

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Marc Ginsberg <ambmcg@usa.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 7, 2014 6:07 PM
To: undi-sclosed <undi-sclosed@usa.net>
Cc: undi-sclosed <undi-sclosed@usa.net>
Subject: "Can Gaza Ever Be Pacified" Fmr. U.S. Amb Marc Ginsberg in the HuffPost
Attach: Can Gaza Ever Be Pacified - Marc Ginsberg.pdf

Please find attached a PDF copy of Fmr. Amb. Ginsberg's article in today's Huffington Post on how to change the Gaza situation written in his capacity as CEO of Peaceworks LLC and CEO of the OneVoice Movement Foundation working in both Israel and Palestine.

See www.onevoicemovement.org

Effective September 15, 2014, The Huffington Post privacy policy will be updated.
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August 7, 2014

THEWORLDPOST

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Can Gaza Ever Be Pacified?

Posted: 08/07/2014 3:19 pm

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The Gaza Strip will never fit neatly into a future Palestinian state jigsaw puzzle. Even in a utopian final two-state settlement it will always be separated from the West Bank across 30 Israeli desert miles. The best minds have tried to figure this one out... an elevated highway linking Gaza and the West Bank, a highway tunnel gouged under Israel, even a light rail system. Yet Gaza's ill-fated geography is what it is no matter what Hamas may seek (and will always fail) to change.

The simplistic narratives spinning around the war about Gaza only make things worse for its victimized citizenry. For Israelis and for those truly interested in a positive future for Gaza, it is essential to understand that Hamas and the Palestinians who live there are not one and the same.

The Islamic extremist terrorist organization has ruled over the Strip's 1.7 million inhabitants since 2007. By any objective measure it is not a rule based on the will of the people. Hamas' own leaders know that, which is why they finally agreed to enter into a unity government after four futile negotiation rounds with the Palestinian Authority over the previous three years.

Gazans have years of bitter experience with their jailers. They know they are merely sheep in Hamas' sinister public relations apparatus. While Gaza's population endured a month of horrific warfare to benefit Hamas's global media campaign, Hamas' leaders conducted the war safely from their underground terror tunnel network -- off limits to Palestinians desperately seeking shelter from Israeli bombs.

Why weren't the people ruled by Hamas accorded refuge in these tunnels from the war above that could have sheltered tens of thousands of them? Pure and simple... Hamas wanted them to suffer for the whole world to stand witness against Israel.

Hamas -- a subgroup of the extremist Muslim Brotherhood, rules by fear, terror, extortion and torture. It is an alien jihadist theology thrust onto Palestinians, surviving off a victimized refugee population who still hope they will return one day to their homes in present day Israel. Hamas plays off of that unobtainable goal.

And while there certainly is a dangerous percentage of Gaza's citizenry who blindly obey and follow Hamas either as enlistees or who are forced to join -- the Al-Qassam Brigades -- Hamas' terrorist wing, the vast majority of Gazans were prepared to boot Hamas out of control of the Strip. Had the planned Palestinian election been held as originally conceived for next December, a decaying Hamas would have likely lost its "mandate" in any internationally supervised election to the very Palestinian Authority it had stolen control from in the first place.

Indeed, Hamas' unpopular and severe seven-year rule over Gaza has been a disaster. Just ask the Palestinians who live there. Coupled with the blockade and Hamas' stealing goods and building materials from its needy population to construct its underground terror tunnels and missile launchers, Gaza's already terrible infrastructure went from worse to worst, and its civilians -- already living in an open air prison -- were reaching the breaking point.

And Israel's Operation Protective Edge has only compounded the misery. Damage to Gaza's infrastructure is more severe than any previous war. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) 465,000 people (25 percent of the population) have been displaced; nearly 60,000 have lost their homes. The one power station supplying power and water was severely damaged. Whole neighborhoods were destroyed.

The people of Gaza deserve more than a break. They deserve a wholesale rehabilitation of their lives. Only then, will the Gordian knot of hatred, which Hamas feeds off of, begin to finally unravel. And if Israel is to achieve its own goal of "rehabilitation for demilitarization" it will have to rethink its shopworn Gaza strategy.

Where to begin?

After four weeks of fighting, Israel now realizes it cannot militarily defang Hamas without a full-blown invasion and reoccupation of Gaza -- appealing to Israel's hard right, but not to the majority of Israelis. Israel must confront the fact that the status quo no longer works.

So to neutralize Hamas, and break the back of Gazans' Hamas-induced "Stockholm Syndrome" Israel will need to reverse course and take positive, transparent steps to help re-empower the moderate Palestinian Authority and its president Mahmoud Abbas. But President Abbas and the Palestinian Authority, already badly mauled politically by the war, has no intention, as Tom Friedman wrote in the *NY Times* on August 3, to become Israel's policeman in the West Bank and in Gaza for free.

What are those steps?

1. Nothing that Israel may do could help Abbas more than declaring an immediate cessation of all settlement expansion on the West Bank. An unlimited settlement freeze would not only demonstrate to the Palestinians that Israel is prepared to deal with a new reality, but it could also set the stage for unfreezing the moribund negotiations that collapsed in April and help begin rehabilitating Israel's tarnished international image. AND, Israel should release to the PA funds that it has withheld to enable the PA to function and to pay the salaries of Gaza civil servants many of whom owe their allegiance to the PA and not to Hamas.

2. Restoring Abbas' credibility among his own population also requires Israel to begin lifting the ineffectual, counter-productive blockade of Gaza and to deal with Abbas in a dignified and positive manner. Any relief from the blockade should be orchestrated to inure to Abbas' benefit and be seen by Palestinians as such. Israel and Egypt have a window of opportunity with the support of other moderate Arab states to establish an effective international monitoring system to supervise the relaxation of the blockade and the internal monitoring of relief and reconstruction supplies so they do not fall into Hamas' sticky fingers again. An "international" monitoring device would also help demilitarize Hamas by keeping a laser-beam like focus on Gaza's imports.

3. Long-term rehabilitation of Gaza will require Hamas to effectively step aside now from administering Gaza. The new PA technocratic government that President Abbas established on June 2 is a reasonable and acceptable conduit to reestablish the PA's role in Gaza as it was supposed to and agreed upon by Hamas. Israel should drop its vociferous objections to its creation and mandate immediately.

4. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and Israel all share a common goal: ridding Gaza of Hamas, if not neutralizing Hamas once and for all. Quashing the Muslim Brotherhood is their defining fault-line. Moreover, they are the key sponsors of the Arab Peace Initiative that Netanyahu has all too conveniently dismissed out of hand for no good reason at all. Israel's leaders have been largely tone-deaf to the new realignment of interests. Netanyahu would be wise to appoint former President Shimon Peres as Israel's Special Envoy for Gaza's reconstruction. Peres enjoys credibility and respectability across the region and is the best diplomat Israel has to work with Egypt, Abbas and other regional players. If Israel were to play its card right, a new Gaza Accord could re-energize regional commitment to the API.

5. PA President Abbas also has to face new realities that inure to his benefit. He has see-sawed on the fulcrum of ambiguity far too long. For a man who has no immediate successor waiting in the wings, the Gaza war also has thrust him into back into the spotlight -- but for how long given his current unpopularity? Abbas is walking a devilish tightrope. His West Bank electorate has little to show for his years urging moderation and non-violence against an occupation that has endured and deepened by the day. Israelis have been told by their prime minister that Abbas is not a partner. Netanyahu is wrong about President Abbas and the new Gaza reality compels Netanyahu to reverse course on Abbas. Abbas has many allies in Israel. But he now needs to explain to deepen his outreach to Israelis directly to explain to them in their post-Gaza frustrations that only a negotiated two state solution will bring them the security they crave. That will require Abbas to address Israeli fears over security, the right of return, and Jerusalem - issues he has forthrightly spoken about, but which have inadequately resonated with vast swaths of Israelis.

In the final analysis demilitarizing Hamas and demobilizing the dreaded al-Qassam brigades will not be achieved through force of arms. Operation Protective Edge, like the other four Israeli military operations before it, prove Hamas's stubborn military resiliency. Israeli and the Palestinian Authority, as well as their Arab allies, are going to have to rethink their approach to so weaken Hamas that it implodes on its own extremism.

What I outlined above is just some of the castor oil that has to be spooned down to cure the patient.

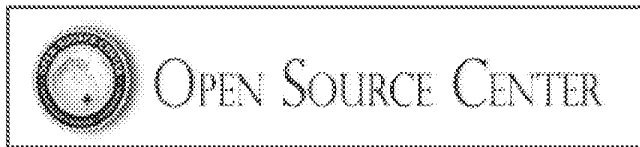
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Sent: Monday, March 2, 2015 3:22 PM
To: SESTravel1, User <SESTravel1@state.gov>; Sherman, Wendy R
<ShermanWR@state.gov>; Malley, R [REDACTED]
Subject: Fw: OSC: Israel: Roundup of Election-Related Developments 2 March 2015

B6

From: TA-Customers-Israel [mailto:TA-Customers-Israel@rccb.osis.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2015 03:19 PM Eastern Standard Time
Subject: OSC: Israel: Roundup of Election-Related Developments 2 March 2015



For feedback or questions, reply to this message or contact TA-Customers-Israel@rccb.osis.gov. To rate this product online and for access to all OSC reporting, analysis, and reference materials on Israeli and Palestinian issues, visit the [Israeli-Palestinian page on OpenSource.gov](#).

Israel: Roundup of Election-Related Developments 2 March 2015

LIN2015030270371390 *OSC Summary* 02 Mar 15

[For a copy of the recording, contact OSC-Video@rccb.osis.gov or the OSC Customer Center at (800) 205-8615.]

The Israeli media on 2 March report the following developments pertaining to the Knesset elections slated for 17 March 2015:

Poll: Netanyahu Approval Drops to 39%; 33% Support Herzog

An unattributed report in commercial Channel 10 Television's website Nana10 in Hebrew says: "A poll conducted by TRI Strategic Studies for Nana10 showed a significant drop in Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's approval ratings, compared to those of Yitzhaq Herzog. Some 39 percent of respondents said that had elections been strictly between Netanyahu and Herzog and Livni they would have voted for the prime minister. Netanyahu continues to maintain a six percent lead over Herzog, whose approval stood at 33 percent, but still suffered a significant drop in support. In comparison, in last week's poll Netanyahu's approval stood at 49 percent versus Herzog's 31 percent. It appears that Herzog did not benefit from Netanyahu's drop in the poll. The number of those who did not support either one of the two rose from 16 percent to 20 percent."

"Asked who they trust to solve Israel's housing crisis, 30.3 percent replied Moshe Kahlon, 12.2 percent said former Finance Minister Ya'ir Lapid, 10 percent favored Economy Minister Naftali Bennett, 9.8

percent said Herzog and only nine percent said they trusted Netanyahu on the matter. Some 2.6 percent said they trusted Shas's Arye Der'i and only 1.9 percent favored Yisra'el Beytenu's Avigdor Lieberman."

Herzog Wants Direct Talks With Palestinians, Blames Netanyahu for Causing Friction With US

Right-of-center daily The Jerusalem Post Online in English includes a report by Gil Hoffman saying: "Zionist Union leader Yitzhaq Herzog explained why he never says the word 'peace' in any of his campaign events for the first time Sunday at a Tel Aviv International Salon event hosted by *The Jerusalem Post's* Lahav Harkov. When she asked why the word had left his lexicon, he said he was one of the last people to speak to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin before he was assassinated and he had not given up his hope to achieve peace. 'I definitely yearn for peace,' he said. 'Clearly this is the dream. But we have to be realistic and not naive about it. I don't want to build expectations. I just want to do my best and move on.' Herzog said he would try to reignite a process using Egyptian and Jordanian support but that ultimately he wants to negotiate directly with the Palestinians, and that he is ready to go to Ramallah to try to reach a deal. 'It will be my role to change the lack of trust between the leaders and peoples,' he said. 'I don't believe in any unilateral withdrawal. The lessons from Gaza are learned.'

"When asked what land he would keep, he said that 'in the ideal world, I would like to keep it all.' He said he would keep the Ezyon Bloc, Ma'ale Adumim and Ari'el blocs, and that the Jordan River would be his security border. Herzog criticized Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu for 'causing friction with our only real staunch strategic ally,' the United States. He said one of his goals for his first 100 days in office would be to restore trust with Washington."

Livni Rejects Possibility of Forgoing Rotation With Herzog

State-funded but independent Voice of Israel in Hebrew at 1100 GMT reports: "MK Tzipi Livni of the Zionist Union rejects the possibility of forgoing the premiership rotation agreement with Yitzhaq Herzog, saying the public is supportive of the partnership between them. Livni told Esti Perez on Voice of Israel's midday newsreel that Herzog himself this morning remarked this partnership has sparked a new hope among the Israeli public. According to Livni, certain elements with a vested interest are those who have raised the idea that she give up the rotation agreement with Herzog, if he wins the elections."

Lapid: Yesh Atid Not Committed To Recommending Leader of Largest Party

Jonathan Lis and Yarden Skop report in left-of-center daily Haaretz.com in English: "MK Ya'ir Lapid, chairman of the Yesh Atid party, will not necessarily recommend the head of the faction that wins the most Knesset seats in the upcoming election for the post of prime minister. In answer to a question from *Haaretz* at an event in Tel Aviv during which the Yesh Atid platform was unveiled, Lapid said the party was no longer committed, as it was in the last election, to recommending the leader of the largest faction as the candidate to form the next government.

"The fact that Lapid is remaining ambiguous as to who he will recommend as prime minister plays in his favor at our expense,' a source in Zionist Union said. 'Many voters who do not want Netanyahu are going to him (Lapid) instead of to us, although Lapid has so far not counted out supporting Netanyahu,' the source added."

Election Campaign Videos

A video posted on the "Benjamin Netanyahu" Facebook page states: "1981. Saddam Husayn builds a nuclear reactor. Begin faces a momentous decision: Should he act to destroy the reactor and endanger ties with Washington? Begin orders the strike on the reactor. Would we be here today if Begin hadn't

done the right thing? Only Likud. Only Netanyahu." [Click here](#) to view the 30-second video in Hebrew with Russian subtitles.

In a video posted on the "Naftali Bennett" Facebook page entitled "True Story, Part Four, With Naftali Bennett," Bennett is shown reading "The Giving Tree" by Y. Herzog, but he puts it down and addresses the viewer, saying: "Buji tells us that we need to give Judea and Samaria to the Arabs to save Israel's international standing and prevent international isolation. Buji, let's tell the truth." Bennett shares the example of Gaza, where Israel did "exactly what the world wanted" by retreating to the 1967 lines, withdrawing all its troops, forcibly evacuating 8,000 Israelis, and giving the whole territory to "our moderate partner, Abu-Mazin [Mahmud Abbas]. The left's plan exactly." Since then, Israel has only reaped trouble from Gaza, such as rockets, and "the three worst blows to Israel's international standing in the past decade have actually occurred in Gaza, not in Judea and Samaria.... Anyone who thinks that giving more and more land to the Arabs will cause the world to somehow respect us and love us more is simply mistaken.... Jewish Home and I will not give even one more centimeter of land to the Arabs. It's over. And that, Buji, is the true story." [Click here](#) to view the 2-minute 10-second video in Hebrew.

In a video posted on the "Yesh Atid" Facebook page, Ya'ir Lapid addresses the viewer in English with a "special message" for immigrants to Israel. He says that in the beginning of the state, Israel fought to make the best home possible for the people while also defending itself, but since then, Israel has lost its way. "Yesh Atid was established to get us back on track." He describes how his party has been working to improve the social aspects of Israel. He urges immigrants, who are by nature idealists, to vote for Yesh Atid so it can continue restoring Israel's pride. [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute 36-second video in English.

A video posted on the "Avigdor Liberman" Facebook page features MK Orly Levi-Abekasis, who describes the poverty situation in Israel and her initiative to legislate supervision for the price of fruits and vegetables, to avoid inflated prices. She states that the bill passed in the Ministerial Legislation Committee despite strong opposition from the finance minister, who later put cream prices under supervision. "So what's more important? Fruits and vegetables? Or cream?" The video concludes: "Orly Levi is fighting for you. Ya'ir Lapid is fighting for cream." [Click here](#) to view the 59-second video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "Shas Party Official Page" on Facebook shows footage of deceased Shas party spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadya Yosef praying, studying, and so on. The video concludes by saying: "People who love the master vote Shas." [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "Eli Yishay" Facebook page shows footage of deceased Rabbi Ovadya Yosef blessing Eli Yishay, saying good things about him, and of Yishay together with Rabbi Yosef. The video then plays the Yahad party anthem and shows Eli Yishay meeting with all different sorts of Israelis. The accompanying post states: "All the streams [of Judaism], all the different yarmulkes, all the people together." [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute 39-second video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "Meretz" Facebook page shows famous Israeli actors, writers, and musicians addressing the viewer. They state: "Every two years, a war breaks out here and children die for nothing, and you're still undecided? When you say that children from both sides deserve to live, you get cursed and threatened, and you're still undecided? Women who complain about harassment and rape are persecuted when they tell the truth, anti-Semitic propaganda videos suggest that you hang yourself, you're scared to go to a protest because you might be beaten, and you're still undecided? So instead of making a strategic vote, on election day, stand erect, stand proud. Vote for what you believe in.... Vote Meretz." [Click here](#) to view the 47-second video in Hebrew.

A video posted on the "V15 -- Victory 2015" Facebook page shows a person going to the polls, while Binyamin and Sarah Netanyahu pack their things. When the voter casts her ballot, the door to the prime minister's residence slams shut behind the Netanyahus. At the end of the video, the polling official tells the voter: "Thank you. Good bye." The accompanying post states: "On 17 March, we'll tell Bibi thank you, good bye." [Click here](#) to view the 1-minute 8-second video in Hebrew.

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Sent By: YaelS


From: Foreign Policy Initiative <info=foreignpolicyi.org@mail44.atl91.mcsv.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2014 7:58 AM
To: Burns, William J <BurnsWJ@state.gov>
Subject: FPI Overnight Brief: April 29, 2014

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
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FPI Overnight Brief

April 29, 2014

Table of Contents

[Russia/Europe](#), [Middle East/North Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Security](#), [Americas](#), [Africa](#), [Obama Administration](#), [Democracy and Human Rights](#), [Ideas](#), [Events](#)

Announcements

This afternoon, FPI will host an event on Capitol Hill on the future of the U.S.-Afghan relationship. For more info and to RSVP, please visit our website.

The Sasakawa Peace Foundation will host an all-day event on Japan's new security policy and capabilities on Wednesday.

FPI Board Member Robert Kagan will deliver remarks on the lessons of World War I and the need for U.S. global leadership Thursday.

If you support our mission and work, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to FPI today.

The Must-Reads

- Ukraine city falls to pro-Russia militants, EU adds Russia sanctions
- Rogin, Lake: US taped Moscow's calls to its Ukraine spies
- WaPo and WSJ (sub) editorials on US's weak Russia sanctions
- Boot: How to safeguard progress in Afghanistan (WSJ sub)
- WSJ editorial on the US return to the Philippines (sub)
- Rep. Randy Forbes: The US Army's Asia opportunity
- Obama lays out his foreign policy doctrine: singles and doubles
- Experts: US has leverage to promote democracy in Iraq
- Alleged Turkish crime ring helped bust Iran sanctions

Russia/Europe

Ukraine

The crisis in eastern Ukraine took dark turns on Monday as the mayor of the country's second-largest city was gravely wounded in an assassination attempt and masked antigovernment militants seized control of this city almost effortlessly, laying bare the limits of the interim government's control. – New York Times

It may never be known who shot Mr. Kernes in the back...An unabashed critic of both sides in eastern Ukraine's

simmering conflict, he had plenty of enemies. But whoever fired it, the shot that almost killed Mr. Kernes may yet prove fatal to Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, as it seeks to maintain a fragile political balance in the weeks ahead without his guiding hand. – New York Times

Americans support imposing tougher sanctions on Russia for its aggressiveness in sovereign Ukraine but by a 2-1 margin oppose any U.S. military aid to the embattled government in Kiev, poll results released Monday show. – LA Times' World Now

Ukraine and Slovakia signed a natural-gas transport deal Monday in what European officials hailed as the first step toward reducing Ukraine's heavy dependence on Russian supplies that are now more costly and at risk of being cut off as hostilities escalate between the two former Soviet republics. – LA Times' World Now

The U.S. has put on indefinite hold on Ukraine's urgent requests for arms shipments to shore up the Ukrainian military in the faceoff with separatists in eastern Ukraine and Russian troops on the border, senior White House officials said Monday. – Military.com

Negotiators from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have arrived in Ukraine to try and win the release of an international observer team that has been held hostage by separatist forces in the town of Slavyansk in the eastern Ukraine since April 25. – Defense News

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoygu assured Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel during a phone call on Monday that Russian forces would not invade Ukraine, according to the Pentagon. – The Hill

NATO has seen no sign that tens of thousands of Russian troops are withdrawing from close to the Ukraine border, a NATO official said on Tuesday, despite a Russian statement that the troops had returned to their permanent positions. – Reuters

A Russian ambassador said on Monday it had been "extremely irresponsible" to send international military monitors to eastern Ukraine, where they were detained by pro-Russian rebels last week. – Reuters

Ukraine has lost at least \$80 billion since Russia annexed its southern Crimea region and the price tag will be much higher when Kiev includes lost profits and the value of possible energy reserves in the Black Sea. – Reuters

Josh Rogin and Eli Lake report: The United States has proof that the Russian government in Moscow is running a network of spies inside Eastern Ukraine because the U.S. government has recordings of their conversations, Secretary of State John Kerry said in a closed-door meeting Friday. – The Daily Beast

Russia

A day after the Obama administration imposed new sanctions against Russia, the European Union on Tuesday added 15 names to its own list of figures close to the Kremlin, including senior military and political officials and pro-Russian militants in Ukraine, who will now be subject to asset freezes and travel bans. – New York Times

Russia's main weapons exporter Rosoboronexport, a state-owned company currently being paid by the Pentagon to support U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, emerged unscathed Monday as the White House and its European allies added new sanctions against Moscow. – Washington Times

The Obama administration announced Monday that it would be preventing and potentially revoking licenses of high-technology defense items in response to Russia's activities regarding Ukraine. – Defense News

Republican lawmakers on Monday blasted President Obama's new round of U.S. sanctions against Russia as a weak and ineffectual response to Vladimir Putin's actions in Ukraine. – The Hill

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) called additional sanctions on Russia announced by the White House on Monday "good news," but urged additional measures. – The Hill

A senior House Intelligence Committee member on Monday called the new sanctions against Russia "an important step," but said additional measures will likely be needed. – The Hill

When the US announced its latest wave of sanctions against Russia on Monday, there was an almost audible sigh of relief in Moscow. While the seven individuals targeted are among the country's most powerful and most trusted and relied upon by president Vladimir Putin, the list appears unlikely to have much, if any, new direct economic impact. – Financial Times

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Tuesday that U.S. restrictions on high-tech exports to Russia

will be a blow to Russian companies in the sector, the Interfax news agency reported. - Reuters

European leaders were giving more consideration to broad sanctions against sectors of the Russian economy after pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine held monitors from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a U.S. official said. - Reuters

As the White House embarks on what experts agree is a cautious approach to penalizing Russia for its intervention in Ukraine, the strategy behind the seemingly light penalties is being cast by Obama administration officials as a slow battle of attrition, chipping away at Russian President Vladimir Putin's credibility while keeping U.S. policy in lockstep with Europe. - Reuters

A prominent foe of Vladimir Putin won an unexpected judicial reprieve on Monday when a Moscow court questioned a theft case he sees as the president's revenge for his activism and sent it back to prosecutors for overhaul. - Reuters

Interview: Secretary of State John Kerry has been thinking about, talking through and wrestling with the Ukraine crisis for weeks, but he still grasps for words to describe the motivations of the man at its center: Russian President Vladimir Putin. - Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Editorial: Vladimir Putin's assault on Ukraine has been relentless and increasingly reckless: Forces working with Russian personnel in eastern Ukraine are torturing and murdering opponents and holding international observers hostage. In contrast, President Obama's response has been slow and excruciatingly measured. New U.S. sanctions announced Monday fall well short of the steps that senior officials threatened when the Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine began three weeks ago. - Washington Post

Editorial: Sanctions only make sense if they cause enough economic pain to make Russians begin to question the wisdom of Kremlin imperialism. Otherwise they make the West look weak and disunited. This is exactly what Mr. Putin is counting on, and so far he's been right. - Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Europe

Britain and France deployed eight fighter jets on Monday to reinforce NATO air patrols over the Baltics as tensions rise with Russia over Ukraine. - AFP

Romania will increase its defense spending by an additional \$215 million (€155 million) this year as tensions continue to rise in neighboring Ukraine, it said on Monday. - AFP

John Vinocur writes: Michael Naumann, who served as the minister of culture in Gerhard Schröder's second-term cabinet, offered me a definition in a conversation last week. "The Germans, now and historically, are scared of Russia," said Mr. Naumann, "and Putin knows this." Mr. Obama can't miss taking this reality into consideration as the United States comes to terms with facing Russia essentially alone. - Wall Street Journal Europe (subscription required)

[Return to Top](#)

Middle East/North Africa

Iran

The Obama administration's strategy of punishing Russia with economic sanctions over the Ukraine crisis encountered a new complication on Monday with word that the Russians are negotiating an \$8 billion to \$10 billion energy deal with Iran, another country ostracized by American-led sanctions, which partly depend on Moscow's cooperation to be effective. - New York Times

The gradual process of rapprochement between Britain and Iran took a further step on Monday with the visit of the most senior U.K. diplomat to Tehran since the two countries broke diplomatic ties in 2011, the Foreign Office said. - Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

A review by Reuters of the report's 299 pages, as well as interviews with currency and precious metals dealers, offer colorful new details of how what police call a "crime organization" allegedly helped Iran exploit a loophole in the West's sanctions regime that for a time allowed the Islamic Republic to purchase gold with oil and gas revenues. - Reuters

The U.N. nuclear watchdog said on Monday its chief inspector had held "informal" talks in Tehran, ahead of a mid-May deadline for Iran to answer questions about detonators that could be used to help set off an atomic explosive device. -

Reuters

Syria

United Nations agencies and other charitable organizations do not need the permission of the Syrian government to deliver humanitarian relief to civilians trapped in the fighting and destruction from the three-year-old civil war there, a group of international lawyers and academics argued in an open letter released on Monday. – New York Times

The Syrian government announced on Monday that President Bashar al-Assad would compete in a presidential election scheduled for June 3 that is widely seen as an attempt to enhance his perceived legitimacy despite a raging civil war that has pushed his government out of much of the country and displaced millions of citizens. – New York Times

The Syrian government and rebels struck a rare agreement Monday to restore electricity in Aleppo province, cut off by the opposition for more than a week, in exchange for a cessation of airstrikes by the military. – LA Times' World Now

A new and bloody front has been opened in eastern Syria as the country's two most powerful jihadist groups battle for control of the region's oilfields. – Financial Times

Aid organizations working in Syria say they are growing frustrated at how the United Nations is handling the world's biggest humanitarian crisis, accusing it of excluding them and withholding information vital to assist millions in need. - Reuters

Two mortar shells struck a school complex in central Damascus on Tuesday, killing at least 12 people and wounding dozens, state media and a monitoring group said. - Reuters

North Africa

With four of its reporters imprisoned in Cairo, the Qatar-owned news network Al Jazeera has filed a \$150 million compensation claim against Egypt for what it said was damage to its media business. - Politico

The Qatar-based satellite network Al Jazeera served Egypt with a \$150 million compensation claim on Monday for what it said was damage to its media business inflicted by Cairo's military-backed rulers, a step likely to worsen Qatari-Egyptian relations. - Reuters

Libyan Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni accused the central bank governor on Monday of obstructing the government and exceeding his powers, in comments that may damage one of the last respected state institutions in the North African country. - Reuters

Jordan has agreed to handover a Libyan Islamist to Tripoli to secure the release of its ambassador kidnapped in the North African country two weeks ago, Libya's state news agency LANA said on Monday. - Reuters

A suicide bomber in a car killed at least two people and wounded two others at an army camp in Libya's eastern city of Benghazi on Tuesday, security and medical sources said. - Reuters

Iraq

The vote will be Iraq's first nationwide election since the withdrawal of United States forces at the end of 2011, and it is clear it will be held amid rapidly growing violence and sectarian bloodletting....The greater fear, though, is that there is no way back this time, that the sectarian division of the nation will become entrenched as the government concentrates its forces on protecting its seat of power in Baghdad. – New York Times

Amid increasing violence by a resurgent al Qaeda, Iraqis will vote this week in the first parliamentary elections since the departure of U.S. troops in 2011 as the country edges closer to outright sectarian warfare and the government moves closer to Iran. – Washington Times

The United States still has some leverage for pushing Iraq toward a more inclusive democracy as it holds elections this week, experts said on Monday. – Washington Free Beacon

The highest levels of violence since Maliki took on the militias in 2008 are undermining his message. He still leads the election field, but his opponents are circling and could unseat him, if they can overcome considerable differences. - Reuters

Wednesday's election marks a new round in an internal power struggle that risks turning violent and skewing the balance of power in Kurdistan between influential neighbors Iran and Turkey. - Reuters

Fifty people were killed on Monday as suicide bombers attacked a political rally and Iraqi police and soldiers cast their votes early for a national election in two days' time, authorities and witnesses said. - Reuters

Yemen

The remains of a Saudi national killed in airstrikes in Yemen earlier this month are not those of a wanted al Qaeda bomb-maker, according to multiple sources in Saudi Arabia who were briefed on the matter. - CNN

Political turmoil is preventing Yemen and donor countries from channeling billions of dollars in foreign aid intended to rebuild the impoverished Arab country, a Yemeni official said on Monday. - Reuters

A German diplomat was injured during an apparent kidnapping attempt by unidentified gunmen in the Yemeni capital Sanaa on Monday, embassy and police sources said. - Reuters

Israel

Secretary of State John Kerry issued an unusual statement Monday evening expressing his support for Israel after a controversy erupted over a politically charged phrase he used in a private appearance. - New York Times

Ultimately, the latest round proved the perennial truth with Middle East peacemaking: Washington cannot force an agreement if the parties are unwilling. - New York Times

Days after suspending American-brokered Middle East peace talks because of a reconciliation pact reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization and its rival Hamas, the Islamic militant group, Israel on Monday raised a new source of potential tension with the United States over Washington's approach to the unity government planned by the Palestinians. - New York Times

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-Va.) on Monday demanded that Secretary of State John Kerry apologize to Israel for alleged comments likening the Jewish state to South Africa's racist apartheid regime. - The Hill

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) said he would release a bill later this week that would make future U.S. aid to the Palestinian government conditional upon leaders agreeing to a ceasefire with Israel and recognizing Israel's right to exist. - The Hill

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) said Monday that Secretary of State John Kerry should resign for allegedly saying that Israel risked becoming "an apartheid state" if it didn't agree to a peace deal. - The Hill's Floor Action

With Middle East peace talks frozen and expectations of a negotiated deal at an all-time low, a growing number of Israeli politicians believe it is time for the government to set the nation's own borders unilaterally. - Reuters

Turkey

Germany's president warned during a trip to Turkey on Monday against the consequences of curbing freedom of expression and he criticized Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's leadership style. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Asia

Afghanistan

Even as Afghanistan's unfolding presidential election has captured the capital's attention, two related questions have become increasingly urgent among security officials here: Where have the Taliban gone, and what are they waiting for? - New York Times

Because of his reputation for brutality, Gulalai was someone both sides of the war wanted gone. The Taliban tried at least twice to kill him. Despite Gulalai's ties to the CIA and Afghan President Hamid Karzai, United Nations officials and U.S. coalition partners sought to rein him in or have him removed. Today, Gulalai lives in a pink two-story house in Southern California, on a street of stucco homes on the outskirts of Los Angeles. How he managed to land in the United States remains murky. - Washington Post

Rich Afghans have been buying up property in Turkey as an insurance policy against possible problems at home after the drawdown of international military forces and aid money. – Financial Times

Max Boot writes: It would be extremely foolish to risk allowing Afghanistan to return to its chaotic pre-9/11 state over a mere matter of 5,000 troops. (At the peak of the U.S. commitment there were 100,000 U.S. troops and even today 33,000 remain.) If Mr. Obama wants a foreign-policy victory in his second term, he will need to puncture this misbegotten trial balloon. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Pakistan

The arrest of a confessed serial killer who used the Internet to lure his victims has caused alarm among gay men and lesbians in Pakistan, where social media has been quietly used to widen freedoms in a country where homosexuality is illegal. – New York Times

Mustafa Qadri writes: The Pakistani government must start by ensuring that the perpetrators in all cases, including the high-profile assassination attempts on Hamid Mir and Raza Rumi, are brought to justice regardless of their affiliations. The media enterprises themselves must also provide adequate training, support and assistance to their staff and not undermine the efforts of rival outlets to seek justice for their journalists. Without these urgent steps, there is a very serious risk that more of Pakistan's journalists will be intimidated into silence. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

China

Gao Yu, a prominent Chinese journalist who was imprisoned following the 1989 suppression of the student protests in Tiananmen Square, is missing, with friends saying she may have been detained ahead of the 25th anniversary of the armed crackdown. – New York Times

Chinese police have placed a labor activist under criminal detention, formally accusing him of causing a disturbance after they said he distributed information online about a factory strike, his manager and father said on Tuesday. – Reuters

Police are the "fists and daggers" in the fight against terrorism, China's President Xi Jinping said on a trip to the western Xinjiang region where authorities say members of a Muslim minority are waging a violent separatist campaign. – Reuters

A China media watchdog has urged customs to intensify checks of luggage entering China to block "harmful publications," said the official Xinhua news service, as Beijing executes a selective crackdown on imported media in the name of social order. – Reuters

Andrew Erickson and Michael Chase write: [T]he United States will need to continue developing and refining new operational concepts and capabilities, and work even more closely with its allies and partners to respond to the challenges posed by China's growing conventional missile-force capabilities. If it chooses not to do so, then it will discover that this, too, is a choice with potentially dire implications for American security. – The National Interest

East Asia

Taiwan this month mobilized hundreds of marines for its largest military exercise since 2000 near disputed islands in the South China Sea, a legislator said Monday. – AFP

A Taiwan air force major was jailed for 20 years Monday for leaking military secrets to China in the latest espionage case to hit the island. – AFP

North Korea conducted live fire drills on Tuesday in two areas near a disputed sea border with South Korea that have been the scene of deadly clashes and where they fired hundreds of artillery rounds only weeks ago. – Reuters

Rep. Randy Forbes (R-VA) writes: Let me be clear that I believe the Army's ability to seize and hold large portions of land will remain an enduring core competency fundamental to preserving options for future policy makers. However, alongside its traditional missions the Army must consider concepts and capabilities for imposing costs and providing affordable theater defenses that will allow it to contribute to maintaining peace and stability in critical regions like the Asia-Pacific. – The National Interest

Southeast Asia

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim and other political and civic figures are planning a mass rally in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday in what could be Malaysia's last big political protest before his sodomy trial is concluded. – Wall Street

Journal

President Obama paid tribute to a shared history of sacrifice Tuesday, as he reflected on how the Philippines had surmounted the challenges of both a war and natural disaster with the aid of its American ally. – Washington Post

The Obama administration says that the Philippines has fixed its problems protecting intellectual property enough to take it off of a special watch list on the issue. – The Hill

President Obama said a 10-year agreement signed Monday to give the U.S military greater access to Philippine bases will help promote peace and stability in the region and that he hopes China's dominant power will allow its neighbors to prosper on their own terms. – Associated Press

The United States said it has removed the Philippines from its piracy watch list after two decades following significant reforms put in place by Manila, raising prospects for increased trade and investment between the two allies. – Reuters

Editorial: The deal ought to show China's military leaders that their imperial behavior is backfiring in the region. Instead of kowtowing to Beijing, Pacific Rim nations are looking to the U.S. for strengthened military partnership. The Philippine-U.S. pact will help the cause of free trade and security in the Pacific. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

[Return to Top](#)

Security

Defense

The Pentagon has failed to produce a legally mandated policy report that outlines to Congress its upcoming plans for overseas troop deployments and the allocation of military hardware, according to an oversight report. – Washington Free Beacon

Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.) said on Monday that lawmakers were not going to allow the USS George Washington aircraft carrier to be cut in 2016 to be cut despite current Pentagon plans to do so. – The Hill

The US Navy announced a record \$17.645 billion contract Monday to build 10 new SSN 774 Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarines. The order assures prime contractor General Dynamics Electric Boat and chief subcontractor Huntington Ingalls Newport News Shipbuilding of submarine orders through 2018. – Defense News

When Australia announced it would purchase 58 F-35A joint strike fighters last week, it agreed to the single largest batch of F-35s acquired by an international partner to date — an important milestone for a program that appears headed to smaller domestic buys than planned. – Defense News

The Pentagon plans to destroy more than \$1 billion worth of ammunition although some of those bullets and missiles could still be used by troops, according to the Pentagon and congressional sources. – USA Today

Crews at a U.S. nuclear missile control center must deal with aging equipment and faulty telephones, according to a report on "60 Minutes." – The Hill

Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) writes: Fielding a mixed fleet is the kind of balanced decision-making that fits the Army's current circumstances. With so much of its modernization funding draining away in response to budget caps, the service needs to find new ways of sustaining capabilities honed in a dozen years of war. And most important, it needs to support deployed soldiers in a timely fashion. A mixed fleet for the AMPV role is an inspired response to these imperatives. – Defense News

Michael Auslin writes: The Global Hawk's base flying cost may have come down and it may be able to fly longer than the U-2, but it cannot fly better. If Ukraine has reinforced any lesson, it is to be as prepared as possible to mitigate risk around the globe and avoid surprise. Undoubtedly, one day the U-2 will no longer be able to do its mission better than remotely piloted drones. But that day is not here yet, and it is more cost effective and operationally wise to use the best airplane for the job. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The War

The Senate has quietly stripped a provision from an intelligence bill that would have required President Obama to

make public each year the number of people killed or injured in targeted killing operations in Pakistan and other countries where the United States uses lethal force. – New York Times

A British former al Qaeda associate appeared via live television feed on Monday as a government witness in the U.S. terrorism trial of Abu Hamza al-Masri, a one-eyed, handless cleric who is charged with supporting al Qaeda. – Reuters

Cybersecurity

In a rare insight into the government's thinking on the use of cyberweapons, the White House on Monday published a series of questions it asks in deciding when to make public the discovery of major flaws in computer security or whether to keep them secret so that American intelligence agencies can use them to enable surveillance or an attack. – New York Times

Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee are drafting cyber legislation that would enable companies to share threat data with federal agencies without fear of getting sued, officials said Monday. – Washington Post

[Return to Top](#)

Americas

United States of America

Carlin is not exactly a household name in Washington or beyond. But the new assistant attorney general in charge of the Justice Department's National Security Division is privy to the nation's most classified secrets about government surveillance, counterterrorism operations, targeted drone killings, cyberhacking and counterespionage. – Washington Post

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is creating a "financial SWAT team" to rush to countries that have overthrown their rulers and hunt for stolen assets—part of a new White House push to help fledgling democracies. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The more US Reps. Mac Thornberry of Texas and Rick Larsen of Washington state spoke Monday, the more clear it became just how far apart the former's Republican Party and the latter's Democratic Party stand on national security issues. From the proper size of the annual US defense budget to whether China's military buildup threatens the United States and Beijing's neighbors to the proper response to Russia's actions in Ukraine, the duo offered widely different ideas during a midday event here at the Brookings Institution. – Defense News

Latin America

A new advocacy group calling for the United States to change its policy toward Cuba launched an advertising campaign on Monday with posters on the Washington D.C. metro system showing President Barack Obama and urging him to "stop waiting." – Reuters

Farmers across Colombia began protests on Monday demanding the government enact reforms it promised last year, organizers said, demonstrations that could unsettle President Juan Manuel Santos as he runs for re-election in four weeks. – Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Africa

The Ethiopian government has arrested nine journalists in what a press freedom group called on Tuesday "one of the worst crackdowns against free expression in the country." – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

International mediators have called on South Sudan's rebel leader to meet his rival President Salva Kiir to prevent an ethnic-fuelled conflict turning into a civil war or genocide, one of the envoys who met Riek Machar last week said on Monday. – Reuters

Uganda has drafted a new law that would bar non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from promoting homosexuality,

tightening rules further after anti-gay legislation in February was widely condemned as draconian. - Reuters

Nigeria is preparing a special development plan for its poor, violence-hit northeast and increasing spending to counter an Islamist revolt there that could dent growth in Africa's No. 1 oil producer if it worsens, the country's finance minister said. - Reuters

Gunmen attacked an evacuation convoy carrying hundreds of Muslims north from Central African Republic's capital on Monday, killing at least two people, according to a Reuters witness and an African Union peacekeeping official. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Obama Administration

Surveying hot spots from Syria to Ukraine, Obama laid out an incremental, dogged approach to foreign relations that relies on the United States deploying every possible economic and institutional lever before resorting to armed force. - Washington Post

[Return to Top](#)

Democracy and Human Rights

Different countries' control of the Internet is increasingly dividing the world into "two different visions" reminiscent of the Cold War, Secretary of State John Kerry warned on Monday. - The Hill

[Return to Top](#)

Ideas

Daniel Runde writes: How do we best grab the jump ball and take another shot at greatness? Holmes argues that there will be some event or events that will wake us from our lethargy and that it will require sustained leadership. This means, to me, that Republicans will need control of one or both houses of congress, and that we will need a Republican president who runs on this vision and brings the Republican party, the American people, and ultimately the Democratic party along with us. - Foreign Policy's Shadow Government

[Return to Top](#)

Events

After Karzai: Assessing the Afghan Elections and Future of the U.S.-Afghan Relationship
Foreign Policy Initiative
April 29

National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force
Senate Armed Services Committee
April 29

U.S.-Russia Nuclear Arms Negotiations: Ukraine and Beyond
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Europe and Eurasia and Terrorism and Nonproliferation Subcommittees
April 29

The Administration's FY 2015 MENA Budget Request: Priorities, Objectives and Challenges
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee
April 29

Effective Accountability: Tier Rankings in the Fight Against Human Trafficking
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee
April 29

Confronting Transnational Drug Smuggling: An Assessment of Regional Partnerships
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Western Hemisphere Subcommittee
April 29

Stakeholder Assessments of the National Preparedness Grant Program Proposal
House Homeland Security Committee
Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee
April 29

A Discussion with the Ambassadors of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine
Brookings Institution
April 29

Reimagining India: What's at Stake in the World's Largest Democracy?
Brookings Institution
April 29

The Army Moving Forward: A Discussion with General David G. Perkins
Center for Strategic and International Studies
April 29

Toward A Europe Whole and Free
Atlantic Council
April 29-30

Israel vs. al-Qaeda: Emerging Challenges on Two Fronts
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
April 29

Future of Democracy in Turkey: Elections, Politics and Foreign Policy
SETA Foundation
April 29

The Future of the Russian-American Security Dialogue after the Ukrainian Crisis
Wilson Center
April 29

Women and Youth in Modern Iran: A Film Festival
Wilson Center
April 29-30

New Thinking on the Origins of World War I
Foreign Policy Research Institute
April 29

Ethnonationalist Conflict in Postcommunist States
Wilson Center
April 29

Reform of the Defense Acquisition System
Senate Armed Services Committee
April 30

A Transformation: Afghanistan Beyond 2014
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs Subcommittee
April 30

Lessons Learned from the Boston Marathon Bombing
Senate Homeland Security Committee
April 30

Assessing U.S. Foreign Assistance Priorities in South Asia
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee
April 30

Point of attack: Preventive war, international law, and global welfare
American Enterprise Institute, Federalist Society
April 30

Japan's New Security Policy and Capabilities
Sasakawa Peace Foundation
April 30

The Future of State Capitalism in China
Brookings Institution
April 30

Congress and the U.S.-Japan Alliance
Center for Strategic and International Studies
April 30

Geopolitical Shockwaves from Ukraine
Center for Strategic and International Studies
April 30

Captains of Industry Series with Thomas Enders, CEO, Airbus Group
Atlantic Council
April 30

A Discussion on the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
April 30

The Central African Republic: From "Pre-genocide" to Genocide?
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee
May 1

Escalating tensions: Is Northeast Asia headed toward war on the high seas?

American Enterprise Institute

May 1

The Middle East in Transition: Allies, Adversaries, and Enemies

Foundation for Defense of Democracies

May 1

20 Years After the Rwandan Genocide: Have We Learned Our Lesson?

McCain Institute

May 1

100 Years Later: Lessons from World War I

Heritage Foundation

May 1

Understanding Islamic Parties, Political Violence, and Extremism in Pakistan

Heritage Foundation

May 1

Turkey and the Transformation of the Global Political and Economic Landscape

Brookings Institution

May 1

The Aftermath of the European Crisis: Where Are We Now?

Brookings Institution

May 1

Where Next for Japan's Economic Revitalization?

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

May 1

A Transatlantic Pivot to Asia, featuring H.E. Frans Timmermans, Foreign Minister of the Netherlands

Center for Strategic and International Studies

May 1

The Banyan Tree Leadership Forum with Jejomar Binay, Vice President of the Philippines

Center for Strategic and International Studies

May 1

Sustaining Strong Defense Posture in the Era of Austere Budgets

Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments

May 1

Freedom of the Press 2014

Freedom House

May 1

America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes

New America Foundation

May 1

Reporting in Pakistan

New America Foundation

May 1

The Social Cost of the Uzbek Cotton Industry
Open Society Foundations
May 1

The Political Origins of Economic Reform in Pakistan
Wilson Center
May 1

The OneVoice Movement: Toward a Two-State Solution
Wilson Center
May 1

Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God
The Institute of World Politics
May 1

The BJP Regime 1998-2004: Looking Back, Looking Ahead
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 2

NATO Expansion and European Security after the Cold War
Wilson Center
May 2

Twin Challenges to Peace and Stability in Africa and to U.S. Policy: Boko Haram in Nigeria and Civil Conflict in South Sudan
Wilson Center
May 2

Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.-China Relations in the 21st Century
Brookings Institution
May 5

Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Aspirations in the Evolving Regional Security Context
Brookings Institution
May 5

U.S. Air Force Engagement in Asia-Pacific
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 5

Libya's Post-Qaddafi Fissures
Atlantic Council
May 5

The Energy, Water, & Food Nexus: Risks and Opportunities for the Private Sector
Atlantic Council
May 5

Magnificent Delusions: A Book Discussion and Signing with Amb. Husain Haqqani
Middle East Institute
May 5

A Democracy with a "Partly Free" Media
New America Foundation
New York City

May 5

2014 Ahtisaari Symposium: The Crisis of Euro-Atlantic Security
Wilson Center
May 5

U.S. Army Intelligence and the Defense of Europe, 1944-1949
Wilson Center
May 5

Military Compensation
Senate Armed Services Committee
May 6

Blueprint for Economic Freedom and Prosperity in Asia
Heritage Foundation
May 6

NATO and the Ukraine Crisis
Atlantic Council
May 6

Policy Priorities for India's New Government
Atlantic Council
May 6

The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators, and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor
Cato Institute
May 6

India's Maoist Insurgency: Drivers and Policy Responses
Wilson Center
May 6

Strategic Challenges and Engagement in Africa Today
The Institute of World Politics
May 6

Governing Uranium: Security in the Front-End of the Fuel Cycle
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 7

The Future of the US-Taiwan Relationship
Atlantic Council
May 7

The Gulf Rising: Defense Industrialization in Saudi Arabia and the UAE
Atlantic Council
May 7

Perception and Military Doctrine in South Asia
Stimson Center
May 7

Reagan at Reykjavik: The Weekend That Ended the Cold War
Heritage Foundation

May 8

China's Oil Future: Balancing Economic, Geopolitical, and Environmental Concerns
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
May 8

Challenges to Democracy in Latin America
Hudson Institute
May 8

Sustaining the U.S. Lead in DoD Unmanned Systems
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 8

The Future of FATA: Practical Solutions
Atlantic Council
May 8

Citizen Strangers: Minority Rights in the State of Israel
New America Foundation
May 8

2nd Annual Sheikhha Fatima Lectureship: Women Leading for Peace
United States Institute of Peace
May 8

The United States, Trade Remedy, and the WTO: What's Next?
Wilson Center
May 8

Data and Goliath: How the Internet Affects Power, and How Power Affects the Internet
The Institute of World Politics
May 8

Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century
Brookings Institution
May 12

35 Years Later: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Taiwan Relations Act
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 12

Pakistan's Bilateral and Regional Trade Priorities
Atlantic Council
May 13

Disrupting Defense: Dynamic Security in an Age of New Technologies
Atlantic Council
May 14

A Conversation with John F. Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
Middle East Institute
May 14

AFA Breakfast Series
Air Force Association

May 15

Will the Lights Go Out? Implications of a Venezuelan Market Downturn
Atlantic Council
May 15

The Big Picture: What Does Egypt's Presidential Election Mean for its Future?
Atlantic Council
May 15

National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change
Wilson Center, CNA Corporation
May 15

Junior Military Officer Panel - Junior Officer Perspectives on National Security
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
May 15

The Role of Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Responding to the Crisis in Crimea
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 19

The International Human Rights System: A Missed Opportunity?
Freedom House and Freedom Rights Project
May 19

FDR, the Jews, and the Holocaust: Resolving the Controversy
Wilson Center
May 19

Subcommittee Markups for FY 2015
Senate Armed Services Committee
May 20

A Time to Attack: The Looming Iranian Nuclear Threat
Heritage Foundation
May 20

Exploring New Frontiers in Peacebuilding
United States Institute of Peace
May 21

The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames
Wilson Center
May 22

Voices From Japan National Security Speaker Series
Stimson Center
June 3

Francis Fukuyama's "The End of History?" 25 Years Later
Cato Institute
June 6

CNAS Eighth Annual National Security Conference
Center for a New American Security

June 11

The Many Faces of Tyranny: Why Democracy Isn't Always Possible
Heritage Foundation
June 12

Envisioning a Competitive U.S.-Mexico Border
Wilson Center
June 12

War with China: How Would it be Fought and Could it be Prevented?
Alexander Hamilton Society
November 24

2014 FPI Forum
Foreign Policy Initiative
December 3

[Return to Top](#)

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Washington, D.C. 20036


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
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FPI Overnight Brief

April 24, 2014

Table of Contents

[Russia/Europe](#), [Middle East/North Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Security](#), [Americas](#), [Africa](#), [Obama Administration](#), [Ideas](#), [Events](#)

Announcements

FPI will host a conference call on Iraq's future after general elections on Monday. For more info, and to register to participate, please visit our website.

FPI will host an event on Capitol Hill on the future of the U.S.-Afghan relationship on Tuesday. For more info and to RSVP, please visit our website.

The Sasakawa Peace Foundation will host an all-day event on Japan's new security policy and capabilities on Wednesday.

FPI Board Member Robert Kagan will deliver remarks on the lessons of World War I and the need for U.S. global leadership next Thursday.

The Must-Reads

- Obama: US ready to ramp up sanctions on Russia (WSJ sub)
- Ukraine forces face pro-Russia separatists in east
- Eastern Europe frets about NATO's ability to curb Russia
- Video: FPI's Kristol, Thoburn on the situation in Ukraine
- FPI's Kirchick: Are Germany's "Putin Understanders" taking things too far?
- Obama says pact obliges US to protect Japan in islands fight
- Green, Inboden, Bosco, and Walker on East Asian security
- Bill Gertz in Commentary: China rises as America weakens
- Fleischman: Sanctions must accompany Venezuelan dialogue

Russia/Europe

Ukraine

U.S. President Barack Obama said Russia hasn't abided by either the spirit or the letter of an agreement to de-escalate tensions in Ukraine, and he warned that the U.S. is prepared to impose additional costs. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The Ukrainian interim authorities said Thursday that "civilian activists" had regained control of City Hall in the

southeastern city of Mariupol, forcing pro-Russian protesters to leave without bloodshed. – New York Times

Clashes between Ukrainian security forces, local protesters and pro-Russia activists spread across the region Thursday, with fighting at an arms depot, a city hall and at checkpoints near the restive city of Sloviansk, where the “people’s mayor” threatened to protect his men with hostages. – Washington Post

The promised Ukrainian military effort to reassert control over the restive eastern part of the country barely registered on Wednesday, but the Geneva agreement to defuse the crisis in the country frayed even further as the United States and Russia exchanged warnings and accusations of meddling in the region. – New York Times

Russian oil and gas company Gazprom has billed Ukraine’s state-owned Naftogaz \$11.4 billion for not importing the full amount of natural gas under a 2013 supply contract, Gazprom’s deputy Chief Executive Alexander Medvedev said Thursday, Interfax news agency reported. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The U.S. State Department said Wednesday that it is “deeply concerned” about reports that Vice News reporter Simon Ostrovsky has been kidnapped by pro-Russian separatists in the Slaviansk city of eastern Ukraine. – Washington Times

Mr. Ponomarev’s metamorphosis from a soap purveyor into a power broker traveling with bodyguards through what Kiev now calls “the most dangerous place in Ukraine” captures the speed and the bizarre quality with which the pro-Russian separatist revolt has upended life in parts of eastern Ukraine. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland are planning to band together and form a joint military brigade, according to local media reports. – Washington Times

The woeful state of Ukraine’s military can be blamed on corruption, Kiev’s shaky commitment to national defense and a policy of selling the best weapons to gain cold hard cash, analysts say. – Washington Times

Mr. Rybak’s death adds to a growing file of vigilante “arrests” and disappearances of politicians, activists and journalists – blamed on armed separatists – as law and order erode, the civic fabric frays, and fear of violence grows in Ukraine’s east. – Financial Times

European and Russian officials will meet this week and next for emergency talks to try to prevent Moscow cutting off gas supply to Ukraine, as Europe explores how to pump more gas to the struggling country. – Reuters

Ukrainian confectionery tycoon Petro Poroshenko has a chance of winning the May 25 presidential election in the first round, an opinion poll indicated on Wednesday. – Reuters

Bill Gertz reports: The White House has launched a covert publicity campaign against a bipartisan report that criticized the Obama administration for failing to provide urgently needed non-weapons military aid to Ukraine in its standoff against some 80,000 Russian troops massed along the country’s eastern border. – Washington Times’ Inside the Ring

Video: FPI Board Member William Kristol, Policy Director Robert Zarate, and Eurasia Analyst Hannah Thoburn discussed the situation in Ukraine on CNN and the BBC.

Russia

Editorial: Mr. Navalny, Journal contributor Garry Kasparov and others warned for years that an authoritarian Putin would eventually become a threat to the West, but they were dismissed by Westerners who said it was none of our business. Now we can see who was right, as Mr. Putin carves up Ukraine, with more of Europe potentially on the menu. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Europe

Poland welcomed a company of some 150 U.S. infantry troops on its territory Wednesday and said more forces could be deployed quickly if needed as it believed neighboring Russia was moving fast to carve up Ukraine. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Britain’s Royal Air Force scrambled a pair of Typhoon fighter jets on Wednesday to identify two Russian military aircraft that were flying in international airspace north of Scotland, the U.K. Ministry of Defence said. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Slovenia’s coalition government, which averted an international bailout last year, could collapse on Friday if Prime Minister Alenka Bratusek loses the leadership of her party, Positive Slovenia. – Reuters

Human rights are deteriorating in Azerbaijan, a European watchdog said on Wednesday, calling on the authorities to uphold regional standards and expressing concerns over what it says is a "worrying pattern" of abuse. - Reuters

FPI Fellow James Kirchick writes: [I]f pacifism at all costs and appeasing tyranny are a country's core foreign policy principles—as most Germans seem to want them to be—then speaking clearly about Russian aggression is certainly "not useful." Denying the gravity of Putin's behavior and chastising those who properly call him out as the expansionist brute that he is absolves Germany of taking the responsibility incumbent upon a country to which many are fruitlessly looking for leadership. – Tablet Magazine

NATO

NATO's mission was meant to reassure allies that are feeling newly vulnerable to Russian threats after Moscow's muscular intervention in neighboring Ukraine. But it provided little comfort to NATO's Eastern European members, which are growing increasingly nervous about Russia's moves and the alliance's ability, or even willingness, to counter them. – New York Times

NATO has begun initial deliberations for upgrading the alliance's surveillance-aircraft fleet, with an eye toward improving its missile-defense capabilities. – Global Security Newswire

[Return to Top](#)

Middle East/North Africa

Iran

The head of Iran's judiciary removed the country's highest prison official on Wednesday, after what human rights advocates said was a violent raid on political prisoners in Tehran's largest prison facility. – New York Times

Although Iranians have traditionally adjusted quickly to rate hikes without noticeably changing their consumption habits, a new increase scheduled for this week will test the patience of a public that has been waiting nearly a year for signs of an economic recovery promised by President Hassan Rouhani when he was elected last June. – Washington Post

Editorial: Perhaps a regime, and a president, that can brutalize political dissidents as a matter of routine can prove reasonable at the nuclear negotiating table. We wouldn't count on it, and neither should the West. – Wall Street Journal

Syria

The U.S. and Britain called for the U.N. to investigate Syrian rebel allegations that President Bashar al-Assad's regime attacked his opponents with chlorine gas, as Damascus came close to meeting a Sunday deadline for ridding his country of chemical arms. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The British police said on Thursday that officers would work with charitable organizations to prevent British Muslims from traveling to Syria as fighters in the civil war, urging women in particular to report would-be jihadists "so that we can intervene and help." – New York Times

Syrian rebels are once again charging that government forces have attacked civilians in rebel-held territory with chlorine gas – a substance not covered by last September's international agreement, brokered by the U.S. and Russia, to remove chemical weapons from the war-torn nation. – NBC News

Tony Blair has dismayed Downing Street by suggesting that Bashar al-Assad may have to remain in place as the "interim" president of Syria as part of a deal to end three years of conflict. – Financial Times

Hopes for a political deal to end Syria's war are fading and it is getting harder every day to send aid to millions of trapped and displaced civilians, U.N. humanitarian chief Valerie Amos said on Wednesday. - Reuters

The Netherlands warned on Wednesday militants returning from Syria posed a security threat to Europe and said two Dutch citizens had carried out suicide attacks in Syria and Iraq in the past six months and about 100 had fought in Syria in 2013. - Reuters

Syria declared on Wednesday that it was looking ahead to the dismantling of the international mission overseeing the destruction of the conflict-torn country's chemical arsenal, though Western officials said they want the team to keep

working. - Reuters

Three men have been charged in a conspiracy to export chemical laboratory equipment from the United States to Syria, according to an unsealed indictment released on Wednesday by the U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Pennsylvania. - Reuters

A Syrian lawmaker has nominated himself for president, state media said on Wednesday, the first candidate in an election likely to cement President Bashar al-Assad's rule over a country devastated by civil war. - Reuters

North Africa

The Egyptian military is expected to receive delivery of 10 AH-64D Block II Apache Longbow helicopters within the coming two weeks, according to Egyptian military sources. – Defense News

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, the most senior U.S. official to visit Libya since a deadly 2012 attack on a U.S. compound there, said on Thursday Libya was facing a severe challenge from an increase in extremist violence. - Reuters

A U.S.-drafted resolution that would renew the U.N. peacekeeping mission in disputed Western Sahara urges all sides to respect human rights but does not ask the United Nations to monitor abuses, according to a text obtained by Reuters on Wednesday. - Reuters

Eric Trager writes: on the eve of Egypt's second presidential election in two years, Egyptian politics are already disastrous – and also a bigger disaster waiting to happen. Given the existential stakes for every political player, Washington's well-intentioned push for greater political inclusiveness has no shot of success right now. The current regime views efforts to encourage democracy as an underhanded conspiracy to hasten Sisi's demise. Meanwhile, the Muslim Brotherhood and its supporters believe that Washington conspired to remove Morsi and thus view American human rights concerns as disingenuous. – Foreign Policy

Roula Khalaf writes: Mr Sisi's election might be a tragedy for Egypt but, sadly, it is not a joke. At stake is the legitimisation of the nation's new authoritarianism, which will also pave the way for sceptical western governments to normalise relations with Cairo. – Financial Times

Arabian Peninsula

The killing of dozens of people in co-ordinated attacks apparently aimed at denting the capabilities of Yemen's al-Qaeda franchise, has been greeted as a counter-terrorism success by the country's government. But they have failed to convince ordinary Yemenis that the increasingly deadly conflict with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) can be won. – Financial Times

A senior member of Saudi Arabia's royal family said on Wednesday that Gulf states should work on acquiring nuclear know-how to balance any threat from Iran. - Reuters

Bahrain expelled a prominent Shi'ite religious figure on Wednesday, accusing him of acting as a representative of influential Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani without permission. - Reuters

Iraq

Ahmed Ali writes: Maliki's ambition entails forming a government in which he becomes more dominant, with fewer players in the cabinet, and an opposition that is functionally outside the government. On one hand, the prospect of a real political opposition may energize Iraq's political scene. However, the opportunity to form a political opposition in the presence of majoritarian rule and in the context of an urgent security demand is not clear. The development of a sect-based opposition is more likely, which will instead inflame tensions rather than provide a constructive outlet. – Institute for the Study of War

Israel

The faltering Middle East peace process was thrown into further jeopardy on Wednesday, with Israel and the United States harshly condemning a new deal announced by feuding Palestinian factions, including the militant group Hamas, to repair their seven-year rift. – New York Times

Be all you can be. That's the message that Israel's army says it wants to send to Christian Arabs as it tries to actively recruit them to volunteer for military service for the first time... That marks a shift because even though Israel's army is known for its role as a social melting pot for those subject to a compulsory draft, the country's one-fifth Arab minority has been left on the sidelines as the state by-and-large doesn't require them to serve. – WSJ's Middle East Real Time

A top Hamas official said that the newly announced Palestinian unity government “will not recognize ‘Israel’ and will not give up the resistance,” throwing into jeopardy the new ruling government’s access to U.S. assistance and other measures. – Washington Free Beacon

The United States would have to reconsider its assistance to the Palestinians if Islamist group Hamas and the Palestinian Liberation Organization form a government together, a senior U.S. administration official said on Thursday. – Reuters

Turkey

For the first time, the Turkish government offered condolences on Wednesday to the descendants of Armenians who were killed by the Ottoman Army in 1915. But it stood by its official position that the events were not a genocide, as they have been called by several Western governments and international organizations. – New York Times

[Return to Top](#)

Asia

Afghanistan

He was America’s ally, a stocky, gray-haired warlord who fought on horseback alongside U.S. Special Forces to overthrow the Taliban government in 2001. But within three years, Gen. Abdurrashid Dostum had so antagonized U.S. officials that they sent a B-1 bomber to buzz his house. Now, after several years out of the spotlight, Dostum may again assume a central role in Afghan politics – Washington Post

The Afghan government sent heavy reinforcements to the country’s north after a deadly clash with a militia, reflecting the growing dangers of what residents and Western officials say is a clandestine weapons buildup by local warlords. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Three American medical staff members died when an Afghan security official opened fire Thursday at an American-run Christian hospital in Kabul in the latest violence targeting foreigners in Afghanistan. – Washington Post

Afghanistan is not a country known for its aeronautical industry, but at least one top-ranking US official believes that could change. “The aviation industry in Afghanistan is an opportunity for that country,” Gen. Mark Welsh, US Air Force chief of staff, said Wednesday. “It’s an industry that could be incredibly successful and meaningful for them in that region, but it hasn’t been robust in the past. Their Air Force will lead that effort, their airmen will lead that effort.” – Defense News

A \$375 million hole in the Afghan budget is threatening public projects and civil servants’ salaries, officials say, putting the aid-dependent economy under stress just as Afghanistan awaits a new leader and foreign troops prepare to go home. – Reuters

As the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan winds down, the White House will soon provide Congress a dossier on about 50 non-Afghan detainees in a U.S. military prison north of Kabul. Their uncertain fate presents sensitive security and legal problems for the Obama administration in an echo of Guantanamo Bay. – Reuters

South Asia

Pakistan has auctioned five next-generation cellphone licenses for \$1.12 billion, officials said Wednesday, in what was seen as a test of the government’s ambitious plan to revive the country’s beleaguered economy. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Pakistani fighter jets pounded suspected militant hideouts near the Afghan border on Thursday in response to a spate of attacks around the country, the army said, in the first aerial operation against Taliban insurgents in two months. – Reuters

India’s opposition Bharatiya Janata Party was set to make gains in two big states in the south and east that began voting on Thursday in the sixth phase of a mammoth general election that could help it build a stable majority in parliament. – Reuters

India’s election, which runs in stages until May 12, may well propel Hindu nationalist leader Narendra Modi to power, a

prospect that has Kashmir's 12.5 million people scrabbling to determine what it would mean for them. - Reuters

China

Beijing won't necessarily observe a new code of conduct for naval encounters when its ships meet foreign ones in disputed areas of the East and South China seas, according to a senior Chinese naval officer involved in negotiations on the subject. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

A court in Shanghai released a Japanese commercial ship from impoundment in eastern China on Thursday, after the ship's owner paid a civil compensation claim dating back to the wartime invasion that remains a source of bitterness in China. – New York Times

Chinese state security agents have detained two labor activists amid one of the country's largest ever worker strikes, according to reports. – Washington Free Beacon

China's defense ministry said on Thursday it will continue military patrols in waters near a tropical Japanese island close to Taiwan, days after Tokyo announced it would break ground on a new radar base in the area. - Reuters

China has banned petitioners from taking their grievances directly to higher levels of government without first going through local authorities, state media reported on Thursday, in the latest effort to streamline its chaotic petitioning system. - Reuters

China's navy commissioned 17 new warships last year, the most of any nation. In a little more than a decade, it's expected to have three aircraft carriers, giving it more clout than ever in a region of contested seas and festering territorial disputes....While Beijing still lags far behind the U.S. in both funding and technology, its spending boom is attracting new scrutiny at a time of severe cuts in U.S. defense budgets that have some questioning Washington's commitments to its Asian allies, including some who have lingering disputes with China. – Associated Press

Bill Gertz writes: Beijing's rulers are beginning to follow through on their main strategic goal: driving the United States military out of Asia and forcing all the states in the region to bow to Beijing's wishes. China is among several important foreign powers that have come to recognize that the Obama administration's behavior has opened new possibilities for them—possibilities that are creating new and unprecedented threats to the United States and the world. – Commentary Magazine

Japan

President Obama offered a security blanket to a staunch Asian ally on Thursday, declaring on a visit here that the United States is obligated by a defense treaty to protect Japan in its confrontation with China over a clump of islands in the East China Sea. – New York Times

The U.S. and Japan failed to reach a trade agreement before President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met Thursday, but the two sides were negotiating into the night in an attempt to reach a deal before Mr. Obama left Tokyo Friday morning. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

President Obama met Thursday with three relatives of Japanese citizens who were abducted by North Korea, a White House official confirmed, a move that underscored growing international concern over how to handle that regime's human rights abuses. – Washington Post's Post Politics

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Thursday that he will continue to explain his visit to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine for war dead to gain understanding from neighboring Asian countries. - Reuters

The governor of the Japanese capital Tokyo said on Thursday there was "great significance" in his visit to the Chinese capital and the trip could be a step toward repairing strained bilateral ties. - Reuters

East Asia

A recent flurry of diplomatic maneuvering by Washington underscores just how desperate the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama is to mend the frayed ties between Japan and South Korea. – Nikkei Asian Review

Interview: Following is a transcript of a written interview with President Obama conducted by the Yomiuri Shimbun. The White House provided the newspaper with Obama's answers on Monday, in advance of the president's trip to Asia. – Washington Post

Michael Green writes: The bottom line is that the United States is not going to resolve the underlying dispute over the islands, which is about the future structure of power and order in the Western Pacific and not just fish, gas or

nationalism. Though nowhere near as brazen as President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in the Ukraine, China is testing the durability of the American-backed status quo and United States alliances in Asia. This line of thinking in Beijing about the region will not disappear overnight, but if the United States is credibly engaged with allies and partners to dissuade any use of coercion, there will be room for confidence-building measures that reduce tensions and buy time for later diplomatic resolutions. – New York Times

Will Inboden writes: The premise of the Asia pivot assumes that one region of the world can be hermetically sealed off from other regions. Yes, the United States should be devoting more diplomatic, economic, and military resources and attention to Asia, but not while simultaneously neglecting other strategic regions. Asian leaders welcome an increased American posture in their region – but they also observe carefully what the United States does or does not do in the Middle East and western Eurasia, and calculate accordingly. – Foreign Policy's Shadow Government

Joseph Bosco writes: It is better for China to understand that now rather than later by heeding the message Congress sent recently. The administration can reinforce that message, and eliminate dangerous ambiguity, by finally moving ahead on a stalled submarine program for Taiwan and by selling it the advanced F-16s it needs for self-defense. Those actions would meet the letter and spirit of the venerable Taiwan Relations Act and help ensure the regional peace and stability it was intended to serve. – The National Interest

Dustin Walker writes: If President Obama wants to make the rebalance a success, the president could send a powerful message by addressing the American people and their representatives from Asian soil. He could indicate his intention to actively pursue a package of spending reforms to replace the sequestration cuts that are undermining confidence in America's security commitments to the friends and allies we are pledged to protect. – The National Interest

Southeast Asia

A Thai court said Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra has until early May to defend her cabinet's 2011 decision to remove the country's top security adviser from his post. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Both sides in Thailand's political crisis must back down from a "showdown in May" that many fear will turn violent and inflict deep damage on the country's economy and reputation, the main opposition party leader has urged. – Financial Times

Kurt Campbell writes: Malaysia itself has lost something in the complex aftermath of the disappearance of MH370. The nation will require steady leadership and strong friends to recover both the aircraft and its own sense of purpose. – Financial Times

Australia

In a \$11.6 billion deal, Australia is ordering 58 more F-35 fighter jets built by Lockheed Martin, increasing the total fleet to 72, Prime Minister Tony Abbott said Wednesday. – New York Times

Trans-Pacific Partnership

Editorial: Maybe Mr. Obama will manage to rescue TPP this week, but the quickest way to get talks moving again is to push aggressively for fast-track trade approval when he gets home. America's partners are waiting for a sign that Washington is still on board. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Alexander Benard and Paul J. Leaf write: The TPP is the economic linchpin of President Obama's Asia pivot, and with good reason. It creates a free-trade zone in the Asia-Pacific region that rivals China in size, thereby presenting countries like Taiwan with an alternative export market. Furthermore, it uses a commercial mechanism to restore confidence in America's commitment to the region when such confidence has been shaken. The United States should move swiftly to conclude the TPP and then work towards including Taiwan. – The National Interest

[Return to Top](#)

Security

Defense

Unmanned Carrier Launched Airborne Surveillance and Strike (UCLASS) system is just what it sounds like: "Top Gun" for drones. The U.S. Navy issued a "restricted" draft request for proposals for the carrier-based drone on April 17 and has already narrowed down the field of companies vying for chance to work on the project. – Washington Times

Rep. Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) is preparing to unveil his last defense bill as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee next week, kicking off what is sure to be a contentious process as lawmakers decide what capabilities the Pentagon will keep during a time of defense budget cuts. – DEFCON Hill

The U.S. Air Force's top officer defended the service's plan to retire the A-10 attack plane, even as lawmakers continue to voice opposition to the idea. – DOD Buzz

The Army on Tuesday denied it will have to force anyone out of its service in the coming years, amidst reports it would have to issue reductions in force to thousands of officers. – Defense One

KC-46A Pegasus crews will train at Altus Air Force Base, Okla., when the tanker begins to enter the fleet in fiscal 2016, the Air Force announced Wednesday. – Defense News

The Air Force will scrutinize its units that fly dozens of bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons across the globe, the latest aftershock of an embarrassing cheating scandal in its nuclear missile force that led to the unprecedented removal of nine commanders from their jobs and the resignation of a 10th in March. – Foreign Policy

Congressional investigators said the Defense Department was right to skip a competitive process for planned updates to B-2 strategic bombers. – Global Security Newswire

The U-2 spy plane outlasted the Cold War, outlived its successor and proved crucial a half-century ago when two superpowers were on the brink of nuclear war. But U.S. defense cuts now threaten to knock the high-flying reconnaissance aircraft out of the sky. – Associated Press

Missile Defense

Four years ago, the Obama administration scrapped plans to install advanced missile defense systems in Poland and the Czech Republic that were seen as part of its efforts to reset relations with Russia. Today, with ties between Washington and Moscow at their lowest point in decades, the question is whether the White House should move new anti-missile equipment to Eastern Europe to reassure jittery allies and stick a finger in the eye of Russian President Vladimir Putin. – Foreign Policy's The Complex

Intelligence

The nation's top national security agencies are failing to properly report instances of misconduct by independent contractors, many of whom hold top-secret security clearances, according to a new report by the Defense Department's Inspector General – Washington Free Beacon

Editorial: It is unfortunate that Mr. Clapper's directive works in the opposite direction of what is needed. After the Edward Snowden affair, the intelligence community needs to build trust in its work, which is vital to the nation. Instead, the new directive will lead to more isolation and suspicion. – Washington Post

Cybersecurity

An informant working for the F.B.I. coordinated a 2012 campaign of hundreds of cyberattacks on foreign websites, including some operated by the governments of Iran, Syria, Brazil and Pakistan, according to documents and interviews with people involved in the attacks. – New York Times

In this internet age, as more devices are hooked up online, so they become more vulnerable to attack. As industries like maritime and energy connect ships, containers and rigs to computer networks, they expose weaknesses that hackers can exploit. – Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Americas

United States of America

Hillary Clinton reiterated Wednesday that her darkest time as secretary of state was the deadly 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya. – WSJ's Washington Wire

Latin America

Residents of this capital city may feel as if they are suffering political whiplash after President Juan Manuel Santos on Wednesday reinstated the mayor that he had removed from office only a month earlier. – New York Times

A Senate panel in Mexico proposed late Tuesday modifications to key aspects of a telecom bill presented by President Enrique Peña Nieto, after some opposition leaders and Internet activists argued that the proposal gives disproportionate powers to the government to control TV content and Internet access. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Wednesday he is exploring ways to deepen U.S.-Mexican defense ties, including the possibility of training exercises with Mexican forces. – Associated Press

Luis Fleischman writes: Without pressure the Venezuelan government is unlikely to concede. Giving a blank check to a dialogue that is already going through a bumpy process would be a huge mistake and would only perpetuate the problem. – The Americas Report

[Return to Top](#)

Africa

South Sudan

Fierce clashes erupted in South Sudan on Wednesday as rebels sought to seize control of oil-rich areas, two days after U.N. officials accused them of killing hundreds of civilians in ethnically motivated attacks. – Washington Post

U.N. Security Council members are considering sanctions on South Sudan's warring parties, envoys said on Wednesday, after U.N. peacekeeping chief Herve Ladsous demanded "serious consequences" be imposed to force an end to the violence. – Reuters

Central African Republic

Russia and China have blocked a proposal by the United States and France to impose U.N. sanctions on Central African Republic's former President Francois Bozize and two other people linked to the conflict there, diplomats told Reuters on Wednesday. – Reuters

South Africa

[A]s head of the A.N.C., founded almost 102 years ago to fight for majority rights, Mr. Zuma draws enormous loyalty and political benefits. There are few if any political analysts who expect anything but a victory for him and the party in the election, in which the government faces an increasingly splintered opposition. Still, many also expect that once Mr. Zuma is re-elected — possibly with a lower margin than the A.N.C. is accustomed to — the party will be forced into realignments reflecting a new era. – New York Times

The country's ruling African National Congress is expected to win national elections in May, but public frustration is growing over widening income disparity and the government's perceived inability to address the issue. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

South Africa, surpassed by Nigeria this month as the continent's biggest economy, is holding back sub-Saharan Africa's overall growth, the International Monetary Fund said Thursday in a report. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Yawning deficits and labor turmoil have made South Africa's economy vulnerable to capital flight as investors pull back from risky markets, the country's central bank said Thursday. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

[Return to Top](#)

Obama Administration

Richard Gowan writes: If Power is to be an effective voice for the administration on grand strategic issues, she needs to ensure that these “lesser” crises don’t undermine both the organization and her own political and moral standing. That may mean more nitty-gritty work on technical policy areas like peacekeeping, mediation and post-conflict reconstruction. If Power can balance these tasks, she may re-establish the U.N.’s status as a strategic tool for the United States – or at least prevent it from sliding into even deeper irrelevance. – Politico

[Return to Top](#)

Ideas

Former U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair said: This is not a conventional war...It is a battle about belief and about modernity. It is important because the world through technology and globalisation is pushing us together across boundaries of faith and culture. Unaddressed, the likelihood of conflict increases. Engagement does not always mean military involvement. Commitment does not mean going it alone. But it does mean stirring ourselves. It does mean seeing the struggle for what it is. It does mean taking a side and sticking with it. – Office of Tony Blair

Cathy Young writes: [W]hile the United States and the other capitalist liberal democracies may be very far from either the libertarian ideal of freedom or the progressive ideal of social justice, the unvarnished truth is that it’s only within this loosely knit global community — the “global liberal hegemony” deplored by far-left and far-right radicals — that these ideals have any chance to survive and develop. A world in which these values are on the ascendancy rather than in retreat is very much a part of our national interest. – Time

David Adesnik writes: [I]t is not clear whether a president incapable of enforcing his own “red lines” has the fortitude necessary to execute a true policy of containment. In the quarter century since the end of the Cold War, memories of containment have faded, resulting in kinder, gentler recollections of a grand strategy that consumed vast resources and generated perennial controversies. – Washington Free Beacon

[Return to Top](#)

Events

Getting it right: A better strategy to defeat al Qaeda
American Enterprise Institute
April 24

Protecting American Interests in the South China Sea
Heritage Foundation
April 24

South Asia’s Elections and Governance: Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India
Brookings Institution
April 24

How China’s Youth are Transforming Chinese Society
Brookings Institution
April 24

Will Indonesia’s Election Results Complicate Its Future?
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
April 24

Engage or Contain? Future Policy Toward Russia Trilaterally Considered
Center for Strategic and International Studies
April 24

Stolen Heritage: Cultural Racketeering in Egypt

Middle East Institute
April 24

Ethnic and Religious Tolerance in Myanmar
Stimson Center
April 24

Building U.S.-China Trust: Through Next Generation People, Platform & Programs
Wilson Center
April 24

U.S.-Japan Cooperation in Southeast Asia
Heritage Foundation
April 25

Partnerships, Corporate Social Responsibility and the New Development Agenda
Brookings Institution
April 25

Benghazi, Ukraine, and Beyond: Applying American Power in the 21st Century
Atlantic Council
April 25

Islamists in Government: Do They Moderate Once in Power?
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
April 25

Democratization and Authoritarianism in the Arab World
National Endowment for Democracy
April 25

China's Roles in the World
United States Institute of Peace
April 25

South Asia's Nuclear Competition in the New Era of Extremism, Militancy and Terrorism
Wilson Center
April 25

A Journey to the Dark Heart of Nameless Unspeakable Evil
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
April 25

FPI Conference Call: Iraq After the April 30th General Election
Foreign Policy Initiative
April 28

How Might U.S. Defense Policy Change in the Years Ahead?
Brookings Institution
April 28

Preparing for Deep Cuts: Options for Enhancing Euro-Atlantic and International Security
Brookings Institution
April 28

Turkey's Energy Security Calculus: Aspirations and Realities

Brookings Institution
April 28

India's Post-Election Foreign Policy
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
April 28

The Flight MAP: The Marine Aviation Plan Through 2040
Center for Strategic and International Studies
April 28

American Energy Prowess in a Strategic Foreign Policy Perspective
Atlantic Council
April 28

Stolen Heritage: Cultural Racketeering in Egypt
Middle East Institute
April 28

The Maidan, Crimea, and the East: Evolving Human Rights Challenges in Ukraine
Open Society Foundations
April 28

A Journey to the Dark Heart of Nameless Unspeakable Evil
Center for American Progress
April 28

Gorbachev's Adaptation, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold War
Wilson Center
April 28

Crisis in Ukraine: A Discussion
Alexander Hamilton Society
April 28

After Karzai: Assessing the Afghan Elections and Future of the U.S.-Afghan Relationship
Foreign Policy Initiative
April 29

National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force
Senate Armed Services Committee
April 29

U.S.-Russia Nuclear Arms Negotiations: Ukraine and Beyond
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Europe and Eurasia and Terrorism and Nonproliferation Subcommittees
April 29

The Administration's FY 2015 MENA Budget Request: Priorities, Objectives and Challenges
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee
April 29

Effective Accountability: Tier Rankings in the Fight Against Human Trafficking
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee

April 29

Confronting Transnational Drug Smuggling: An Assessment of Regional Partnerships
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Western Hemisphere Subcommittee
April 29

Stakeholder Assessments of the National Preparedness Grant Program Proposal
House Homeland Security Committee
Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications Subcommittee
April 29

A Discussion with the Ambassadors of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine
Brookings Institution
April 29

Reimagining India: What's at Stake in the World's Largest Democracy?
Brookings Institution
April 29

The Army Moving Forward: A Discussion with General David G. Perkins
Center for Strategic and International Studies
April 29

Toward A Europe Whole and Free
Atlantic Council
April 29-30

Israel vs. al-Qaeda: Emerging Challenges on Two Fronts
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
April 29

The Future of the Russian-American Security Dialogue after the Ukrainian Crisis
Wilson Center
April 29

New Thinking on the Origins of World War I
Foreign Policy Research Institute
April 29

Ethnonationalist Conflict in Postcommunist States
Wilson Center
April 29

Reform of the Defense Acquisition System
Senate Armed Services Committee
April 30

Assessing U.S. Foreign Assistance Priorities in South Asia
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee
April 30

Point of attack: Preventive war, international law, and global welfare
American Enterprise Institute, Federalist Society
April 30

Japan's New Security Policy and Capabilities
Sasakawa Peace Foundation
April 30

Understanding New Political and Economic Dynamics in Southeast Europe
Center for Strategic and International Studies
April 30

Captains of Industry Series with Thomas Enders, CEO, Airbus Group
Atlantic Council
April 30

A Discussion on the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
April 30

Escalating tensions: Is Northeast Asia headed toward war on the high seas?
American Enterprise Institute
May 1

The Middle East in Transition: Allies, Adversaries, and Enemies
Foundation for Defense of Democracies
May 1

20 Years After the Rwandan Genocide: Have We Learned Our Lesson?
McCain Institute
May 1

100 Years Later: Lessons from World War I
Heritage Foundation
May 1

Understanding Islamic Parties, Political Violence, and Extremism in Pakistan
Heritage Foundation
May 1

Turkey and the Transformation of the Global Political and Economic Landscape
Brookings Institution
May 1

The Aftermath of the European Crisis: Where Are We Now?
Brookings Institution
May 1

Where Next for Japan's Economic Revitalization?
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
May 1

A Transatlantic Pivot to Asia, featuring H.E. Frans Timmermans, Foreign Minister of the Netherlands
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 1

The Banyan Tree Leadership Forum with Jejomar Binay, Vice President of the Philippines
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 1

Sustaining Strong Defense Posture in the Era of Austere Budgets
Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments
May 1

Freedom of the Press 2014
Freedom House
May 1

America, the Taliban, and the War through Afghan Eyes
New America Foundation
May 1

Reporting in Pakistan
New America Foundation
May 1

The Social Cost of the Uzbek Cotton Industry
Open Society Foundations
May 1

The Political Origins of Economic Reform in Pakistan
Wilson Center
May 1

The OneVoice Movement: Toward a Two-State Solution
Wilson Center
May 1

Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God
The Institute of World Politics
May 1

The BJP Regime 1998-2004: Looking Back, Looking Ahead
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 2

Twin Challenges to Peace and Stability in Africa and to U.S. Policy: Boko Haram in Nigeria and Civil Conflict in South Sudan
Wilson Center
May 2

U.S. Air Force Engagement in Asia-Pacific
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 5

Libya's Post-Qaddafi Fissures
Atlantic Council
May 5

The Energy, Water, & Food Nexus: Risks and Opportunities for the Private Sector
Atlantic Council
May 5

Magnificent Delusions: A Book Discussion and Signing with Amb. Husain Haqqani
Middle East Institute

May 5

A Democracy with a "Partly Free" Media
New America Foundation
New York City
May 5

U.S. Army Intelligence and the Defense of Europe, 1944-1949
Wilson Center
May 5

Military Compensation
Senate Armed Services Committee
May 6

NATO and the Ukraine Crisis
Atlantic Council
May 6

Policy Priorities for India's New Government
Atlantic Council
May 6

Strategic Challenges and Engagement in Africa Today
The Institute of World Politics
May 6

The Future of the US-Taiwan Relationship
Atlantic Council
May 7

Perception and Military Doctrine in South Asia
Stimson Center
May 7

Reagan at Reykjavik: The Weekend That Ended the Cold War
Heritage Foundation
May 8

China's Oil Future: Balancing Economic, Geopolitical, and Environmental Concerns
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
May 8

The Future of FATA: Practical Solutions
Atlantic Council
May 8

The United States, Trade Remedy, and the WTO: What's Next?
Wilson Center
May 8

Data and Goliath: How the Internet Affects Power, and How Power Affects the Internet
The Institute of World Politics
May 8

Strategic Reassurance and Resolve: U.S.-China Relations in the Twenty-First Century

Brookings Institution
May 12

35 Years Later: Assessing the Effectiveness of the Taiwan Relations Act
Center for Strategic and International Studies
May 12

Pakistan's Bilateral and Regional Trade Priorities
Atlantic Council
May 13

Disrupting Defense: Dynamic Security in an Age of New Technologies
Atlantic Council
May 14

A Conversation with John F. Sopko, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction
Middle East Institute
May 14

AFA Breakfast Series
Air Force Association
May 15

Will the Lights Go Out? Implications of a Venezuelan Market Downturn
Atlantic Council
May 15

Junior Military Officer Panel - Junior Officer Perspectives on National Security
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
May 15

The International Human Rights System: A Missed Opportunity?
Freedom House and Freedom Rights Project
May 19

FDR, the Jews, and the Holocaust: Resolving the Controversy
Wilson Center
May 19

Subcommittee Markups for FY 2015
Senate Armed Services Committee
May 20

A Time to Attack: The Looming Iranian Nuclear Threat
Heritage Foundation
May 20

Exploring New Frontiers in Peacebuilding
United States Institute of Peace
May 21

The Good Spy: The Life and Death of Robert Ames
Wilson Center
May 22

Voices From Japan National Security Speaker Series

Stimson Center
June 3

CNAS Eighth Annual National Security Conference
Center for a New American Security
June 11

The Many Faces of Tyranny: Why Democracy Isn't Always Possible
Heritage Foundation
June 12

Envisioning a Competitive U.S.-Mexico Border
Wilson Center
June 12

War with China: How Would it be Fought and Could it be Prevented?
Alexander Hamilton Society
November 24

2014 FPI Forum
Foreign Policy Initiative
December 3

[Return to Top](#)

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11 Dupont Circle, NW Suite 325
Washington, D.C. 20036

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Cc: undi-sclosed <undi-sclosed@usa.net>
Subject: "It's Just Not Good Enough to be Prime Minister of AIPAC" -- Marc Ginsberg in Huffington Post

RELEASE IN FULL

Marc Ginsberg

Fmr. U.S. Ambassador to Morocco & White House Middle East Adviser & CEO of Peaceworks Foundation/One Voice Movement

THE HUFFINGTON POST

It's Just Not Good Enough to Be Prime Minister of AIPAC

Posted: 03/05/2014 2:24 pm EST Updated: 03/05/2014 3:59 pm EST

Noted *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman once remarked that it is far more important what Arab leaders say to their people in Arabic than what they tell Americans in English. That adage also applies to Israeli leaders, including Benjamin Netanyahu, whose speech yesterday before the National Policy Conference of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee wowed the fretful faithful, but represented no Sister Soldjah moment break with his darker anti-peace agenda.

Netanyahu in English is not the same Netanyahu in Hebrew.

In his AIPAC speech, the prime minister went to great lengths extolling the virtues of peace with the Palestinians and Arab nations "...peace is Israel's highest aspiration...and I'm prepared to make a historic peace with our Palestinian neighbors."

Halleluiah!

Netanyahu enchantingly exalted his audience to share his vision of a durable peace that would open up ties with Arab states and turn them into "...thriving relationships." He extolled how a great new union between Israel and Gulf states, what with Israeli innovation and Gulf entrepreneurship would "...catapult the entire region forward!"

Bibi's rhetorical wings soared ever higher across the cavernous Washington Convention Center as he embraced a Middle East that would solve its water and energy problems if a lasting peace emerged. "We could better the lives of hundreds of millions... So we all have so much to gain from peace."

Was that Peter Pan taking us on a voyage to Neverland, or a courageous, empowered leader finally embracing compromise to deliver a comprehensive two state solution -- willing to fight tooth and nail for it back in Israel to become his nation's transformative leader?

Well, first of all, those words have never been delivered in Hebrew by Mr. Netanyahu. And preparing Israelis for the sacrifices necessary to reach the Middle East promised land Bibi artfully portrayed before AIPAC has not been part of Mr. Netanyahu's Hebrew lexicon, so what is one to believe -- empty rhetoric or setting the peace table?

It's a constant guessing game. But it wasn't too long before Mr. Netanyahu quickly transformed his Middle East oasis into a mirage.

Having lifted kindred spirits about the comforting possibilities of peace, Netanyahu pivoted 180 degrees, defiantly asserting that what is standing between this new Middle East is the Palestinian leadership -- a Palestinian leadership he accused of refusing to recognize Israel as a Jewish state; a Palestinian leadership which, he warned, will flood Israel with Palestinian refugees, and a Palestinian leadership which wants to "amputate" (his word) parts of the Negev and Galilee from Israel.

That was the recalcitrant Bibi we have come to know all too well -- the brooding self-declared preserver of Israel's security at any cost -- even at the cost of delivering to Israelis that city on the hill whose vision he had just laid out for Israel in English at AIPAC.

I challenge Mr. Netanyahu to deliver the same AIPAC speech in Hebrew before Israel's Knesset - word for word.

Would it really matter to Mr. Kerry's chances of success if Prime Minister Netanyahu delivered that speech to Israelis? Certainly! It would inaugurate the long overdue debate that Netanyahu has steadfastly avoided taking to Israel's electorate ever since Mr. Kerry began his quest. And time is running out on Bibi to control the theatrics... the show is going to go on whether he likes it or not.

At what point in time is Mr. Netanyahu going to end his rhetorical *ropa dopa* -- on the one hand claiming to want a diplomatic solution, yet kow-towing to the equivalent of his own tea party equivalent, rewarding it with hush money to fund new West Bank settlements and promising never to give up one inch of Jerusalem?

Netanyahu knows (and we have already heard it stated publicly from Palestinian President Abbas) that the Palestinians have no intention of flooding Israel with Palestinian refugees; that the Palestinian leader has proposed thoughtful solutions to Israel's security concerns in the Jordan River valley, and only those imputing the worst motives against the Palestinian leadership would use this red herring of a demand to recognize Israel as a Jewish state as the reason to walk away from a peace treaty that would require the Palestinians to execute an end of conflict treaty fully recognizing Israel as the Jewish state of Israel on the dotted line.

Mr. Kerry's framework proposals are supposed to be unveiled no later than April 29, then the ultimate test of intentions will commence and let's be clear, neither the Palestinians or the Israelis are arriving at this decisive point with clean hands, enthusiasm, or magnanimity.

Reports out of Ramallah indicate that Mr. Abbas told Mr. Kerry that he will not agree to continue negotiations until the end of 2014 once the framework proposals are unveiled unless there is a settlement freeze and more prisoner releases. The Palestinian leader also asserted to visiting Israeli political leaders that the framework must offer a solution, be based on 1967 borders, and permit a quota of Palestinian refugees to be resettled in Israel. And too many Palestinian officials continue to turn a blind eye to corroborated Israeli accusations that anti-Israeli incitement continues unabated and callously blow off Bibi's demand that Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish state -- a demand that resonates, however unfairly motivated by Netanyahu, with vast swaths of the Israeli public. President Abbas stated he will wait till his March 17 Washington meeting with President Obama before making a final judgment whether to continue or walk away.

Secretary of State Kerry has unsparingly and at great personal sacrifice, invested considerable American prestige getting to this latest Middle East diplomatic fork in the road. Ironically, the all-too-familiar "final status" issues (refugees, borders, Jerusalem, right of return, mutual recognition, end of conflict) appear closer to compromise than the historically charged demand by Mr. Netanyahu that Mr. Abbas immediately recognize Israel as a Jewish state. The more Bibi demands this of Mr. Abbas, the more Abbas resists doing so, asserting that to make such a public declaration would jeopardize the rights of Israel's Palestinian minority.

Just to be clear, the demand is a relatively new one for an Israeli leader to assert, but it is also odd for Palestinians to resist what seems obviously and eminently reasonable reality on the unusual pretext that they suddenly sees

themselves as protectors of Israel's Arab minority -- a minority they have ignored for decades.

As my good friend, Aaron David Miller, one of the most respected Middle East experts around asserted in *Foreign Policy* today, Israeli-Palestinian peace has been a trap for Bibi to avoid at all costs and never an opportunity to embrace. But Netanyahu has signaled that he will not reject Kerry's framework -- whatever that portends for Mr. Kerry's efforts during the coming months.

In the final analysis what *both* Abbas and Netanyahu say to their respective populations in their own languages will ultimately determine the fate of Mr. Kerry's investment and the future vision of the two state solution enterprise. If this promising effort falters, neither Mr. Netanyahu nor Mr. Abbas will be able to avoid the blame -- whether in English, Hebrew, or Arabic.

Follow Amb. Marc Ginsberg on Twitter: www.twitter.com/@ambmcg

RELEASE IN FULL

**322 4th Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002
April 22, 2014**

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express our serious concern about the FY 2015 budget request for vital nuclear material security and nonproliferation programs. These cuts are difficult to understand since the danger of nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists remains high.

In your closing remarks last month at the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit in the Netherlands, you rightly stated that despite the progress made over the past four years, "it is important for us not to relax, but rather accelerate our efforts... [and] sustain momentum." The FY 2015 budget request is out of sync with these objectives.

We urge you to work with Congress to significantly increase funding for core nuclear security activities during the FY 2015 authorization and appropriations process.

We applaud your leadership in spearheading an accelerated international effort to enhance the security of nuclear and radiological materials. Significant progress has been made safeguarding nuclear materials and through the nuclear security summit process. Thirteen countries eliminated all the highly enriched uranium (HEU) or separated plutonium on their soil. All of the locations in non-nuclear-weapon states where there was enough high-quality HEU for the simplest type of terrorist nuclear bomb were either eliminated or had significant security improvements.

Despite these noteworthy achievements, significant work remains to be done. There are still hundreds of sites spread across 30 countries that have weapons-usable nuclear material. Over 120 research and isotope production reactors around the world still use HEU for fuel or targets. Many of these locations have very modest or insufficient security measures.

The FY 2015 budget request for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) reduces funding for the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) and the International Nuclear Materials Protection Program (IMPC) by 25% and 27%, respectively. This is the third year in a row of budget cuts to these core nonproliferation programs. The fiscal 2015 request is nearly \$1 billion less for GTRI and the IMPC programs than the funding level projected by your administration three years ago. In addition, the request for the Pentagon slashes funding for the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (CTR) by 27%.

Reducing funding for these programs increases the amount of time it will take to secure or eliminate dangerous materials that could be used by terrorists in an improvised nuclear explosive device or a dirty bomb.

For example, the NNSA request delays the goal of converting or shutting down a total of 200 research reactors that still use HEU by an additional five years to 2035. The previous end date to secure 8,500 buildings with radioactive material has already been delayed to 2044 and now may be further postponed. The construction of fixed site radiation detectors under the second line of defense program will be reduced from 25 to 15 and work in the Middle East and Africa is not moving forward. Programs to improve the nuclear accounting, control, and security culture in Russia are reduced "to fund other NNSA priorities." Other previously planned work in the removal of nuclear and radiological material will be "deferred to future years."

In testimony before the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee in April, Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz expressed his "disappointment" with the cuts to nonproliferation and attributed them to the tough budget environment and the decision to prioritize NNSA's nuclear weapons programs.

We understand that the budget environment is difficult. We also understand that some major projects funded in previous years have been completed. Moreover, Moscow's unwillingness to renew the old CTR umbrella agreement has reduced the amount of work we can do in Russia.

However, the FY 2015 budget request signals a major retreat in the effort to secure nuclear and radiological materials. Nonproliferation programs must be a top priority and their work is too important to be a bill payer for other activities.

We encourage you to work with Congress to ensure that these programs have the resources they need to secure nuclear and radiological materials as quickly as possible.

Sincerely (*organizations listed for identification purposes only*)*,

John Adams, Brig General (USA Ret.)
Guardians Six Consulting LLC

Bruce Amundson, MD
Washington Physicians for Social
Responsibility

Kennette Benedict
Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

Peter Bergel
Oregon PeaceWorks

Kim Bergier
Co-coordinator Michigan Stop The
Nuclear Bombs Campaign

Harry C. Blaney III
Center for international Policy

Barry M. Blechman
Stimson Center

Roger R Blunt, P.E., Major General (USA
Ret.)

Carol Blythe
Alliance of Baptists

Jack Boureston
FirstWatch International

John Bradshaw
National Security Network

Ambassador Kenneth C. Brill
Former Ambassador to the IAEA

Dan Caldwell
Distinguished Professor of Political
Science, Pepperdine University

John Castellaw, Lt. General (USMC Ret.)

Sr. Patricia Chappell
Pax Christi USA

Jay Coghlan
Nuclear Watch New Mexico

Tom Z. Collina
Arms Control Association

David Culp
Friends Committee on National Legislation
(Quakers)

Susan Cundiff
Oregon WAND

Peter Davies
Founding President, InterAction

Chantal de Jonge Oudraat
SIPRI North America

Marie Dennis
Pax Christi International

The Honorable Byron Dorgan
United States Senator (North Dakota)

Ambassador Ralph Earle II
Former Director, Arms Control and
Disarmament Agency

Jenefer Ellington
National Green Party

Erica Fein
Women's Action for New Directions

Charles D. Ferguson, Ph.D.
Federation of American Scientists

The Honorable Donald Fraser
Former Member of Congress (Minnesota)

Ambassador Peter W Galbraith
Former Ambassador to Croatia

Robert G. Gard, Jr., Lt. General (USA,
Ret.)

Richard L. Garwin
National Medal of Science Awardee

Alicia Godsberg
Peace Action, New York State

Debbie Goolsby
President, Arkansas Women's Action for
New Directions

Jean Gordon
Founder, Arkansas Women's Action for
New Directions

Ambassador Thomas Graham Jr.
Former Special Representative of the
President for Arms Control,
NonProliferation and Disarmament

Lisbeth Gronlund
Union of Concerned Scientists

B. Welling Hall
Earlham College

Howard L. Hall
The Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public
Policy, University of Tennessee

Mark W. Harrison
United Methodist General Board of Church
and Society

William D. Hartung
Center for International Policy

Katie Heald
Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Free
World

Ira Helfand, MD
Past President, Physicians for Social
Responsibility

John Holum
Former Undersecretary of State for Arms
Control and International Security

John Isaacs,
Council for a Livable World

Arlen D. Jameson, Lt. General (USAF
Ret.)

Joni Jenkins
Kentucky State Representative

John H. Johns, Brig General (USA Ret.)

Fern Katz
Michigan WAND

David Kay
Potomac Institute for Policy Studies

Catherine M. Kelleher
University of Maryland, College Park

Marylia Kelley
Tri-Valley CAREs (Communities Against a
Radioactive Environment)

The Honorable Mike Kopetski
Former Member of Congress (Oregon)

Don Kraus
GlobalSolutions.org

Ira Lechner
Council for a Livable World

The Honorable Jan M. Lodai
The Atlantic Council of the United States

Ben Loehrke
Ploughshares Fund

Marie Lucey, OSF
Franciscan Action Network

Kenneth Luongo
Partnership for Global Security

Bruce W. MacDonald
Johns Hopkins University, School of
Advanced International Studies

Jenifer Mackby
Former Senior Political Affairs Officer,
United Nations

Paul Kawika Martin
Peace Action

Mary Lou Marzian
Kentucky State Representative

Matthew McKinzie, Ph.D.
Natural Resources Defense Council

Mark Medish
Former Senior Director, National Security
Council and US Treasury Deputy
Assistant Secretary
Gary Milhollin
Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms
Control

JoAnne Mills
Arkansas Women's Action for New
Directions

Thomas C. Moore
Independent consultant

Clark Murdock
Center for Strategic and International
Studies

Tammy Murphy
Project for Nuclear Awareness

Robert K. Musil
The Rachel Carson Council

Dr. Janne E. Nolan
The George Washington University

Robert Nurick
Atlantic Council

Michael O'Hanlon
Senior Fellow at Brookings

Nan Grogan Orrock
Georgia State Senator

Sandy Pappas
MN State Senator & Senate President

Miles Pomper
Monterey Institute for International Studies

Becky Rafter
Georgia WAND

Jon Rainwater
Peace Action West

Diane Randall
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Kingston Reif
Center for Arms Control and Non-
Proliferation

Richard Rhodes
Author

Eric Sapp
American Values Network
Deb Sawyer
Utah Campaign to Abolish Nuclear
Weapons (UCAN)

Lawrence Scheinman
Former Assistant Director,
Nonproliferation and Regional Arms
Control (Arms Control and Disarmament
Agency)

Andrew K. Semmel
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of
State (2003-2007)

Ashish Sinha
Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

William K. Smith, MD
Physicians Against Land Mines

Ambassador Nancy Soderberg
Former US Representative for Special
Political Affairs at the US Mission to UN

David C. Speedie
Carnegie Council for Ethics in
International Affairs

Guy Stevens
PeacePAC

Mimi Stewart
New Mexico House of Representatives

Charleta Tavares
Ohio State Senator

Catherine Thomasson, MD
Physicians for Social Responsibility

Rev. Robert W. Tiller
Retired clergyperson

William Tobey
Belfer Center for Science and International
Affairs, Harvard University

Alexandra Toma
Fissile Materials Working Group

Paul F. Walker, Ph.D.
Green Cross International

Harry Wang, MD
President, Physicians for Social
Responsibility/Sacramento

Gerald F. Warburg
Professor of Public Policy, UVA

Peter Wilk, MD
Physicians for Social Responsibility Maine


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
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FPI Overnight Brief

October 2, 2013

Table of Contents

[Middle East/North Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Security](#), [Russia/Europe](#), [Americas](#), [Africa](#), [Events](#)

Announcements

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The 2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead? will be held on October 22 at the Andrew W. Mellon auditorium in Washington DC. RSVP today.

If you support our mission and work, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to FPI today.

The Must-Reads

- Foreign extremists dominate Syria fight, Qaeda branch pursues own agenda
- Eli Lake: Inside Kerry's Syria diplomacy
- Ross and Maovsky and Coughlin on Iran nuclear negotiations
- Washington Post: Moroccan king backs away from reforms
- US, S. Korea set defense strategy for N. Korean threat
- China testing new space weapons, Fear of US may tempt China to preempt
- Thomas Henriksen: The perilous future of Afghanistan
- Kenyan gov't forces seemed slow to respond during mall siege
- Scott Truver: Why the Navy still needs aircraft carriers

Middle East/North Africa

Iran

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu castigated the U.S. diplomatic outreach to Tehran, telling world leaders Iranian President Hasan Rouhani is a "wolf in sheep's clothing" determined to use a political thaw to advance his country's nuclear program. – Wall Street Journal

Read the text of Prime Minister Netanyahu's address to the United Nations General Assembly – Israeli Prime Minister's Office

Hassan Rowhani, in a conversation secretly taped by an Israeli agent 27 years ago, is heard urging the West to take a

firm stand against the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. – Washington Free Beacon

Jack Dorsey, chairman and cofounder of Twitter, challenged Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on the availability of social media in his country. – The Hill's Twitter Room

Under pressure not to squeeze Iran too hard, the U.S. Senate is unlikely to impose a fresh round of sanctions on the Islamic Republic until after Tehran holds nuclear talks with world powers later this month, lawmakers and congressional aides said. – Reuters

The U.N. atomic watchdog and Iran appeared to make little real headway in talks last week and it is uncertain whether Tehran's more positive attitude will help yield a long-sought breakthrough, diplomats said on Wednesday. – Reuters

Iran's parliament strongly endorsed President Hassan Rouhani's diplomatic bid to dispel mistrust at the United Nations last week during a visit which ended with an historic phone call with President Barack Obama, Iranian media said. – Reuters

Iran is preparing a politically risky increase in domestic fuel prices, trying to lighten the burden of multi-billion dollar subsidies on an economy severely damaged by Western sanctions. – Reuters

Dennis Ross and David Makovsky write: The United States should not be afraid to lift the requisite economic sanctions, if Iran comes through with its part of the bargain. The Iranian position in the talks will make it clear soon enough whether it is sincere about reaching a deal or whether Iran is only willing to make cosmetic adjustments. But in the bid to divine Rouhani's mind, we first have to know our own. – Foreign Policy

Con Coughlin writes: So long as Mr. Shamkhani and Ayatollah Khamenei continue to dominate Iran's national-security establishment, Mr. Rouhani's room for maneuver in future negotiations with the West will be very limited indeed. – Wall Street Journal Europe

Syria

Foreign fighters from across the Arab world and beyond are playing an increasingly dominant role in the battle for control of Syria, which has emerged as an even more powerful magnet for jihadist volunteers than Iraq and Afghanistan were in the past decade. – Washington Post

Fighters from the fastest-growing Qaeda franchise in Syria have repeatedly clashed with other rebel brigades, seizing towns, replacing crosses on churches with black flags and holding classes to teach Syrian children about the importance of battling "infidels," meaning anyone who is not a Sunni Muslim. – New York Times

At least 15 countries have agreed to set up special quotas for fugitives fleeing Syria's civil war, marking a shift in international thinking about how to deal with the world's biggest humanitarian crisis, the head of the United Nations refugee agency said Tuesday. – New York Times

An advance team from the organization charged with destroying Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles arrived in Damascus on Tuesday to begin talks with Syrian officials on how to carry out its difficult and politically charged task, a United Nations official said. – New York Times

The top U.S. military officer took time Tuesday from an official visit aimed at allaying regional concerns about the U.S. commitment to Asia in order to discuss ideas Pentagon officials are mulling for assisting armed forces in Middle Eastern countries such as Lebanon and Jordan, and training moderate opposition forces in Syria. – Washington Times

Syrian President Bashar Assad has the right to decide whether to participate in elections next year, Information Minister Omran Zoubi told reporters in Damascus on Tuesday, insisting that Syrians want him to remain in office. – LA Times' World Now

The civil war in Syria has been raging for two years now, and with the United States backing off a threat to strike the Assad regime over the use of chemical weapons after a United Nations deal was reached to secure the stockpile, it could be years – decades, even – before there is an end to the unrest, warns Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey. – Defense One

"Reasonable" Syrian rebels could take part in prospective peace talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime, Russia's foreign minister said Tuesday. – Associated Press

More than 115,000 people have been killed in Syria's two-and-a-half-year-old civil war, including tens of thousands of soldiers, rebels and civilians, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Tuesday. – Reuters

The United Nations is shifting its aid effort for Syria to prepare for long-term help to neighboring countries to cope with the humanitarian crisis, the head of the U.N. refugee agency UNHCR said on Tuesday. - Reuters

Russia expressed doubt on Tuesday that Western nations can persuade Syrian opposition representatives to take part in an international peace conference in time for it to take place in mid-November. - Reuters

Syria's currency has recovered some of the heavy losses inflicted over two years of civil war and sanctions, helped by a U.S. decision not to pursue military action against Damascus. - Reuters

Eli Lake reports: The Daily Beast has obtained notes of Kerry's meetings with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, that show how the two men worked out the last details of the document Obama hopes will save him from entering Syria's civil war and eliminate the chemical weapons he says the regime used against its own people on August 21. - The Daily Beast

Fouad Ajami writes: Then came the tsunami: the government shutdown. No one recalled the name of that country by the Mediterranean where a war had been raging for nearly three years. Hail Barack Obama, the Houdini of his time. He had made the accumulated American influence of decades vanish before a distracted audience. - Hoover Institution's The Caravan

Egypt

A Coptic Christian activist from Egypt said Tuesday that the Egyptian military has essentially ignored the persecution of the Coptic community as leaders attempt to stabilize a country riven by continued violence. - Washington Free Beacon

A leading Egyptian politician criticized the Obama administration for backing the Muslim Brotherhood and abandoning the Egyptian people. - Washington Free Beacon

Egypt's army chief called on Tuesday for a quick transition to elections in order to restore stability to the country, while supporters of the Islamist president he ousted, Mohamed Mursi, staged daring protests urging an end to "military government". - Reuters

An Egyptian court will hear an appeal on October 22 against its decision to ban deposed president Mohamed Mursi's Muslim Brotherhood group and seize its funds, court sources said. - Reuters

Egypt's economy will only grow 2.6 percent in the fiscal year ending June 2014, well below the 3.5 percent the government expects to achieve, according to a Reuters poll that saw economists cutting forecasts again. - Reuters

European Union Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton will encourage Egypt's army-backed government and the Muslim Brotherhood to pursue reconciliation during talks this week, a European diplomatic source said. - Reuters

Morocco

Editorial: The king may calculate that the political opening he undertook in March 2011, when the Arab world appeared to be on the cusp of a democratic revolution, is no longer necessary in a region where generals and jihadists are on the ascent. But the Arab monarchies cannot avoid change: They are doomed unless they can complete a transition to democratic government. That means tolerating crusading journalists such as Mr. Anouzla. If King Mohammed wants to preserve his credibility as a reformer, he will order his critic released. - Washington Post

Bahrain

Some of the 50 people jailed in Bahrain on Sunday for security offences were also convicted of spying for Iran and had planned "vandalism and rioting" with the backing of the Islamic Republic, the Bahraini government said. - Reuters

Iraq

A special visa program for Iraqi interpreters and others who worked with the U.S. military during the Iraq War expired on Tuesday after Congress failed to extend the visas with passage of a government funding bill. - DEFCON Hill

Prisoners in two Iraqi prisons that saw mass breakouts earlier this year say they are victims of much harsher treatment as a result. - Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

A surge in political violence across Iraq, fuelled partly by war in neighbouring Syria, is causing alarm about the country's future and adding another potentially destabilising factor to a volatile region. - Financial Times

The U.N. mission in Iraq said Tuesday that 979 people died in September, most civilians caught up in the violence by insurgents led by al-Qaida in Iraq who appear determined to rekindle the tensions between Sunnis and Shiites that nearly pushed the country to the brink of civil war in 2006-2007. – Associated Press

Unidentified militants shot down a military helicopter in northern Iraq on Wednesday, killing all four crew members, police sources said. – Reuters

Editorial: The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been fought with American blood and treasure and that of the Iraqi and Afghan peoples, including those who subscribed to the noble goals of democracy and freedom. They took it on faith that the United States meant what it said. – Washington Post

Israel

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have pledged to keep silent about the talks, so solid information has been scant despite occasional leaks, and the silence is making Israeli hard-liners nervous. – LA Times' World Now

More than a quarter century after cancellation of the US-Israeli Lavi program, a key figure in that traumatic chapter of bilateral relations continues to blame opponents of the mega project for lasting damage to Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel's largest aerospace and defense firm. – Defense News

Turkey

Abdullah Gul, Turkey's president, has warned against the polarisation of Turkish society, saluted the memory of people slain in the year's Gezi Park protests and insisted on the importance of a free media in a speech widely seen as a riposte to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the country's prime minister. – Financial Times

Peaceful anti-government protests that shook Turkey in the summer were a sign of the country's democratic maturity but they took a wrong turn by becoming violent, President Abdullah Gul said on Tuesday. – Reuters

Kurdish militants and politicians dismissed on Tuesday a set of political reforms proposed by Turkey's ruling AK Party, saying they were not meant to end a 29-year conflict with the state and that the insurgents would present their response next week. – Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Asia

South Asia

Afghan opposition politician Abdullah Abdullah, the runner-up in the 2009 presidential race, Tuesday became the first high-profile candidate to register for the April elections, securing the backing of powerful warlords and of an important Islamist party. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

When Wave of Change, a female-led political movement, was unveiled last week in Afghanistan, it was greeted with applause by women's rights activists...But skeptics say the movement, which was launched as candidates register for next year's crucial presidential election, could be used as an electoral tool by the movement's male backers to gain wider support both at home and abroad. – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Western competitors could face stiffer competition from the Russians in India's forthcoming US \$12 billion tender for the purchase of six conventional submarines. The Indian Defence Ministry is requiring that submarines in the competition be capable of mounting the Indo-Russian BrahMos cruise missile. – Defense News

A U.S. bid to run unilateral counter-terrorism operations in Afghanistan after 2014 is threatening to derail a security pact between the two countries, an Afghan spokesman said, underlining Afghanistan's tenuous ties with its main backer. – Reuters

Thomas H. Henriksen writes: Without continued and firm U.S. and allied assistance, the fragile, war-beset country will likely re-descend into anarchy, violence, and a return of warlordism. It's fracturing will open the door for a return of al Qaeda bases, from which terrorist attacks can be launched on the West. Catapulting Afghanistan back into turmoil could also destabilize nuclear-armed Pakistan and the region. In an age where terrorists will stop at nothing, the fallout from precipitously abandoning Afghanistan will in all likelihood surpass the consequences that the American homeland escaped after the fall of South Vietnam. – Hoover Institution's Defining Ideas

East Asia

China last week conducted a test of a maneuvering satellite that captured another satellite in space during what Pentagon officials say was a significant step forward for Beijing's space warfare program. – Washington Free Beacon

Because China believes it is much weaker than the United States, they are more likely to launch a massive preemptive strike in a crisis. Here's the other bad news: The current US concept for high-tech warfare, known as Air-Sea Battle, might escalate the conflict even further towards a "limited" nuclear war, says one of the top American experts on the Chinese military. – Breaking Defense

Amid rising tensions between Japan and China over disputed Pacific islands, the U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) has notified Congress that there may be a \$950 million foreign military sales contract to upgrade Japanese airborne warning and control s (AWACS) aircraft. – Defense News

A senior Taiwanese official has renewed a call for the United States to sell the island submarines and advanced fighters to bolster defenses against China, local media reported Tuesday. - AFP

Korean Peninsula

Once hailed as a Communist hero, Mr. Kim would become a traitor to North Korea. His family in the North, including a daughter who would be 21 this year, if still alive, vanished in a purge. Now, he lives in the South under the alias Kim Dong-sik and refuses to give his real name, accepting news media interviews on the condition that any photographs not show his full face. – New York Times

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Wednesday that the United States had devised a strategy with South Korea to deter the growing threat of North Korea's nuclear and chemical weapons programs. – New York Times

The outgoing commander of U.S. military forces on the Korean Peninsula said Tuesday that North Korea's youthful and enigmatic leader, Kim Jong Un, has successfully consolidated power, even as he has dashed international hopes that he might turn out to be a reformer. – Washington Post

Nine young North Korean defectors may have been executed upon their return from Laos, according to several media reports. – Washington Times

The threat posed by North Korea has "toned down" significantly since Pyongyang's sabre-rattling threatened to bubble over into a regional conflict, but the regime's nuclear aspirations remain a serious concern to Washington and its allies. – DEFCON Hill

North Korea in a Tuesday speech at the United Nations blamed "hostile" U.S. policies for this past spring's heightened Korean Peninsula tensions. – Global Security Newswire

Tanks rumbled through downtown Seoul on Tuesday, as South Korea staged its largest military display in a decade and paraded a missile capable of high-precision strikes anywhere in North Korea. - AFP

Southeast Asia

Myanmar authorities stepped up security Wednesday in Thandwe, a town in troubled Rakhine state, in a bid to restore calm after four days of communal violence that forced President Thein Sein to cancel a planned stop as part of his first visit to the region since violence broke out last year. – Wall Street Journal

President Barack Obama is canceling part of his planned trip to Asia this weekend because of the government shutdown, the White House announced on Wednesday. - Politico

[A] planned visit by U.S. President Barack Obama to Asia starting this weekend could herald the start of dramatic changes to Oyster Bay, a postcard-perfect cove on Palawan Island that the Philippines expects to transform into a port for its naval frigates and eventually for American warships - all overlooking the disputed South China Sea. - Reuters

Chinese President Xi Jinping will on Thursday become the first foreign leader to address Indonesia's parliament, signaling a push by the Asian economic powerhouses to expand relations that were for decades frozen in hostility. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Security

Defense

Pratt & Whitney has submitted its proposal for the next two lots of F-35 joint strike fighter engines to the Pentagon, and the engine manufacturer expects to reach an agreement in the first quarter of 2014, according to a top executive. – Defense News

As budget pressures force the Defense Department to rethink long-term spending plans, Air Force officials are openly admitting that their venerable fleet of A-10 Warthogs could be on the chopping block because the heavily armed planes simply do not top the priorities list. – Roll Call

The Senate Armed Services will hold a hearing next week on how the government shutdown is impacting the military if the shutdown is still ongoing. – DEFCON Hill

While ongoing operations involving ships at sea and forward-deployed forces are moving along as scheduled, the government shutdown is reverberating throughout the Navy, especially at its shipyards. – DOD Buzz

The Pentagon will continue to award hundreds of millions of dollars in acquisition, services and other types of contracts despite a government-wide shutdown, but don't expect to hear about them. – Defense News

The Defense Department scrambled Tuesday to resolve a slew of unanswered questions after the government shutdown, some of them raised by the last-ditch legislation to pay the troops. – Politico

House Armed Services Chairman Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) told Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel Tuesday that he should bring furloughed civilian employees back to work. – DEFCON Hill

Pentagon and administration lawyers are looking for ways to expand the number of Defense Department civilians who are exempt from furloughs, amid worries that the government shutdown is damaging U.S. credibility among its international allies, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Tuesday. – Associated Press

Scott Truver writes: [A]s long we need to protect vital U.S. interests, citizens and friends in critical world regions from the sea, the nation's naval forces will project national power in support of national strategy and policy. Because of this, regional commanders continue to ask the question every admiral loves to quote: "where are the carriers?" – Breaking Defense

The War

Major U.S. cities lack the capabilities and know-how to effectively deal with the fallout from a large-scale nuclear and radiological attack by terrorists, according to the government's top watchdog group. – Washington Free Beacon

Legal proceedings against five Guantanamo Bay prisoners charged in the Sept. 11 attack should go forward, a military judge ruled Tuesday, rejecting a bid to put the case on hold until the Pentagon resolves computer network security concerns. – Associated Press

Intelligence

The government shutdown has forced spy agencies to furlough 70 percent of their civilian employees, according to a senior intelligence official. – Hillicon Valley

Cybersecurity

Global cybersecurity spending will reach \$94 billion between 2013 and 2023, according to a new study by market research firm ASDReports. – Defense News

[Return to Top](#)

Russia/Europe

Russia

[S]eizing on his proposal to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons stockpile and forestall a missile strike that had been threatened by President Obama, a Russian advocacy group said on Tuesday that it had nominated President Vladimir V. Putin for the Nobel Peace Prize. – New York Times

Analysis: Last year Russia's defence spending soared 25 per cent and this year Moscow's expenditure is set to overtake that of the UK and Japan, according to analysis by IHS. That would make Russia the third largest arms buyer in the world, spending \$68.8bn in 2013, trailing only China (\$131.7bn), and the US, which spends more on defence (\$637.8bn) than the next 10 countries combined. – Financial Times

Europe

Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives plan to open coalition talks Friday with leftist Social Democrats in the first round of political bargaining that could drag into early next year, as the two parties haggle over the direction of the next government in the economic powerhouse of Europe. – Washington Times

National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden has been nominated for a human rights award in Europe. – The Hill's Blog Briefing Room

Bosnia launched its first census as an independent state on Tuesday, a politically charged event that has revived ethnic rifts and could shake the delicate power-sharing system that helped end the country's 1992-95 war. - Reuters

Hungary will use all political and legal tools available to crack down on resurgent anti-Semitism in the country, the deputy prime minister said on Tuesday, in one of the government's boldest statements yet on the issue. - Reuters

Niall Ferguson and Pierpaolo Barbieri write: We look forward eagerly to Ukraine's first step toward E.U. membership. We also look forward to Yalta's imminent rebranding as the Riviera of Purgatory. – International Herald Tribune

[Return to Top](#)

Americas

United States of America

Lawmakers and the White House dug in Tuesday for a long fight as the first federal government shutdown in nearly two decades showed no signs of breaking, increasing the likelihood it will become entangled in an even larger battle over the Treasury's ability to pay the government's bills. – Wall Street Journal

The Senate is still moving full speed ahead with President Obama's ambassador picks despite the government shutdown. – The Hill's Global Affairs

Chen Guangcheng, the Chinese dissident and legal rights activist who accused New York University of forcing him to leave this summer because of alleged pressure from the Chinese government, will be joining The Witherspoon Institute, a conservative think tank. - Reuters

John Hudson reports: Despite a wave of disruptive furloughs at the Pentagon, CIA, NASA and other federal agencies, Uncle Sam will continue pumping out thousands of hours of government-funded news programs to foreign audiences during the shutdown. – The Cable

Peter Feaver writes: It seems clear, however, that the necessary catalyst for the emergence of such a third party is manifest failure by one or both of the existing parties. It is premature to publish the obit for the existing parties, but the political crisis in Washington sure seems to be hastening that day. – Shadow Government

Canada

Electronic eavesdropping devices have been discovered at a former high-tech company campus in Ottawa slated to become Canada's new military headquarters, local media said Tuesday. - AFP

Latin America

Argentina's leading dailies, like a lot of newspapers in the U.S., are locked in a fight for survival amid declining ad sales. The troubles of Clarín and La Nación, however, aren't due just to circulation declines and online competition, but also to a government-led attack, the newspapers say. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Nearly seven months after the death of Hugo Chávez, the country's longtime leftist president and father figure, there is a growing sense that things are falling apart. – New York Times

The State Department on Tuesday rejected Venezuelan accusations that three U.S. diplomats had conspired with local conservatives to sabotage the South American nation's power grid and economy and said the Obama administration was considering retaliatory action. – LA Times' World Now

The U.S. Embassy in Venezuela on Tuesday defended three diplomats expelled by President Nicolas Maduro, rejecting charges they were involved in espionage and accusations Washington is trying to destabilize the OPEC nation - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Africa

West Africa

Charles Blé Goudé, a crucial ally of Laurent Gbagbo, the Ivory Coast strongman indicted on charges of crimes against humanity, is being sought on similar charges, the International Criminal Court said Tuesday. – New York Times

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan on Tuesday promised a national dialogue to heal what he said was an ethnically and religiously divided nation, and urged his compatriots to unite against extremism to avoid the fate of Syria. - Reuters

East Africa

It was the beginning of a chaotic and what many Kenyans now call a bungled reaction by the national security services to one of the most chilling terrorist attacks this country has ever suffered, in which more than 60 men, women and children were killed. – New York Times

When Islamic militants killed dozens of people at Nairobi's Westgate mall last week, they also battered one of Africa's homegrown corporate success stories and set back a rising economy. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The arrests, and possibly many others, are a sign of an emerging backlash against Kenya's Somali community in the aftermath of the bloodiest terrorist assault in the country since the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing, raising fears among one of the most vulnerable communities on the continent. – Washington Post

Kenya's president vowed Tuesday to keep the country's troops in Somalia until that country is stabilized, after a Somali Islamic extremist group said it staged a deadly attack on an upscale Nairobi mall to force the withdrawal of Kenyan troops from its Horn of Africa nation. – Associated Press

Kenya's president told Somalia on Tuesday to "put their house in order," in a sign of frustration at the festering instability in the neighboring country after members of a Somali militant group attacked and killed dozens at a Nairobi shopping mall. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Events

Markets, Civil Society, and Democratic Change in the Middle East
Hudson Institute
October 2

Democracy and Development: Perspectives of the new USAID DRG Strategy
Center for Strategic and International Studies

October 2

The Business of Defense in an Age of Austerity: Perspectives from the Mid-Tier
Atlantic Council
October 2

Unheard Voices: Civil Society Perspectives on Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations
Project on Middle East Democracy, OneVoice
October 2

The WTO and the Uncertain Future of Multilateralism
Cato Institute
October 2

An Assessment of Rouhani's Visit to New York: Real Diplomacy or Failed Expectations?
Wilson Center
October 2

Leadership in the Asia-Pacific: The Road Ahead for Japan and the United States
Wilson Center
October 2

Reversing Iran's Nuclear Program
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 3

Nomination Hearing
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 3

Threats to the Homeland
Senate Homeland Security Committee
October 3

Al-Shabaab: How Great a Threat?
House Foreign Affairs Committee
October 3

What Japan Can Gain from Sound Innovation
Heritage Foundation
October 3

Revisiting Sovereign Bankruptcy
Brookings Institution
October 3

Cross-Strait Developments in 2013: New Trends and Prospects
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 3

Syria: Prospects for Political Settlement
Atlantic Council
October 3

Transatlantic Cooperation on Energy Security and Climate Change
Atlantic Council

October 3

Freedom on the Net 2013: Internet Freedom In Decline, But Activists Fight Back

Freedom House

October 3

Building Government Institutions in Afghanistan: Getting the Basics Right

United States Institute of Peace

October 3

Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe

Wilson Center

October 3

China's Strategies for Lowering Energy's Environmental Footprint

Wilson Center

October 3

Brazil in the Global Arena

Wilson Center, George Washington University

October 4

Application Deadline for FPI Director of Development Position

Foreign Policy Initiative

October 4

Germany's Decision: Post-Election Analysis

Brookings Institution

October 4

How the Arab World's Transitions are Resonating in Russia, Iran and Iraq

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Embassy of the Czech Republic

October 4

The meaning and implication of the "Mensalão," Brazil's largest trial on political corruption

Wilson Center

October 4

A New Look at American Foreign Policy: The Third in a Series of Discussions

Heritage Foundation

October 7

North American Rally for Tibet

International Campaign for Tibet

October 7

Domestic Barriers to Dismantling the Militant Infrastructure in Pakistan

United States Institute of Peace

October 7

Deciphering Russian Policy on Syria: What Happened...and What's Next

Wilson Center

October 7

A Conversation With Michael Leiter, Former Director of NCTC

Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 7

Impact of Sequestration on the National Defense
Senate Armed Services Committee
October 8

Japan and the Korean Peninsula: A Regional "Two-Level Game"
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 8

Tunisia: Divided and Dissatisfied with Ennahda
Middle East Institute
October 8

Rethinking U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy
Cato Institute
October 8

Israeli Security Policy in an Uncertain Middle East
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
October 9

Two States or One?: The Future of Israelis and Palestinians
Middle East Policy Council
October 9

NSA Surveillance: What We Know; What to do About It
Cato Institute
October 9

Community Security and Protection from Deliberate Violence
Stimson Center
October 9

Slovak Political Elites: The nexus between their roots and foreign policy
The Institute of World Politics
October 9

Nomination Hearing
Senate Armed Services Committee
October 10

DHS Financial Management: Investigating DHS's Stewardship of Taxpayer Dollars
House Homeland Security Committee
Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee
October 10

NSA Surveillance Programs and the Najibullah Zazi Terrorist Threat
Brookings Institution
October 10

A New Agenda for African Development Finance in the 21st Century
Brookings Institution
October 10

Recapturing India's Growth Momentum: A Conversation With Finance Minister Chidambaram
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 10

Israel's National Challenges, at Home and Abroad
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
October 10

European Union - United States Partnership in Africa
Wilson Center
October 10

The Future of the Eurozone
Wilson Center
October 10

U.S.-Mexico High Level Economic Dialogue: Analysis and Next Steps
Wilson Center
October 10

Assessing Warsaw Pact Military Forces: The Role of CIA Clandestine Reporting
Wilson Center
October 10

The Faulty Logic of the EU and its Consequences
Alexander Hamilton Society
October 10

Among Enemies: Counter-Espionage for Business Travelers
The Institute of World Politics
October 10

U.S. Global Leadership in the Second Obama Administration: Policies and Realities
Brookings Institution
October 11

Narendra Modi's Experiment With the Middle Class in Gujarat
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 11

Global Economic Issues: Perspectives from Kazakhstan
Atlantic Council
October 11

Fall 2013 AILA International Fellows Program
Center for Strategic International Studies
October 13-18

JFK, Conservative
Politics and Prose Bookstore and Coffeehouse
October 15

Russia: A Postmodern Dictatorship?
National Endowment for Democracy
October 15

The End of Overkill? Reassessing U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy
Cato Institute
October 15

The Russian Orthodox Church and Russia's Foreign Policy Vectors
Wilson Center
October 15

A conversation with Jim Clifton, CEO of GALLUP
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 15

A Discussion with Ken Pollack, Author of Unthinkable
Middle East Institute
October 16

The Role of Economics in Democratic Transitions: Kenya
National Endowment for Democracy
October 17

Rare Earth Elements: Implications on US-Asia Environmental and Security Issues
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 21

The New Political Landscape of Afghanistan's Neighborhood After '2014'
Wilson Center
October 21

The World that Faces President Obama: A Conversation with Ian Bremmer
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 21

2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead?
Foreign Policy Initiative
October 22

PONI Live Debate: Global Zero
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 22

AFA Air Force Breakfast Program
Air Force Association
October 23

Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991
Wilson Center
October 23

Social Networks and Public Support for the European Union
The Institute of World Politics
October 23

Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security
Cato Institute
October 25

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 25

PONI 2013 Fall Conference
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 28-29

Constructing Nation: National Narratives of History Teachers in Ukraine
Wilson Center
October 28

Startup Rising: The Entrepreneurial Revolution Remaking the Middle East
Center for a New American Security
October 29

The Prospect of Peace in Sudan
The Institute of World Politics
October 29

Does the Treaty Power Threaten Our System of Limited Government?
Heritage Foundation
October 30

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Japan
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

International Affairs Fellowship in South Korea
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

CSIS-U.S. Army War College International Strategic Crisis Negotiation Exercise
Center for Strategic International Studies
November 1-2

Obama's Foreign Policy: What is it and is it Working?
Alexander Hamilton Society
November 5

Pakistan's Accelerating Urbanization
Wilson Center
November 6

Application Deadline for Stanton Nuclear Security Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
December 16

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Nuclear Security
Council on Foreign Relations
January 17, 2014

[Return to Top](#)

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The Foreign Policy Initiative

11 Dupont Circle, NW Suite 325

Washington, D.C. 20036

Telephone: (202) 296-3322

E-mail: info@foreignpolicyi.org

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
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
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FPI Overnight Brief

September 30, 2013

Table of Contents

[Middle East/North Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Security](#), [Russia/Europe](#), [Americas](#), [Africa](#), [Ideas](#), [Events](#)

Announcements

FPI seeks an energetic and experienced Director of Development. For more information, please visit our website. Applications are due Friday.

The 2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead? will be held on October 22 at the Andrew W. Mellon auditorium in Washington DC. RSVP today.

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The Must-Reads

- Syrian chemical disclosure falls short of US count, WSJ editorial
- US aims to ease doubt on Iran talks, Dueling narratives in Iran over talks
- FPI's Griffin, Sens. Menendez and Graham, and Bolton on Iran
- Pentagon in triage mode ahead of shutdown, to slow 2014 spending
- Al Qaeda plot leak has undermined US intelligence
- FPI's Patrick Christy: Keeping the US-India relationship strong
- Tunisian Islamist party to step down, Egypt crisis sidelined at UN
- Handover of US command of ROK troops still under debate
- US, Japan eye rewrite of military cooperation pact

Middle East/North Africa

Syria

Syria has declared fewer chemical-weapons sites than U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies believe it has, U.S. and other Western officials said on Friday, hours before the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution for the destruction of the arsenal. – Wall Street Journal

The diplomatic drive to purge Syria of its chemical weapons accelerated Friday, as the full 15-member United Nations Security Council approved a breakthrough resolution to ensure Syrian compliance, and the organization responsible

for carrying out the destruction of those munitions announced a timetable that starts Tuesday, sooner than some had expected. – New York Times

Syria's government has been "businesslike and efficient" ahead of meetings this week to lay the groundwork for the destruction of the country's chemical weapons, officials charged with overseeing the effort said Sunday. – Washington Post

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will send a team of inspectors to Damascus on Monday, and its success or failure could shape whether the United States and its partners push once again to intervene militarily in Syria. – Washington Post

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said Sunday that his government had respected international treaties on the use of chemical weapons even before Friday's United Nations Security Council resolution calling for the destruction of his country's arsenal. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Despite a week of daily negotiations between the United States and Russia over the planned destruction of Syria's chemical weapons, the two sides were still deeply split on a fundamental point when Secretary of State John F. Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met last Tuesday. – Washington Post

The Syrian capital has been deeply altered by the country's civil war, now in its third year. The economy is collapsing. Displaced people arrive faster than they can be absorbed. Most of all, there is a sense that the war will continue, perhaps for years, making the country's rifts progressively harder to heal. – New York Times

For the first time in history, the extended war in Syria has furnished global audiences with a sofa-side view of what it feels like to be there, almost in real time. – Wall Street Journal

A group of Islamist brigades, including the Al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front, has taken over one of two official crossings on the 230-mile border between Syria and Jordan, according to a statement on one of the brigades' websites. – LA Times' World Now

[O]n Friday, the U.N. said chemical or biological weapons might have been deployed three more times after the Aug. 21 attack. – The Hill's Blog Briefing Room

Syria's Bashar Assad vowed Sunday to abide by a United Nations resolution ordering him to abandon his chemical weapons. – The Hill's Global Affairs

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who brokered the Syrian chemical weapons deal with the United States, says the use of military force against the nation would be "ineffective, meaningless and destructive." – The Hill's Global Affairs

After adopting a hard-fought, Russian-backed resolution to rid Syria of chemical weapons, the U.N. Security Council is now turning its attention to the country's dire humanitarian crisis, putting to the test its fragile consensus on the conflict. – Reuters

At least 16 people, most of them students, were killed in an air strike that hit a secondary school in the rebel-held Syrian city of Raqqa on Sunday, activists said. – Reuters

More than 30 rebel factions have broken with the Western-backed Syrian opposition organization and its military wing, according to a video statement posted on the Internet. – Reuters

Editorial: As for the Syrian opposition, they see all of this as an Assad victory and a Western betrayal. Earlier this week, 13 rebel groups broke with the Turkish-based, moderate Syrian Supreme Military Council and are expected to align with the Islamist fighters affiliated with al Qaeda. Far from leading to a larger peace, the chemical weapons diplomacy seems to have radicalized both sides. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Iran

The presidents of America and Iran spoke directly Friday for the first time since 1979, setting the stage for delicate negotiations that could reshape the two adversaries' relationship. – Wall Street Journal

Dozens of protesters hurled eggs and at least one shoe at President Hassan Rouhani as he returned to Tehran on Saturday after a groundbreaking phone call with President Obama and other outreach to the West at an annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations. – New York Times

Iran's foreign minister said on Sunday said that there was a "real chance" to reach an agreement with the United

States over his country's nuclear program, as long as Washington was prepared to end sanctions and recognize Tehran's right to peaceful nuclear enrichment. – New York Times

At the heart of the "significant concerns" that Mr. Obama said the two countries would have to address is whether Iran's divided leadership is really willing to dismantle vast parts of the multibillion-dollar atomic infrastructure it has amassed over the past decade as just part of the price for ridding the country of the sanctions that have crippled daily life. – New York Times

President Barack Obama is ramping up efforts to sell his diplomatic drive with Iran to skeptical Middle East allies and to Congress, starting with a crucial meeting at the White House on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. – Wall Street Journal

U.S. officials said Iran hacked unclassified Navy computers in recent weeks in an escalation of Iranian cyberintrusions targeting the U.S. military. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The controversy over whether Iranian President Hassan Rowhani actually acknowledged the Holocaust continued on Sunday, when the president's top aide reiterated the Iranian stance that Rowhani never used the term. – Washington Free Beacon

Iran is steadily increasing its ability to indigenously produce different kinds of submarines, some of which would likely play an important role in any Iranian effort to close down the Strait of Hormuz. – The Diplomat

Secretary of State John Kerry said a deal on Iran's nuclear program could be reached relatively quickly, and it would have the potential to dramatically improve the relationship between the two countries. – Reuters

Eli Lake reports: In the last two and a half weeks, there have been at least 31 state executions in Iran and a prominent Iranian filmmaker has had his passport seized. The leaders of Iran's reformist Green Movement remain in jail. – The Daily Beast

Editorial: The point may seem small to Western ears, but it's significant in the context of a regime for which Holocaust denial is an article of ideological faith. Ditto for the second comment: Mr. Rouhani did not speak narrowly of Nazi crimes against Jews, but more broadly of crimes "against the Jews and the non-Jews." This distinction is also important, because central to the claims of Holocaust revisionists is the lie that Jews were not the deliberate and principal target of Nazi genocide. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Video: FPI Executive Director Christopher J. Griffin discussed Iranian President Rouhani and negotiations over the country's nuclear program – Fox News Live

Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) write: In the coming days, we will be outspoken in our support for furthering sanctions against Iran, requiring countries to again reduce their purchases of Iranian petroleum and imposing further prohibitions on strategic sectors of the Iranian economy. We proceed with an open hand, but there can be a deal only when Iran's actions align with its rhetoric. – Washington Post

John Bolton writes: Extended negotiations will enable Mr. Obama to argue that a "diplomatic process" is under way to resolve the Iranian nuclear threat. No phrase is more beloved at the State Department. Mr. Obama will then use this process on Israel to prevent pre-emptive military action against Iran's nuclear program. In time, even Hamlet came to understand that "one may smile, and smile, and be a villain." Maybe one day President Obama will figure it out. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

North Africa

Tunisia's governing Islamist party, Ennahda, thrust into power by the Arab Spring, has agreed to step down after months of political wrangling with a hard-bargaining opposition. – New York Times

When hundreds were killed in Egypt after interim authorities cleared out antigovernment protest camps in August, the country's political crisis moved front-and-center of the world stage...Six weeks later, at the annual United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, Egypt's crisis has seemed a side issue, a regrettable irritant that needs mentioning but not tackling. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Egypt's escalating political tumult leaves little room for common ground. Fistfights break out in cafes and on street corners. Screeds shoot like arrows across social media. Debates over religion, politics and patriotism rage on television talk shows. Bearded men call on God in the night, and pictures of dead protesters lift in the breeze. – Los Angeles Times

Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy said on Saturday the transitional phase of government in Egypt should end "by

next spring," replacing leaders appointed after the army ousted elected president Mohamed Mursi in July. - Reuters

Egypt's second biggest Islamist party, Nour, on Friday rejected proposed changes to the constitution that would outlaw parties founded on religious grounds, and called the move a "sword drawn" against Islamists. - Reuters

Gulf States

The Obama administration's handling of overtures on Syria and Iran have outraged regional ally Saudi Arabia, which is signaling it wants to do more to boost the power of armed Sunni rebel groups on the ground in Syria as the U.S. pursues diplomacy. - Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

A court in Bahrain handed down sentences of between 5 and 15 years in jail for 50 people on Sunday whom the authorities accused of belonging to a protest movement seeking to overthrow the government, human rights activists said. - New York Times

If Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's dream of reaching a deal with world powers on Tehran's nuclear program in six months comes true, Oman, an important intermediary in the dispute, could be a big winner. - Reuters

Iraq

Several explosions, some of them from suicide bombers, struck the heart of Iraq's northern Kurdish region on Sunday, setting off chaos and gunfights in the streets of the capital, Erbil. - New York Times

The attack on the funeral last weekend...has also set off waves of anger toward a government that the people here increasingly view as incompetent and corrupt, even illegitimate, adding to the isolation of a Shiite leadership already struggling to contain growing Sunni unrest. - New York Times

A series of car bombs exploded in busy areas in predominantly Shi'ite neighborhoods of Baghdad on Monday, killing at least 42 people and wounding dozens more, police and medical sources said. - Reuters

Iraq's foreign minister said Saturday he doubts the escalating violence in the country will lead to "an all-out sectarian or civil war." - Associated Press

Iraqi Kurdistan's main opposition party has come in second in the autonomous region's parliamentary election, according to preliminary results on Saturday that left the shape of the government still unclear a week after the vote. - Reuters

Israel

For Israel and Persian Gulf states like Saudi Arabia, President Obama's telephone call with President Hassan Rouhani of Iran on Friday was the geopolitical equivalent of discovering your best friend flirting with your main rival. - New York Times

Israeli security officials said Sunday they have arrested a Belgian businessman of Iranian descent for spying on Israel and gathering intelligence on possible terror targets. - Washington Post

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, popular wisdom suggests. But as he heads to the United States, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is showing no such intention regarding Iran. - LA Times' World Now

Israel's Defense Ministry has ordered another three fast patrol craft from state-owned Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI) in an award that will expand the Israel Navy's fleet of Super Dvora Mk3s to 13, sources here say. - Defense News

Turkey

A Turkish decision to commission a Chinese company to build Turkey's first long-range air and missile defense shield presents any number of challenges to Turkey's Western allies, both politically and militarily, defense analysts and Western diplomats said. - Defense News

Turkey will end a ban that bars women from wearing the Islamic-style headscarf in state institutions, part of the government's long-awaited package of proposed human-rights reforms, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday in a major policy speech. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Asia

Afghanistan

[A]s U.S. troops prepare to end their combat mission in Afghanistan by the end of next year, there is a foreboding about the future on this campus, and a sense that the school may not survive as the incubator of talent and entrepreneurship that Washington sought to create. – Washington Post

U.S. troops went to Afghanistan to battle al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden in retaliation for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Now, 12 years later, will they stay to battle the Taliban? – Defense One

A contractor has admitted that it shipped dozens of containers filled with construction supplies through Iran to Afghanistan to support US troops there, a possible violation of US law. Internal emails suggest that at least one senior executive was involved in the process. – Defense News

Video: Former First Lady Laura Bush on the significant, if fragile, gains made by Afghan women and children, and what the 2014 troop drawdown portends for their future – Wall Street Journal

South Asia

A bomb ripped through a busy marketplace in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar on Sunday, killing at least 40 people and injuring dozens of others, hospital officials said, in the latest bloody attack to hit Pakistan after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif proposed peace talks with the Taliban-led militants. – Wall Street Journal

The leaders of Pakistan and India held their first official meeting in New York on Sunday, leaving with renewed promises of mutual restraint in Kashmir but little real hope for a fresh start in relations. – New York Times

Indian opposition leader Narendra Modi on Sunday brought his prime ministerial campaign to Delhi, where coming state elections will test whether he can sell his mix of Hindu nationalism and business-friendly policies to a critical constituency: Young, urban voters. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Friday said the United States is violating his country's "territorial integrity" with armed drones. – The Hill's Global Affairs

India and Pakistan have agreed to talks between their military chiefs in a new drive to repair a much-violated ceasefire between the two nuclear-armed south Asian neighbours and prepare the way for an eventual peace. – Financial Times

FPI Senior Policy Analyst Patrick Christy writes: Manmohan Singh's visit to the White House — perhaps his last as India's prime minister — is a reminder of how far this once distant relationship has come. To be sure, temporary setbacks or momentary disagreements will continue. The task ahead will be to overcome these near-term challenges, and ensure that U.S.-India relations become — to evoke President Obama's own words — the "defining partnership" of the 21st century. – US News and World Report's World Report

China

A Tibetan man in China's western Sichuan Province died on Saturday after setting himself on fire to protest Chinese policies in the region, according to Tibetan exile groups and Radio Free Asia, a news service financed by the United States government. – New York Times

On Sunday the woman, Gong Aiai, who was accused of amassing dozens of high-end properties by forging or illegally purchasing documents, was sentenced to three years in prison, according to the state-run Xinhua news service. – New York Times

Hong Kong's per-capita gross domestic product is higher than that of Italy, and not far short of those of Britain and France, according to World Bank figures. But for unskilled or semiskilled people like Mr. Ng, the city is a tough place to be, said Wong Hung, an associate professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong specializing in urban poverty and employment. – New York Times

A detailed list of sectors that are off limits to foreign investors in Shanghai's free-trade zone provides clarity on how the economic experiment will work, but is a disappointment for those expecting a more liberal approach. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

In an unusual departure for mainland Chinese-language media, the Beijing-based Sina Military Network (SMN) criticized the capabilities of the carrier-borne J-15 Flying Shark as nothing more than a “flopping fish.” – Defense News

President Xi Jinping believes China is losing its moral compass and he wants the ruling Communist Party to be more tolerant of traditional faiths in the hope these will help fill a vacuum created by the country's breakneck growth and rush to get rich, sources said. - Reuters

Japan

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan on Friday rejected any concession in a standoff with China over a group of islands claimed by both countries, declining to even acknowledge that the islands are disputed. – New York Times

Washington and Tokyo are eyeing massive changes to the military cooperation pact between the two countries, including possibly allowing Japan first-strike capabilities against potential threats in the region. – DEFCON Hill

Japan is looking to purchase a Mission Computing Upgrade (MCU) for its four E-767 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) platforms. – Defense News

Korean Peninsula

Sixty years after the end of the Korean War, the United States and South Korea still can't agree on who should take charge if another war breaks out with the communist neighbor to the north. – Washington Post

Both Chinese and Western analysts called the export ban an important development — if it is implemented fully — especially since the list appeared to have been approved at the highest levels of the Chinese government. – New York Times

After it was dropped from consideration in South Korea's fighter competition, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter appears to be back in the running after a Defense Ministry source cited the need to counter North Korea with a fifth-generation fighter. – Defense News

U.S. lawmakers on Thursday called for Cuba to be punished for its illegal weapons dealings with North Korea, arguing the international-sanctions regime would be undermined if the U.N. Security Council does not penalize Havana. – Global Security Newswire

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel toured the Korean DMZ on Monday, at times under the watchful eye of North Korean soldiers, and said the Pentagon had no plan to reduce its 28,500-member force in the South despite budget constraints. - Reuters

Southeast Asia

Sporadic fighting continued Sunday in Zamboanga City, the embattled southern Philippine city where government officials a day earlier had declared an end to a three-week standoff with separatist militants. – New York Times

Terrified Muslims hid in their homes in northwest Myanmar on Monday after armed police dispersed a Buddhist mob that torched houses and surrounded a mosque in the latest outbreak of sectarian tension. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Security

Defense

US lawmakers are stumbling into a season of budgetary crises, with spending cuts once dubbed “draconian” and “devastating” now largely viewed by House Republicans as immovable conservative canon. – Defense News

The US House of Representatives doubled down early Sunday on a threat to shut down the federal government unless the White House agrees to a one-year delay in the health care law known as Obamacare. – Defense News

The Pentagon issued a memo Friday with instructions on how the military will respond in the event of a government shutdown on Tuesday. – Defense News

The U.S. military appears likely to escape largely unscathed from the looming government shutdown. – DEFCON Hill

Defense Department leaders are in “triage mode” as the Pentagon scrambles to adjust domestic and international operations in anticipation for a government shutdown. – DEFCON Hill

The Pentagon plans to slow spending in anticipation that federal defense spending caps will remain in place throughout 2014, a senior US Defense Department official said. – Defense News

Lockheed Martin has reached final agreement on the sixth and seventh batch of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, for the first time dropping the cost of an F-35A conventional variant below \$100 million. – Defense News

The Navy is trying to lower costs for its nuclear-armed Ohio Replacement Submarine program by leveraging technologies from the Virginia-class submarine program, senior service officials said. – DOD Buzz

A second US senator has placed a hold on President Obama's nominee for Air Force Secretary, Defense News has learned. – Defense News

Trading old C-17s for new ones — akin to what the service does with its Lockheed Martin C-130Js — could extend the line several years, sources and analysts said. Rather than retiring the aircraft, like the Air Force does with its older C-130s, the service could return its early C-17s to Boeing, which would refurbish them for sale on the international market. – Military Times

Todd Harrison writes: The budget constraints the Defense Department currently faces, no matter how difficult and painful they may seem, should be viewed as more of an opportunity than a burden. The Defense Department should seize this opportunity and the compelling force it provides to reshape the military fundamentally and make internal reforms that are long overdue. – Foreign Affairs' Snapshots

The War

As the nation's spy agencies assess the fallout from disclosures about their surveillance programs, some government analysts and senior officials have made a startling finding: the impact of a leaked terrorist plot by Al Qaeda in August has caused more immediate damage to American counterterrorism efforts than the thousands of classified documents disclosed by Edward Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor. – New York Times

For the first time, FBI agents have put together a report about consequences in the field of the across-the-board government budget cuts known as sequestration. – Washington Post

A report released Monday by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) finds that homegrown terrorist plots have risen sharply since 2009, suggesting that some Americans “are susceptible to ideologies supporting a violent form of jihad.” – Washington Free Beacon

Nuclear Weapons/Arms Control

A group of senators are telling the Pentagon to back off any plans to conduct an environmental impact study that would examine eliminating intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) silos. – DEFCON Hill

Rose Gottemoeller, President Obama's nominee to be under secretary of State for arms control and international security, faced sharp questions on Thursday during her confirmation hearing from GOP senators regarding whether the administration would ever consider unilateral arms reductions. – Global Security Newswire

The No. 2 officer at the military command in charge of all U.S. nuclear war-fighting forces is suspected in a case involving counterfeit gambling chips at a western Iowa casino and has been suspended from his duties, officials said. – Associated Press

NSA

Since 2010, the National Security Agency has been exploiting its huge collections of data to create sophisticated graphs of some Americans' social connections that can identify their associates, their locations at certain times, their traveling companions and other personal information, according to newly disclosed documents and interviews with officials. – New York Times

[Return to Top](#)

Russia/Europe

Russia

The law has made gay athletes and spectators fearful of discrimination, and even arrest, at the Olympics. And Thursday, as the International Olympic Committee coordinating commission made its last inspection tour of Sochi before the opening ceremony Feb. 7, its members added fuel to this particular flame. Russia, they said, was not violating Olympic anti-discrimination principles. – Washington Post

A jailed member of Russian punk band was hospitalized on Friday after going on a hunger strike to protest prison conditions, her husband said, but her condition was not clear. – Reuters

Editorial: E.U. leaders should work hard in the next two months to persuade the Eurasian countries to embrace those Western values — and they could use some help from the United States. – Washington Post

Europe

David Cameron's push to modernize the Conservative Party helped him become Britain's prime minister in 2010—but it is also making it difficult for him to govern and setting up a tough road to winning the next election. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Sixty-eight years after the end of the Holocaust, Germany is asking itself what it still owes its Jews. The answer, as measured by a vote in this small southwestern city, is very little. – Washington Post

Serbia's president says his country will not recognize Kosovo's independence as the price for entering the European Union, but the leader of the former Serb province said he sees no reason to force the issue with Belgrade now. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

[Return to Top](#)

Americas

United States of America

The nation braced for a partial shutdown of the federal government, as time for Congress to pass a budget before a Monday midnight deadline grew perilously short and lawmakers gave no signs Sunday they were moving toward a resolution. – Wall Street Journal

Secretary of State John Kerry rejected the notion that the U.S. military has been “sidelined,” telling Scott Pelley on “60 Minutes” that “we will continue to stand up for our interests.” – Politico

Latin America

Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto is entering a critical stage of his term, analysts say, as his administration faces growing resistance to its wide-ranging, fast-track push to remake the country's institutions. – Washington Post

Mexico is poised to end one of its most deeply rooted political taboos by allowing the re-election of lawmakers and mayors, part of an overhaul that is shaping up to be the latest challenge for President Enrique Peña Nieto's agenda. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Colombia President Juan Manuel Santos said he won't authorize a plan by Marxist rebels to have civil-rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson help facilitate the release of a U.S. war veteran they kidnapped two months ago while the young man was backpacking. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

U.S. food giant Cargill Inc. acquired 30 times more Colombian land than legal restrictions allow, claimed Oxfam International, the latest allegation amid legislators' questioning of land purchases by large corporations operating in the South American country. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

In another step toward lifting restrictions on its citizens abroad, Cuba announced Friday that its athletes could sign contracts with foreign professional sports leagues, raising the prospect of a flood of new talent around the world but possibly not much in the United States. – New York Times

Iran has approved a deal with Argentina to investigate the 1994 bombing of a Buenos Aires Jewish community center that courts in the South American country accuse Tehran of sponsoring, Argentine official state news service Telam said. – Reuters

Editorial: Judge Velasco's dismissal can only be seen as a desire not to examine Cuba's dark side. But looking the other way will change nothing. Mr. Payá's daughter, Rosa Maria Payá, has announced plans to appeal. Hopefully, other judges will be listening. – Washington Post

[Return to Top](#)

Africa

West Africa

Dozens of gunmen attacked an agricultural college in northeastern Nigeria late Saturday night and early Sunday, killing more than 40 students, local officials said. The attackers were thought to belong to the extremist group Boko Haram. – New York Times

From Kenya to Nigeria, African air forces are acquiring surveillance drones—often made in the U.S.—to track militants, poachers and drug traffickers moving across vast and often inhospitable terrain. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Tuareg separatists and Malian soldiers exchanged fire in the northern town of Kidal on Sunday, residents said, in a sign of escalating tensions three days after MNLA rebels ended a ceasefire with the newly elected government. – Reuters

East Africa

A year before militants attacked the upscale Westgate mall here, killing 67 people, a Kenyan government intelligence report warned of a potential attack at the same place. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Less than a week after more than 60 people were killed by Islamist militants inside a Nairobi shopping mall, survivors shared crushing and astonishing accounts on Friday of how they kept their wits about them and narrowly escaped death. – New York Times

The British fascination with the “white widow” — a woman of 29 rumored to have been involved in the terrorist attack on a shopping mall in Kenya last Saturday — continued unabated this week, with tabloid and broadsheet newspapers retracing every step of her life's journey, from soldier's daughter to wanted terrorist. – New York Times

Kenya's interior minister slammed the United States on Sunday for issuing what he called an “unnecessary” and “unfriendly” warning against travel to the country after last weekend's terror attack. – The Hill's Global Affairs

The U.S. intelligence community is monitoring a specific stream of classified information suggesting the terror group believed to be behind the Nairobi shopping mall attack may be planning new attacks in East Africa, particularly in Kenya, CNN has learned. – CNN's Security Clearance

Al-Shabab, the group that has claimed responsibility for this week's mass-terror attack in Kenya, is attempting to acquire chemical weapons, the London Telegraph reported on Thursday, citing recently filed documents in U.S. federal court in New York. – Global Security Newswire

Kenya is “at war” with Islamist militants who attacked a Nairobi shopping mall, the government said on Saturday as it faced questions about whether it had received advance intelligence warnings of the deadly strike. – Reuters

Their chilling accounts, combined with internal al-Shabab documents discovered earlier this year by The Associated Press, mark the final notch in a transformation within the global terror network, which began to rethink its approach after its setbacks in Iraq. – Associated Press

Sudans

As the international community pours billions of dollars into South Sudan in an effort to make it a viable nation, Western observers are now worried that the armed forces in a country they helped create have been preying on civilians. – New York Times

About 1,000 Sudanese staged another protest in Khartoum on Sunday to demand President Omar Hassan al-Bashir resign, a witness said, as the government moved to raise salaries to soften the impact of unpopular austerity measures. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Ideas

Michael Auslin writes: Should we ever slip from our perch atop the global pecking order, we will quickly find that our strength can no longer cover for our strategic incompetence. So far, there is scant evidence that either political party understands that. – National Review Online

[Return to Top](#)

Events

Implosion: The End of Russia and What It Means for America
Heritage Foundation
September 30

The U.S.-Russia Relationship: Transcending Mutual Deterrence
Brookings Institution
September 30

Lessons from the United States African Development Foundation
Center for Strategic and International Studies
September 30

Putin vs. Civil Society
National Endowment for Democracy, George Washington University
September 30

Covering Syria
New America Foundation
New York City
September 30

Film Screening: The Network
Open Society Foundation
September 30

Expanding the U.S.-India Defense Partnership
Center for American Progress
September 30

Reform Under Rouhani: Assessing Positive Change in Iran
Stimson Center
September 30

A Conversation With Catherine Ashton
Wilson Center
September 30

The China-Russia Reversal
Wilson Center
September 30

Business Meeting
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 1

The Navy Yard Tragedy: Examining Government Clearances and Background Checks
Senate Homeland Security Committee
October 1

Human Rights Abuses in Egypt
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee
October 1

Pain and Promise for Women in the Middle East and North Africa
Heritage Foundation, SAT-7
October 1

Keeping the Promise: Maintaining the Health of Military and Veteran Families and Children
Brookings Institution
October 1

Book Launch Event: "Thank You For Your Service" by David Finkel
Center for a New American Security
October 1

Yoshihiko Noda, 95th Prime Minister of Japan, to speak at Stimson
Stimson Center
October 1

Foreign Investment and Myanmar's Reform
Stimson Center
October 1

Strategy: A History
Wilson Center
October 1

Islamic Law and Finance Incubator Module
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 1

Markets, Civil Society, and Democratic Change in the Middle East
Hudson Institute
October 2

The Business of Defense in an Age of Austerity: Perspectives from the Mid-Tier
Atlantic Council
October 2

Unheard Voices: Civil Society Perspectives on Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations
Project on Middle East Democracy, OneVoice
October 2

The WTO and the Uncertain Future of Multilateralism
Cato Institute
October 2

U.S. Drone Strikes: Voices from the Ground
Open Society Institute
New York City
October 2

An Assessment of Rouhani's Visit to New York: Real Diplomacy or Failed Expectations?
Wilson Center
October 2

Leadership in the Asia-Pacific: The Road Ahead for Japan and the United States
Wilson Center
October 2

Nomination Hearing
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 3

Threats to the Homeland
Senate Homeland Security Committee
October 3

What Japan Can Gain from Sound Innovation
Heritage Foundation
October 3

Revisiting Sovereign Bankruptcy
Brookings Institution
October 3

Cross-Strait Developments in 2013: New Trends and Prospects
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 3

Transatlantic Cooperation on Energy Security and Climate Change
Atlantic Council
October 3

Freedom on the Net 2013: Internet Freedom In Decline, But Activists Fight Back
Freedom House
October 3

Building Government Institutions in Afghanistan: Getting the Basics Right
United States Institute of Peace
October 3

Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe

Wilson Center
October 3

China's Strategies for Lowering Energy's Environmental Footprint
Wilson Center
October 3

Application Deadline for FPI Director of Development Position
Foreign Policy Initiative
October 4

Germany's Decision: Post-Election Analysis
Brookings Institution
October 4

The meaning and implication of the "Mensalão," Brazil's largest trial on political corruption
Wilson Center
October 4

A New Look at American Foreign Policy: The Third in a Series of Discussions
Heritage Foundation
October 7

North American Rally for Tibet
International Campaign for Tibet
October 7

Deciphering Russian Policy on Syria: What Happened...and What's Next
Wilson Center
October 7

Impact of Sequestration on the National Defense
Senate Armed Services Committee
October 8

Japan and the Korean Peninsula: A Regional "Two-Level Game"
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 8

Rethinking U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy
Cato Institute
October 8

Israeli Security Policy in an Uncertain Middle East
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
October 9

Two States or One?: The Future of Israelis and Palestinians
Middle East Policy Council
October 9

NSA Surveillance: What We Know; What to do About It
Cato Institute
October 9

Community Security and Protection from Deliberate Violence

Stimson Center
October 9

Nomination Hearing
Senate Armed Services Committee
October 10

NSA Surveillance Programs and the Najibullah Zazi Terrorist Threat
Brookings Institution
October 10

Israel's National Challenges, at Home and Abroad
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
October 10

European Union - United States Partnership in Africa
Wilson Center
October 10

Assessing Warsaw Pact Military Forces: The Role of CIA Clandestine Reporting
Wilson Center
October 10

The Faulty Logic of the EU and its Consequences
Alexander Hamilton Society
October 10

Among Enemies: Counter-Espionage for Business Travelers
The Institute of World Politics
October 10

Narendra Modi's Experiment With the Middle Class in Gujarat
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 11

Global Economic Issues: Perspectives from Kazakhstan
Atlantic Council
October 11

Fall 2013 AILA International Fellows Program
Center for Strategic International Studies
October 13-18

JFK, Conservative
Politics and Prose Bookstore and Coffeehouse
October 15

The End of Overkill? Reassessing U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy
Cato Institute
October 15

The Russian Orthodox Church and Russia's Foreign Policy Vectors
Wilson Center
October 15

A Discussion with Ken Pollack, Author of Unthinkable

Middle East Institute
October 16

The Role of Economics in Democratic Transitions: Kenya
National Endowment for Democracy
October 17

The New Political Landscape of Afghanistan's Neighborhood After '2014'
Wilson Center
October 21

The World that Faces President Obama: A Conversation with Ian Bremmer
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 21

2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead?
Foreign Policy Initiative
October 22

PONI Live Debate: Global Zero
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 22

Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991
Wilson Center
October 23

Social Networks and Public Support for the European Union
The Institute of World Politics
October 23

Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security
Cato Institute
October 25

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 25

PONI 2013 Fall Conference
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 28-29

Constructing Nation: National Narratives of History Teachers in Ukraine
Wilson Center
October 28

Does the Treaty Power Threaten Our System of Limited Government?
Heritage Foundation
October 30

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Japan

Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

International Affairs Fellowship in South Korea
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

CSIS-U.S. Army War College International Strategic Crisis Negotiation Exercise
Center for Strategic International Studies
November 1-2

Obama's Foreign Policy: What is it and is it Working?
Alexander Hamilton Society
November 5

Application Deadline for Stanton Nuclear Security Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
December 16

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Nuclear Security
Council on Foreign Relations
January 17, 2014

[Return to Top](#)

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
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
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
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FPI Overnight Brief

September 27, 2013

Table of Contents

[Middle East/North Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Security](#), [Russia/Europe](#), [Americas](#), [Africa](#), [Obama Administration](#), [Events](#)

Announcements

FPI seeks an energetic and experienced Director of Development. For more information, please visit our website. Applications are due by Friday, October 4.

The 2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead? will be held on October 22 at the Andrew W. Mellon auditorium in Washington DC. RSVP today.

If you support our mission and work, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to FPI today.

The Must-Reads

- UN deal on Syria reached, Most of Syria's toxins can be easily destroyed
- Oubai Shahbandar: UN deal ensures more Syrians will die
- US, Iran hold first major meeting since 1979
- FPI's Griffin, Krauthammer, Gerecht, and Misztal on Iran
- Jackson Diehl: President Obama's myopic worldview
- US troops in Afghanistan down 20%, 10K troops seen as post-2014 force
- US-India summit to seek closer ties, Twining + Dhume on agenda
- Gershman: Former Soviet states stand up to Russia. Will the US?
- Administration ignores China's supply of ICBM launchers to N. Korea
- Philippines' S. China Sea legal case against China gathers pace

Middle East/North Africa

Syria

The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council have agreed on a resolution that will require Syria to give up its chemical weapons, but there will be no automatic penalties if the Syrians fail to comply, officials said

Thursday. – New York Times

Following is the text of this draft resolution. - Reuters

U.S. and Russian officials now believe that the vast majority of Syria's nerve agent stockpile consists of "unweaponized" liquid precursors that could be neutralized relatively quickly, lowering the risk that the toxins could be hidden away by the regime or stolen by terrorists. – Washington Post

Experts from the world's chemical weapons watchdog will begin inspecting Syria's stockpile of toxic munitions by Tuesday, according to a draft agreement obtained by Reuters. - Reuters

Syria is committed to the convention against chemical weapons it signed under a US-Russian deal and sees "no obstacles" to its implementation, President Bashar al-Assad said in an interview broadcast Thursday. - AFP

Syrian rebels and al Qaeda-linked fighters clashed with Kurds in northern Syria on Thursday, activists said, in a battle for territory highlighting the country's descent towards sectarian and ethnic fiefdoms after two years of war. - Reuters

The head of the opposition Syrian Supreme Military Council cut short a visit to France on Thursday and said he would head to Syria for talks with rebel brigades that broke with the Western-backed coalition. - Reuters

The Friends of Syria group declared on Thursday that it is determined to boost aid to all parts of the opposition Syrian National Coalition, which has been struggling with increasing infighting in recent weeks. - Reuters

Iraq's top diplomat warned outside nations Wednesday not to send military aid to Syria's rebellion for fear they could assist jihadist groups that he said might have a role in a future government in Damascus. – Associated Press

Oubai Shahbandar writes: There was a time when "never again" meant just that -- and included an American resolve to back up its words with actions. In dealing with Syria today, we would do well to rediscover the courage once displayed by Gen. Clark and President Clinton. It is in everyone's interest to do so. – Foreign Policy

Daniel Nisman writes: In what has become a vicious cycle, the refusal of the West to assert itself in Syria has turned the country's battlefields into fertile breeding grounds for destabilizing religious fundamentalism. The nightmares of policy makers on both sides of the Atlantic are now reality. – Wall Street Journal

Iran

The top diplomats of the United States and Iran on Thursday held their first substantive meeting since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, hoping that within six months they can come to terms on Iran's disputed nuclear ambitions and find a new foundation for their relationship after decades of antagonism. – Los Angeles Times

Descending on New York this week in a Shiite cleric's traditional fine wool robes, Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, turned himself into a high-speed salesman offering a flurry of speeches, tweets, televised interviews and carefully curated private meetings. – New York Times

A top Israeli national security official said Thursday that Western powers need to maintain economic sanctions on Iran and establish a credible threat of force if negotiations with Tehran's new leadership are to succeed in curbing the country's nuclear program. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

President Hassan Rouhani of Iran appeared to walk his condemnation of the Holocaust back a notch on Thursday, one day after he provoked a politically fraught uproar in the United States and at home with a qualified castigation of one of history's best-documented genocides. – New York Times

In Iran's news media landscape, which is divided into two camps, the hard-liners and reformists, Fars has emerged in recent years as the most influential conservative voice. – New York Times

Secretary of State John Kerry praised Iran's "very different tone" on Thursday after meeting one-on-one with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in the first such encounter in more than three decades. – The Hill's Global Affairs

Detailed negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme will start in Geneva next month, it was announced on Thursday, following a meeting in New York that included one of the few encounters between senior US and Iranian officials since the 1979 Islamic revolution. – Financial Times

Iran played down prospects for a quick breakthrough in talks with the U.N. nuclear agency on Friday over a stalled inquiry into its atomic work, the first such meeting under the new relatively moderate Iranian government. - Reuters

Iran proposed carrying out an agreement to address concerns about its nuclear program within a year at talks with major powers on Thursday, a senior U.S. State Department official said. - Reuters

Iran has sharply criticized the U.N. nuclear watchdog over "baseless allegations" about its atomic activity, a document showed before talks between the two sides on Friday to discuss a stalled inquiry into suspected bomb research by Tehran. - Reuters

Reformist former president Mohammad Khatami called for all political prisoners in Iran to be freed following a decision to pardon 80 people in an easing of the Islamic Republic's strict security policies. - Reuters

The ailing father of a former U.S. Marine imprisoned in Iran is pleading for the release of his son in a letter delivered Wednesday to Iranian President Hasan Rouhani, in New York to attend a meeting of world leaders. - Associated Press

Video: FPI Executive Director Christopher J. Griffin discussed Rouhani and the future of nuclear negotiations with Iran on Fox News Live - Fox News Live

Charles Krauthammer writes: The administration says it wants actions, not words. Fine. Demand one simple proof of good faith: Honor the U.N. resolutions. Suspend uranium enrichment and we will talk. At least that stops the clock. Anything else amounts to being played. - Washington Post

Reuel Marc Gerecht writes: Without a credible American threat to go to war if Khamenei fails to dismantle—not just delay—his nuclear program, the upcoming negotiations are unlikely to end well. They could become, as we have already seen elsewhere in the Middle East, just farce. - The Weekly Standard

G. William Heiser and Amir Abbas Fakhraei write: If Khomeini was the father of the Islamic Revolution, Rouhani is the legitimate son of the Islamic Revolution. As they say, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. - Shadow Government

Blaise Misztal writes: [T]o best signal to Iran such American resoluteness - both in seeking peace and preparing for the worst - the president and Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, should unite behind a policy that lays out an acceptable deal while reaffirming their commitment to prevent a nuclear Iran, by all means necessary. - Christian Science Monitor

Naghmeh Abedini writes: Please recognize the promise that Iran made to my husband, and please restore Iran's commitment to religious freedom. Please show mercy and return my husband, Saeed Abedini, to our family. - Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Peter Feaver writes: Is there a bold step that Rouhani could take that would galvanize the optimists in the international community and, crucially, within the United States? I can think of one: releasing Pastor Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen who is a victim of religious persecution, imprisoned for his faith inside Iran. - Shadow Government

North Africa

Egypt's economy is in a shambles since the revolution in 2011 with many companies big and small slowing on new initiatives amid political uncertainty, but some businesses are still flourishing - online. - WSJ's Middle East Real Time

Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) said that an independent audit of last year's Benghazi attack should have interviewed Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, even though the previous 11 similar probes did not talk with the acting secretary. - DEFCON Hill

Egypt's new finance minister is on a mission that is seemingly impossible: he has pledged to reduce the budget deficit while at the same time spending more to get the economy moving, create jobs and buy some social peace. - Financial Times

Thousands protested in cities across Tunisia on Thursday to call on the ruling Islamist Ennahda party to step down immediately to make way for new elections to end a stalemate with its secular opponents. - Reuters

Bahrain

Bahrain voiced disappointment with President Barack Obama's description of the kingdom as beset by sectarian tension, arguing its problem was with "terrorists" who fomented division. - Reuters

Iraq

As a U.S. visa program for Iraqi interpreters nears its end Monday, one of those former military aides fears that he —

as well as thousands others like him — will be left behind to face the wrath of insurgents who view him as a traitor amid intensifying sectarian combat in Iraq. — Washington Times

Israel

Israeli President Shimon Peres offered a robust endorsement of President Barack Obama's overtures to Iran and handling of the Syria crisis, at a time when many Israelis have accused the American leader of showing uncertain leadership in the region. — Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday endorsed European restrictions on assistance to Israeli organizations in the occupied Palestinian territories, saying in a United Nations address that the European Union approach is a model for others to follow. — Washington Post

Palestinian militant groups are pushing for a “third intifada” in Israel to combat what they call the “Judaization” of Jerusalem, according to Arabic reports. — Washington Free Beacon

Religious and nationalist Israelis are defying a longstanding ban on Jewish prayer on the hilltop site of Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock — known to Jews as Temple Mount — prompting violent clashes with Palestinians that pose a threat to incipient peace talks. — Financial Times

Yochi Dreazen reports: A significant number of Israelis kind of agree Rouhani's demand -- or, at least the part about Israel finally owning up to its nuclear arsenal. — The Cable

Turkey

The United States and Turkey on Friday will announce the creation of a \$200 million fund to combat violent extremism by undercutting the ideological and recruiting appeal of jihadists in places like Somalia, Yemen and Pakistan, State Department officials said Thursday. — New York Times

In a multibillion-dollar deal, Turkey agreed Thursday to buy a Chinese-made long-range air- and missile-defense system — a move that could prevent the system from being integrated with Turkey's existing NATO architecture. — Defense News

For years, the overarching question about Turkey was whether the country would become more at home in the Middle East or instead continue its decades-long journey towards European standards. Now an answer has come closer into view: neither of the above. Relations with both regions are in a parlous state. — Financial Times

[Return to Top](#)

Asia

Afghanistan

A person wearing an Afghan Army uniform shot and killed a service member from the American-led coalition in eastern Afghanistan on Thursday before being shot dead himself, Afghan and coalition officials said. — New York Times

The Pentagon has quietly removed nearly 12,000 troops from Afghanistan during the past several months, scaling back the military's combat power before the end of the fighting season. — Military Times

Afghan leaders are coalescing around a final number of U.S. forces to remain in country after American and coalition forces withdraw next year. That total postwar force will likely end up around 10,000 soldiers, Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmi Rassoul said Thursday. — DEFCON Hill

Pakistan

Militants on Thursday shot two rockets at a helicopter carrying the Pakistani general in charge of disaster relief for the devastating earthquake this week, officials said. — New York Times

Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said he would proceed with a plan to build a gas pipeline from Iran, despite objections from the U.S., and said that he plans to use his speech at the United Nations on Friday to hit out against American drone strikes in his country. — Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Some security officials and relief groups are coming under attack as they struggle to reach victims in earthquake-ravaged southwestern Pakistan, demonstrating the volatile conditions in areas hardest hit by Tuesday's 7.7-magnitude temblor. – Washington Post

A bomb exploded in a crowded bus carrying government officials north of Peshawar on Friday, killing 17 people and wounding more than 40 in the second major attack in or near the northwestern Pakistani city in a week. – New York Times

American-led drone strikes against terrorist targets in Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere will undermine efforts by Islamabad and Kabul to forge a Taliban peace pact. – DEFCON Hill

President Obama will welcome Pakistan's new prime minister at the White House next month, the administration announced Thursday. – The Hill's Global Affairs

A former Afghan Taliban commander, who Pakistan said had been released at the weekend, is being held under virtual house arrest by his Pakistani handlers who watch his movements and listen to his phone calls, an arrangement likely to undermine his role as a peacemaker. – Reuters

India

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is set to meet President Barack Obama on Friday as the U.S. and India look to deepen military relations and increase cooperation on nuclear energy, hoping to invigorate their bond at a time when economic ties are strained. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Militants dressed in Indian Army uniforms killed up to a dozen people in attacks Thursday on an Indian police station and army base in Indian-controlled Kashmir, officials said. The attacks, near the disputed border with Pakistan, came a day after the Indian prime minister, Manmohan Singh, said he would hold talks in New York with his Pakistani counterpart. – NYT's India Ink

Dan Twining writes: A defensive strategy of nonalignment and autarky may have suited India when it was weak and poor. Today, a "do-nothing" foreign policy does not befit an aspiring global power. As India rises, its people, and the world, will expect more of it. – Shadow Government

Sadanand Dhume writes: India already lags most of East Asia in terms of both income and human development; it can scarcely afford to slip behind further. If growth continues to stall, it will jeopardize both the U.S.-India strategic partnership and India's rise as a global power. If Mr. Obama is frank, this is the message he'll deliver to his visitor today. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

China

Nineteen province-level governments in China collected a total of \$2.7 billion in fines last year from parents who had violated family planning laws, which usually limit couples to one child, a lawyer who had requested the data said Thursday. – New York Times

China's State Council, or cabinet, announced Friday the long-awaited rules for the Shanghai free-trade zone, pledging to ease restrictions on the service and financial sectors as a testing ground for reform. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Amid all the murkiness around the Shanghai free-trade zone, one area has drawn special interest: talk that the Internet will be freer there, with unblocked access to Facebook and Twitter. – WSJ's China Real Time

If there's any subtext underlining China's bid for a minority stake in a \$6 billion African iron ore mine, it's that the world's largest steel factory is still very much in the market for overseas assets. – WSJ's China Real Time

Two centuries of insecurity have conditioned Chinese leaders to be a little light on the trigger finger. So while Chinese strategy documents consistently speak of self-defense – the current official "active defense" – "I think you have to not be very literal when you read this stuff," Wortzel said. "It's a fairly prickly and aggressive military doctrine inside a defensive structure." – Breaking Defense

A PLA Navy official has confirmed to state-run media outlets that China will export the Shenyang J-31 twin-engine fifth generation fighter jet. – The Diplomat

China's anti-corruption watchdog said it had uncovered abuses at several provincial governments and state-owned enterprises, in the latest sign of an expanding crackdown on graft. – Reuters

North Korea

The Obama administration is ignoring China's transfer of mobile nuclear missile launchers to North Korea as Secretary of State John Kerry on Thursday applauded China for announcing new export controls on Pyongyang's arms programs. – Washington Free Beacon

The Obama administration's onetime point-man for North Korean policy met with a senior official from Pyongyang in Germany, Kyodo News reported on Wednesday, citing an informed source. – Global Security Newswire

Editorial: North Korea won't suddenly throw open its doors and invite more inspection of this dark underside of the world. But the commission has laid down an important record of testimony and human experience...[T]he commission is only a mechanism for discovering the truth. When its work is done, the world will have to decide what to do about it. – Washington Post

East Asia

The Pentagon notified the US Congress on Thursday of a proposed contract with Japan worth nearly \$1 billion to upgrade the country's early warning radar aircraft – Global Post

Japan said on Friday that it needed to expand its surveillance activities to cover the Pacific Ocean off its east coast to protect its interests in a zone rich with resources where Chinese naval ships were recently spotted by ministry officials. – Reuters

Taiwan's navy launched its premier surface-to-air missile from the deck of a warship Thursday, its first test of the weapon in six years, destroying a drone simulating a Chinese air attack. – AFP

Southeast Asia

The Philippines' legal challenge against China's claims in the South China Sea is gathering pace, emerging as a "proxy battle" over Beijing's territorial reach. – Reuters

Philippine forces said on Friday they had rescued the last civilians held by Muslim rebels on a southern island after nearly three weeks of fighting that has raised doubts about government efforts to end decades-old insurgencies. – Reuters

Editorial: As it happens, the pageant will be held in the same complex that next week will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit of some 1,200 CEOs and 20 world leaders, including President Obama and Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott. Maybe some of those high-flyers could find a quiet moment to ask their Indonesian hosts why Jakarta plays nice with thugs like the Islamic Defenders Front. – Wall Street Journal Asia (subscription required)

Trans-Pacific Partnership

President Barack Obama and leaders of 11 other countries are set to get directly involved with negotiations over the Trans-Pacific Partnership — potentially the largest trade deal in U.S. history — when they meet in Bali next month, U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman said on Thursday. – Politico

US business is urging the Obama administration not to compromise on key intellectual property and investment provisions as leaders of 12 countries intent on reaching a Pacific Rim trade deal prepare to meet in Indonesia next week for what are billed as crucial talks. – Financial Times

[Return to Top](#)

Security

Defense

House Speaker John Boehner sent mixed messages Thursday about the prospects for a government shutdown as Senate Democratic leaders floated a two-year sequestration fix. – Defense News

With five days left until the partial shutdown of the U.S. government on Monday, there are lots of ideas but no consensus about how to keep doors open on federal agencies. – Defense News

Sequestration and Congress' annual "inability to pass a budget" are putting at risk all the gains the Navy and Marine Corps have made during his four years in office, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said on Wednesday. – Defense One

The aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt's has delayed a scheduled underway period in order to complete required maintenance to its propulsion plant — a delay that's unrelated to a four-year midlife overhaul the flattop completed last month, a Navy spokesperson said. – Defense News

[T]he standard 40-person crew of an LCS — expanded to about 50 for Freedom's cruise — is too small to deal with onboard problems in the same manner, relying instead on an extensive shore organization. – Defense News

The three competitors in the program to build the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle remain confident in the program despite budget uncertainties as the Defense Department kicks off testing as part of the Engineering and Manufacturing Development phase of the program. – DOD Buzz

A government watchdog report issued Thursday calls for greater congressional oversight of the Navy's carrier-based unmanned aircraft program, and cites other "programmatic risks" related to the budget and schedule. – The Daily Press

NSA

U.S. officials declined to answer lawmakers' questions on Thursday about the full scope of the National Security Agency's collection of Americans' data, including whether it has ever sought to acquire large volumes of cellphone location information or other records. – Washington Post

Congress took the first steps Thursday to restrain the NSA's phone-snooping program, with Sen. Dianne Feinstein laying out details of a bill that require phone data be deleted more quickly and agents to let a secret court know immediately every time they want to dig through the data. – Washington Times

A government shutdown, set for Oct. 1 if lawmakers fail to strike a deal, would be unlikely to impede the National Security Agency's surveillance programs. – Hillcon Valley

Britt Snider and Charles Battaglia write: Far from being a threat to the agency's sensitive yet necessary operations, an independent inspector general at the NSA would boost public support for that work. – Washington Post

Arms Control

The State Department on Thursday asked Georgia Republican Johnny Isakson to join Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) in introducing President Obama's nominees to lead the State Department's arms control policy amid GOP concerns about the administration's priorities. – The Hill's Global Affairs

Experts monitoring a U.N. gathering that convened Thursday to discuss atomic-weapons elimination said they expected the event to reveal tensions that have long divided nuclear-armed nations from much of the world. – Global Security Newswire

Cybersecurity

Congress almost certainly won't pass any kind of major cybersecurity legislation in 2013, according to industry officials, lobbyists and others who track the issue. – Roll Call

[Return to Top](#)

Russia/Europe

Russia

The International Olympic Committee said Thursday that it had no grounds to challenge a Russian law widely perceived as anti-gay, angering LGBT and human rights activists, who say they will make their case with sponsors and governments taking part in the Sochi Winter Olympics. – Washington Post

Experts said Wednesday that a myriad of demographic, social, and economic problems could transform Russia into a virtually unrecognizable country in just a couple of decades that is more harmful to U.S. and Western interests. – Washington Free Beacon

Russian President Vladimir Putin is considering a prison amnesty later this year, a gesture that could enable him to counter critics who say the courts have been used to silence his political foes. - Reuters

Carl Gershman writes: Russian President Vladimir Putin has had some success recently using his support for the Assad regime in Syria to strengthen Moscow's position in the Middle East. But his progress on this front is much less important than Moscow's growing troubles in its "near abroad," as it refers to the strategically vital area to its immediate west. - Washington Post

Christian Caryl writes: The current anti-Putin movement remains deeply fragmented, a bewildering array of constantly shifting (and bickering) small parties with scant funding and little organization... The real challenge is a strategic one: What does the opposition ultimately stand for? What sort of alternative policies does it offer? - Foreign Policy's Democracy Lab

Europe

Two Muslim converts pleaded not guilty on Friday to murdering a British soldier whose killing in broad daylight on a busy London street in May horrified the nation. - Reuters

Bel Trew reports: The ongoing suppression of the Brotherhood has driven party activists still in Egypt underground. But it has also prompted volunteers to take over the party's work from what might perhaps seem an unlikely location: North London. - Foreign Policy

Christopher Caldwell writes: Like the United States after 2004, when a shaky-looking executive won a victory that was never as solid as it seemed, Germany may be sailing out of the calm before a big ideological storm. - The Weekly Standard

Kateryna Krylova writes: The difficult democratic changes Ukraine needs to move forward will require both sustained effort by the government and lawmakers and sustained pressure from ordinary citizens. - Freedom House's Freedom at Issue

[Return to Top](#)

Americas

United States of America

President Obama named executives to two development organizations on Thursday. - The Hill's Global Affairs

Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) on Thursday slammed the Obama administration for pursuing an empty foreign policy in the Middle East, and said the United States needs to recognize that the Arab Spring has become a movement that hurts U.S. allies in the region. - The Hill's Floor Action Blog

The FBI has been using drones to support its law enforcement operations since 2006 and has spent more than \$3 million on the unmanned aircraft, the Justice Department's internal watchdog said Thursday. - Associated Press

Latin America

Panama's Canal Authority slapped a fine on Thursday of up to \$1 million on the owners of a North Korean ship seized in July for smuggling Cuban weapons under 10,000 tons of sugar. - Reuters

Real estate agents, auto body workers and home builders can come out of the shadows in Cuba's expanding private economy under rules announced Thursday that allow 18 new categories of independent employment under President Raúl Castro's economic reforms. - Associated Press

Argentina and Spain agreed on Thursday to team up to pressure Britain to discuss their separate claims on British territories: the Falklands in the south Atlantic and Gibraltar near the southern tip of Spain. - Reuters

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos writes: In my country, no one under age 70 knows what a Colombia completely without violence feels like. As president, I have assumed the responsibility of making sure that our children and grandchildren learn about the conflict only from history books. - Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

[Return to Top](#)

Africa

East Africa

The CIA is adding operatives and resources to focus on the Somalia-based militant group the Shabab as the FBI sends scores of agents to help examine evidence taken from the rubble of the shopping mall massacre in Nairobi, U.S. officials say. – Los Angeles Times

Only days after heavily armed assailants stormed a crowded mall and killed scores of people in the capital, militants killed three people near the border with Somalia, Kenyan officials said Thursday, putting this country even further on edge. – New York Times

From the strife of Somalia to the slums of Kenya to the leafy streets of Minneapolis, Minn., al-Shabaab has put together a global recruiting network to replenish its militancy. The drive draws on videos for the curious; small financial incentives for the poor; and sometimes brute force for the reluctant, said people who have had contact with members of the group. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

A report from Africa in the aftermath of the deadly al-Shabab terrorist attack on a Nairobi shopping mall indicates Kenya's intelligence agency had advance warning that the al Qaeda-linked group was planning attacks. – Washington Times

An international arrest notice was issued for Samantha Lewthwaite, a British woman the Kenyan government is investigating in relation to the Nairobi shopping-mall attack who is also wanted in relation to explosives-related charges connected to a 2011 terror plot. – Wall Street Journal

More U.S. Marines are fortifying security at the American Embassy in Nairobi following the deadly shopping mall attack there, CNN has learned. – CNN's Security Clearance

Leaders of the nation's largest Somali community say some of their young men are still being enticed to join the terror group that has claimed responsibility for the deadly mall attack in Kenya, despite a concentrated effort to shut off what authorities call a "deadly pipeline" of men and money. – Associated Press

The Islamist militant attack on a Kenyan shopping mall increasingly appears to have been carried out by a dominant faction of al Shabaab, which has ideological and personal ties to al Qaeda, U.S. officials said on Thursday. – Reuters

David Kilcullen writes: If we want to succeed, rendering today's dire projections inaccurate, we will need to get our heads into the cities and out of the mountains. – Financial Times

West Africa

Weeks after Nigeria's army declared him dead, Africa's most-wanted terrorist, a fundamentalist preacher named Abubakar Shekau, appeared in an online video hurling invective at the American president and British queen. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Separatist Tuareg rebels in northern Mali said late Thursday that they were suspending their participation in a peace accord with the government, marking a major setback for the newly elected president who is trying to reunite the country after a 2012 rebellion led to large-scale upheaval. – Associated Press

Mali's newly elected President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita called on Thursday for nations in the Sahara region to create a regional multilateral force that could intervene quickly to respond to the ongoing Islamist threat across the area. – Reuters

Parliamentary elections in Guinea on Saturday officially cap the mineral-rich West African country's return to civilian rule after a 2008 coup, but many fear that the vote could reignite violence that killed dozens of people earlier this year. – Reuters

Sudan

Deadly protests have rocked several Sudanese cities since Sunday, when the government lifted subsidies on gasoline, nearly doubling the price in an increase that is bound to create a domino effect on other goods. – New York Times

Sudanese security forces have killed at least 50 protesters with shots to the head or chest, two rights groups said on Friday, challenging the authorities' narrative of the worst unrest in Sudan's central regions for years. - Reuters

Mia Farrow and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen write: For reasons that are unclear, Sudan doesn't meet Mr. Obama's threshold for action. His words at the U.N., including generic rhetoric "that it is in our interest to see a Middle East and North Africa that is peaceful and prosperous," offer little hope if any. Mr. Obama has abandoned his own moral standards and left the people of Darfur to perish. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe on Thursday berated the United States and former colonial power Britain and its allies for trying to control his nation and its resources, telling them to remove their "illegal and filthy sanctions." - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Obama Administration

Jackson Diehl writes: Obama warned the General Assembly on Tuesday that "the danger for the world is that the United States, after a decade of war . . . may disengage, creating a vacuum of leadership that no other nation can fill." Sadly, it is not just a danger. It was the message of his speech — and the tangible result of his presidency. – Washington Post

Peggy Noonan writes: The world misses the old America, the one before the crash—the crashes—of the past dozen years. That is the takeaway from conversations the past week in New York, where world leaders gathered for the annual U.N. General Assembly session. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

[Return to Top](#)

Events

uVirtus Linux Launch Party
Freedom House
September 27

Crisis in the Central African Republic
National Endowment for Democracy
September 27

Women in the Syrian Crisis
United States Institute of Peace
September 27

Challenges of Chemical Weapons Disarmament in Syria
Wilson Center
September 27

Kosciuszko Chair Military Lecture: The Battle for Westerplatte, 1939
The Institute of World Politics
September 27

Implosion: The End of Russia and What It Means for America
Heritage Foundation
September 30

The U.S.-Russia Relationship: Transcending Mutual Deterrence
Brookings Institution
September 30

Lessons from the United States African Development Foundation
Center for Strategic and International Studies
September 30

Putin vs. Civil Society
National Endowment for Democracy, George Washington University
September 30

Covering Syria
New America Foundation
New York City
September 30

Film Screening: The Network
Open Society Foundation
September 30

Expanding the U.S.-India Defense Partnership
Center for American Progress
September 30

Reform Under Rouhani: Assessing Positive Change in Iran
Stimson Center
September 30

A Conversation With Catherine Ashton
Wilson Center
September 30

The China-Russia Reversal
Wilson Center
September 30

Business Meeting
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 1

The Navy Yard Tragedy: Examining Government Clearances and Background Checks
Senate Homeland Security Committee
October 1

Human Rights Abuses in Egypt
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee
October 1

Pain and Promise for Women in the Middle East and North Africa
Heritage Foundation, SAT-7
October 1

Keeping the Promise: Maintaining the Health of Military and Veteran Families and Children
Brookings Institution

October 1

Book Launch Event: "Thank You For Your Service" by David Finkel
Center for a New American Security
October 1

Yoshihiko Noda, 95th Prime Minister of Japan, to speak at Stimson
Stimson Center
October 1

Foreign Investment and Myanmar's Reform
Stimson Center
October 1

Strategy: A History
Wilson Center
October 1

Islamic Law and Finance Incubator Module
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 1

Markets, Civil Society, and Democratic Change in the Middle East
Hudson Institute
October 2

The Business of Defense in an Age of Austerity: Perspectives from the Mid-Tier
Atlantic Council
October 2

Unheard Voices: Civil Society Perspectives on Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations
Project on Middle East Democracy, OneVoice
October 2

The WTO and the Uncertain Future of Multilateralism
Cato Institute
October 2

U.S. Drone Strikes: Voices from the Ground
Open Society Institute
New York City
October 2

An Assessment of Rouhani's Visit to New York: Real Diplomacy or Failed Expectations?
Wilson Center
October 2

Leadership in the Asia-Pacific: The Road Ahead for Japan and the United States
Wilson Center
October 2

Nomination Hearing
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 3

Threats to the Homeland

Senate Homeland Security Committee
October 3

What Japan Can Gain from Sound Innovation
Heritage Foundation
October 3

Revisiting Sovereign Bankruptcy
Brookings Institution
October 3

Cross-Strait Developments in 2013: New Trends and Prospects
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 3

Transatlantic Cooperation on Energy Security and Climate Change
Atlantic Council
October 3

Freedom on the Net 2013: Internet Freedom In Decline, But Activists Fight Back
Freedom House
October 3

Building Government Institutions in Afghanistan: Getting the Basics Right
United States Institute of Peace
October 3

Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe
Wilson Center
October 3

China's Strategies for Lowering Energy's Environmental Footprint
Wilson Center
October 3

Application Deadline for FPI Director of Development Position
Foreign Policy Initiative
October 4

Germany's Decision: Post-Election Analysis
Brookings Institution
October 4

The meaning and implication of the "Mensalão," Brazil's largest trial on political corruption
Wilson Center
October 4

North American Rally for Tibet
International Campaign for Tibet
October 7

Deciphering Russian Policy on Syria: What Happened...and What's Next
Wilson Center
October 7

Impact of Sequestration on the National Defense
Senate Armed Services Committee
October 8

Japan and the Korean Peninsula: A Regional "Two-Level Game"
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 8

Rethinking U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy
Cato Institute
October 8

Israeli Security Policy in an Uncertain Middle East
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
October 9

Two States or One?: The Future of Israelis and Palestinians
Middle East Policy Council
October 9

NSA Surveillance: What We Know; What to do About It
Cato Institute
October 9

Community Security and Protection from Deliberate Violence
Stimson Center
October 9

Nomination Hearing
Senate Armed Services Committee
October 10

NSA Surveillance Programs and the Najibullah Zazi Terrorist Threat
Brookings Institution
October 10

Israel's National Challenges, at Home and Abroad
Washington Institute for Near East Policy
October 10

European Union - United States Partnership in Africa
Wilson Center
October 10

Assessing Warsaw Pact Military Forces: The Role of CIA Clandestine Reporting
Wilson Center
October 10

The Faulty Logic of the EU and its Consequences
Alexander Hamilton Society
October 10

Among Enemies: Counter-Espionage for Business Travelers
The Institute of World Politics
October 10

Narendra Modi's Experiment With the Middle Class in Gujarat
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
October 11

Global Economic Issues: Perspectives from Kazakhstan
Atlantic Council
October 11

Fall 2013 AILA International Fellows Program
Center for Strategic International Studies
October 13-18

JFK, Conservative
Politics and Prose Bookstore and Coffeehouse
October 15

The End of Overkill? Reassessing U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy
Cato Institute
October 15

The Russian Orthodox Church and Russia's Foreign Policy Vectors
Wilson Center
October 15

A Discussion with Ken Pollack, Author of Unthinkable
Middle East Institute
October 16

The Role of Economics in Democratic Transitions: Kenya
National Endowment for Democracy
October 17

The New Political Landscape of Afghanistan's Neighborhood After '2014'
Wilson Center
October 21

The World that Faces President Obama: A Conversation with Ian Bremmer
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 21

2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead?
Foreign Policy Initiative
October 22

PONI Live Debate: Global Zero
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 22

Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991
Wilson Center
October 23

Social Networks and Public Support for the European Union
The Institute of World Politics
October 23

Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security
Cato Institute
October 25

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 25

PONI 2013 Fall Conference
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 28-29

Constructing Nation: National Narratives of History Teachers in Ukraine
Wilson Center
October 28

Does the Treaty Power Threaten Our System of Limited Government?
Heritage Foundation
October 30

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Japan
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

International Affairs Fellowship in South Korea
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

CSIS-U.S. Army War College International Strategic Crisis Negotiation Exercise
Center for Strategic International Studies
November 1-2

Obama's Foreign Policy: What is it and is it Working?
Alexander Hamilton Society
November 5

Application Deadline for Stanton Nuclear Security Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
December 16

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Nuclear Security
Council on Foreign Relations
January 17, 2014

[Return to Top](#)

Overnight Brief is a daily product of the Foreign Policy Initiative, which seeks to promote an active U.S. foreign policy committed to robust support for democratic allies, human rights, a strong American military equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century, and strengthening America's global economic competitiveness. To submit comments or suggestions, email overnight@foreignpolicyi.org.



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
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
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FPI Overnight Brief

September 26, 2013

Table of Contents

[Middle East/North Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Security](#), [Russia/Europe](#), [Americas](#), [Africa](#), [Obama Administration](#), [Events](#)

Announcements

FPI seeks an energetic and experienced Director of Development. For more information, please visit our website. Applications are due by Friday, October 4.

The 2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead? will be held on October 22 at the Andrew W. Mellon auditorium in Washington DC. RSVP today.

If you support our mission and work, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to FPI today.

The Must-Reads

- Rouhani denounces Holocaust, CNN denies mistranslating
- WSJ editorial: Holocaust denial in translation (sub req)
- West says near UN resolution on Syria
- Key Syrian rebel groups abandon exile leaders
- Westinghouse and India's nuclear power corp near pact (WSJ sub)
- N. Korea's nuclear work beyond sanctions' ability to contain
- US sees direct threat in attack at Kenyan mall, investigation phase begins
- WaPo editorial and Lee Smith on Pres. Obama's UNGA speech
- FPI's Zarate: Suggested questions for today's SFRC hearing
- FPI's Zarate on Syria on France 24 and NTDTV + Kirchick on Model UN

Middle East/North Africa

Iran

Iranian President Hasan Rouhani broke from his government's questioning of the Holocaust, telling American media editors that "the Nazis committed a massacre against the Jewish people and we condemn that." – Wall Street Journal

A much-anticipated greeting between President Obama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani did not take place here

because American officials seemed to have no firm strategy for what would come next, the new Iranian leader said Wednesday. – Washington Post

As he conducts a high-profile good-will visit to New York this week, Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, says he is bringing a simple message of peace and friendship. But on Wednesday, Mr. Rouhani set off a political storm here and in Iran, with a frank acknowledgment and condemnation of the Holocaust that landed him in precisely the kind of tangled dispute he had hoped to avoid. – New York Times

Iranians pored over news accounts Wednesday of President Hassan Rouhani's speech to the United Nations General Assembly, with those eager to break out of Iran's isolation expressing disappointment that their new leader didn't meet with President Obama or offer more concrete steps for sanctions relief. – Los Angeles Times

After Secretary of State John F. Kerry sits down Thursday with his Iranian counterpart to start the highest level talks between the two nations in 34 years, negotiators for the two sides are likely to grapple with a highly sensitive issue: Can the mullahs in Tehran be trusted to enrich uranium — potential nuclear bomb fuel — to even low levels on their own soil? – Los Angeles Times

CNN said it did not mistranslate Iranian President Hassan Rowhani's comments about the Holocaust to make him sound more moderate during a Tuesday interview with Christiane Amanpour, contradicting a report that ran in Iran's state-run news agency. – Washington Free Beacon

David Ignatius reports: The U.S.-Iranian diplomatic train is rolling fast, with President Hassan Rouhani talking Wednesday about a three-month timetable for a nuclear deal. But Rouhani was also cautiously insistent about staying on the single track of the nuclear issue — perhaps fearing that if this becomes a runaway, it will derail. – Washington Post

Editorial: We'll leave it to CNN to account for its translation, and why it made Mr. Rouhani seem so much more conciliatory than he was. Meantime, points for honesty go to the journalists at Fars, who for reasons that probably range from solidarity to self-preservation aren't disposed to whitewash their President's ideological predilections. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Ray Takeyh writes: In the next few weeks, in a variety of conclaves and conferences, Iranian and western diplomats will test each other. It remains to be seen whether the international community will be comfortable with the new Iran retaining its nuclear plants. It seems implausible that Mr Rouhani can escape the noose of the sanctions without offering some measurable concessions on the scope and scale of the growing nuclear programme. Still, it may come to pass that he will be given allowances and reprieves not offered to his impetuous predecessor. Hovering over all this will be Iran's most consequential decision maker, assessing his latest protégé and determining the scope of his authority. – Financial Times

Marc Tracy writes: The Holocaust is a thing that happened—just like Barack Obama getting re-elected as president last year, the Baltimore Ravens winning the Super Bowl earlier this year, and me eating chicken fingers for lunch a couple hours ago are things that happened. This is only hard if you want it to be. Has it ever occurred to people that if Rouhani wanted to acknowledge the Holocaust, he would just, you know, acknowledge the Holocaust? – The New Republic

Syria

After months of crippling deadlock, members of the United Nations Security Council have inched closer to the details of a binding resolution on Syria, Western diplomats said Wednesday, though Russia, one of Syria's strongest allies, denied that a consensus had been reached. – New York Times

As diplomats at the United Nations push for a peace conference to end Syria's civil war, a collection of some of the country's most powerful rebel groups publicly abandoned the opposition's political leaders, casting their lot with an affiliate of Al Qaeda. – New York Times

The recent U.S.-Russia deal to rid Syria of its chemical weapons found the White House toning down its previous calls for Syrian President Bashar Assad to resign, but the State Department now says the Obama administration still believes Mr. Assad will have to be removed before peace can be achieved in the Mideast nation. – Washington Times

Russia is ready to help guard Syria's chemical weapons sites when President Bashar al-Assad's chemical arms stockpiles and factories are destroyed, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying on Thursday by news agencies. – Reuters

World leaders will be able to secure a peace deal in Syria only if Washington drops demands for President Bashar al-Assad's removal and the threat of air strikes, an ally of President Vladimir Putin said. – Reuters

Seven al Qaeda-affiliated rebels were killed in a battle with a Syrian Kurdish militia on Wednesday, as violence between Syria's Arabs and Kurds increased, opposition activists said. - Reuters

Bill Gertz reports: State Department officials at the United Nations briefed reporters Tuesday about Syria arms talks that day between Secretary of State John F. Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov – Washington Times' Inside the Ring

Interview: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, the architect of the recent agreement with Secretary of State John Kerry to remove chemical weapons from Syria, spoke with The Post's Lally Weymouth at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Tuesday. Lavrov made it clear that Russia is determined to see Syria remain unified, but that it does not insist that President Bashar al-Assad remain in power. – Washington Post

Video: FPI Policy Director Robert Zarate recently discussed Syria in appearances on France 24 and NTDTV.

North Africa

Egypt's interim government closed the Muslim Brotherhood's last remaining media outlet and issued coverage directives to all Egyptian television stations. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Catherine Ashton, the European Union's foreign-policy chief, has agreed to return to Egypt next week to try to nudge forward efforts to re-establish political dialogue, a senior European diplomat said. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The State Department's watchdog says it has found no evidence of any bias in the independent audit of the attack in Benghazi, Libya, contradicting Republican allegations that it was set up to protect Hillary Clinton. – The Hill's Global Affairs

A Moroccan editor is being investigated on suspicion of helping militants after posting an al Qaeda video on his website, prosecutors said, in a case that rights groups say erodes press freedom. - Reuters

Yemen

A Yemeni lieutenant colonel was killed on Wednesday by a bomb planted in his car, the state news agency said, the latest in a string of attacks on security officials blamed by government on Islamist insurgents. - Reuters

Iraq

Lawmakers are looking for a last-minute legislative fix to extend a visa program for Iraqis who served as interpreters for the U.S. military during the Iraq War. – DEFCON Hill

At least 33 people were killed in attacks across Iraq on Wednesday that included a coordinated assault against local government and police buildings in the north of the country, police and medical sources said. - Reuters

Bombs left inside busy markets in mainly Sunni Muslim districts of Baghdad killed at least 23 people on Thursday, police said. - Reuters

Israel

Israeli President Shimon Peres offered a robust endorsement of President Barack Obama's overtures to Iran and handling of the Syria crisis, at a time when many Israelis have accused the American leader of showing uncertain leadership in the region. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Although Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered Israel's delegation to leave the room during this week's U.N. speech by Iran's president, he was listening and was not happy with what he heard. "As expected, this was a cynical speech that was full of hypocrisy," Netanyahu said in a statement Wednesday. – LA Times' World Now

Israel and the Palestinians have agreed to intensify their peace talks and to increase the U.S. role, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Wednesday in a rare comment on the negotiations. - Reuters

Peter Berkowitz writes: The path to peace in the Holy Land passes through the mutual recognition by Israelis and Palestinians of the legitimacy of the other side's national claims and the inalienability of their human rights. The path to peace in the Holy Land requires that both Israel and the Palestinians grasp that painful concessions are not only warranted by justice but by the vital interests of both peoples in peace and security. – Hoover Institution's Defining Ideas

Turkey

Almost 40 percent of protesters surveyed by a Turkish medical group complained of continuing repercussions from their exposure to the tear gas that security forces used to quell last spring's antigovernment demonstrations, the group says. – New York Times

[Return to Top](#)

Asia

South Asia

Twelve years after the overthrow of the Taliban, many Afghan women are caught in a confusing time warp. They are absorbing new ideas about freedom and rights through the Internet and attending school and college in record numbers... Yet they still live in a deeply traditional society where male elders decide their fates and in-laws rule their lives. – Washington Post

The company that holds the multibillion-dollar Pentagon contract to supply U.S. forces in Afghanistan with food and water brought in supplies to build an Afghan warehouse through Iran, in a possible violation of U.S. sanctions. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Four years after it crushed a long separatist rebellion, Sri Lanka may be sliding towards an authoritarian system as President Mahinda Rajapaksa gathers power around him, the U.N. human rights chief said on Wednesday. - Reuters

Editorial: Mr. Sharif has a long and mixed political record, and terrorism of the sort seen Sunday could derail his third premiership. But with growth down since 2008, privatization is a laudable first step toward revitalizing Pakistan. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

India

Nuclear Power Corp. of India is close to signing a preliminary agreement with Westinghouse Electric Co. that would lay the groundwork for a nuclear plant using the company's reactors, a person familiar with the pending deal said. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

When U.S. and Indian leaders meet on Friday they likely will discuss a bilateral civilian-atomic cooperation agreement that was signed in 2008 but has not been implemented because of a clash over financial culpability following a nuclear accident, Time magazine reported. – Global Security Newswire

Militants dressed in Indian army uniforms killed eight people in attacks on an Indian police station and army base near the Pakistan border on Thursday, triggering calls to cancel talks between the rival nations' leaders at the weekend. - Reuters

Rod Hunter writes: Failure to oppose India's depredations would invite widespread imitation. It is time to return the U.S.-India economic relationship to a more balanced footing. In the meantime, President Obama should make clear to Prime Minister Singh that the discrimination and pillaging of foreign intellectual property need to stop. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

China

Mr. Xi must now decide how much further he is willing to pursue other high-level corruption investigations that could either strengthen his authority or unleash risky instabilities within the political elite. – New York Times

Now, over the past several months, all of those tycoons have disappeared from view. Their absences come amid an alleged corruption scandal that may broadside the economic vitality of this gateway to China's rugged west and indicate a fresh front in Chinese political infighting. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

A court in Beijing sentenced the teenage son of a celebrity military singer to 10 years in prison on Thursday, after finding him and four other young people guilty of rape in a case that galvanized discussion in China about the reckless lives of some offspring of the Communist Party elite. – New York Times

East Asia

North Korea has advanced its indigenous atomic capabilities so much that it is not realistic to expect international sanctions and export controls to constrain its progress in developing a nuclear weapon, Agence France-Presse reported on Wednesday, citing the findings of experts. – Global Security Newswire

South Korea's decision to reject a bid by Boeing to supply 60 warplanes and to re-issue a tender was made in the interests of better technology but may not be justified given North Korea's weak air capabilities, experts said on Wednesday. – Reuters

Taiwan on Wednesday received the first of 12 anti-submarine aircraft from the United States, as it beefs up its naval defenses against China, the military said. – AFP

Russia threatened on Thursday to ban visa-free travel for Japanese officials to four disputed Pacific islands if they make statements demanding the territories be returned to Japan. – Reuters

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe writes: Womenomics will feature prominently in my address on Thursday at the United Nations General Assembly. Unleashing the potential of Womenomics is an absolute must if Japan's growth is to continue. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Philippines

Philippine government troops claimed more than a week ago to be mopping up a failed attempt by Muslim rebels to seize the port city of Zamboanga, but news media report continuing clashes and mounting casualties. – LA Times' World Now

The United States gave the Philippine military six patrol boats Wednesday to be used in a southern region where armed Muslim militants are active, the military said. – AFP

[Return to Top](#)

Security

Defense

Senior US senators say it's still too early to predict the final contents of a short-term government spending measure, nor exactly when both chambers will approve it. – Defense News

With Congress still wrestling with how to avoid a government shutdown on Tuesday, the US Treasury Department issued another piece of bad fiscal news Wednesday, saying that the debt ceiling crisis will arrive sooner and be worse than previous estimates. – Defense News

Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., has placed a hold on the White House's nominee for Air Force secretary, blocking the confirmation process of Deborah Lee James until questions are answered regarding potential cuts to the A-10 Thunderbolt attack aircraft, according to an Ayotte aide. – Defense News

The Pentagon's inspector general has flagged hundreds of deficiencies and corrective actions needed for Lockheed Martin Corp. (LMT)'s F-35 fighter, the military's costliest program. – Bloomberg

The Pentagon expects to finalize a contract with Lockheed Martin Corp for the sixth and seventh batches of F-35 fighter jets within days, the deputy director of the \$392 billion program said on Wednesday. – Reuters

NSA

The head of the National Security Agency delivered a vigorous defense Wednesday of his agency's collection of Americans' phone records for counterterrorism purposes, asserting that the program was helpful in investigations of the Boston Marathon bombing and the suspected plots against U.S. diplomatic outposts this summer. – Washington Post

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said Wednesday that he expects the Supreme Court will eventually decide the legality of National Security Agency surveillance programs. – DEFCON Hill

Spying by the National Security Agency has cost the United States economically and angered allies, a bipartisan group

of senators said Wednesday in unveiling legislation that would end the collection of millions of Americans' phone records and data on Internet usage. – Associated Press

Arms Control

Robert Zarate writes: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will meet this morning to question nominees to three important State Department positions that deal with U.S. policy on weapons of mass destruction, arms control, and nonproliferation....We encourage Senators and the general public to consider the following questions. – Foreign Policy Initiative

[Return to Top](#)

Russia/Europe

Russia

Former President Bill Clinton described his relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin as “brutally blunt,” and said Putin never reneged on a personal agreement between the two. – The Hill's Blog Briefing Room

Pentagon intelligence agencies are closely watching Russian and Chinese war games now taking place in Europe and Asia involving tens of thousands of troops. – Washington Free Beacon

A Supreme Court judge in Russia's North Caucasus province of Dagestan was shot dead along with his son on Wednesday, the second member of the court to be killed this year in a region beset by an Islamist insurgency and violent crime. – Reuters

Europe

The EU is stepping up its courtship of Ukraine amid an escalating contest with Russia for influence in eastern Europe. – Financial Times

Ukraine, which is hoping to sign a historic free-trade agreement with the European Union in November, is confident it will resolve the status of jailed former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara said on Wednesday. – Reuters

The chief executive of Russian potash producer Uralkali has been moved from jail to house arrest in Belarus, signaling that a diplomatic spat over the collapse of a sales cartel could be nearing an end. – Reuters

NATO

A missile defense contract will kick off a series of NATO business opportunities expected to be worth more than €1 billion (US \$1.35 billion) over 18 months. – Defense News

[Return to Top](#)

Americas

United States of America

The association representing State Department employees will hold a rally Friday to highlight the damage to U.S. influence and national security if Congress fails to pass a stopgap spending bill. – The Hill's Global Affairs

FPI Fellow James Rosen discussed his recent article in The Weekly Standard on Model U.N. on the Mike Rosen show – 850 KOA

Latin America

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro didn't appear Wednesday at the United Nations, where he was scheduled to address the General Assembly—and later attributed his decision to an alleged conspiracy against him. – Wall Street

Journal (subscription required)

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Wednesday said he was preparing legal action against Airbus due to a "serious fault" in his presidential jet following maintenance. - Reuters

South American nations are jointly exploring the creation of a communications system to curtail U.S. spying in the region, Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Ricardo Patino said on Wednesday. - Reuters

The support of Venezuela and Cuba will play a key role in Colombia's efforts to reach a negotiated end to Latin America's last major guerilla war, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos said on Wednesday. - Reuters

Leftist Honduran presidential candidate Xiomara Castro, the wife of deposed former President Manuel Zelaya, appears to have a slight lead in the race to become the next head of the Central American country, according to a poll released on Wednesday. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Africa

East Africa

Kenyan and American investigators began a sweeping inquiry on Wednesday into a shopping mall massacre here that killed scores of people, sifting through rubble, studying closed-circuit television footage and bringing in more resources to identify the attackers. - New York Times

Viewing the deadly siege at a shopping mall in Kenya as a direct threat to its security, the United States is deploying dozens of F.B.I. agents to investigate the wreckage, hoping to glean every piece of information possible to help prevent such a devastating attack from happening again, possibly even on American soil. - New York Times

Strong similarities between this week's terrorist assault in Kenya and a 2008 raid by Islamists in India have raised questions among counterterrorism experts about whether militant groups see the earlier attack as a model. - Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

The alleged Somali mastermind of the assault on a posh mall that killed scores and jolted Kenya is a man of contradictions. - Washington Post

The deadly mall attack in Kenya is unlikely to change the Obama administration's restrained approach to Shabab, the Somali-based terrorist group that claimed responsibility for the violence and that has been the target of occasional U.S. military action, American officials and counter-terrorism analysts say. - Los Angeles Times

U.S. security and law enforcement personnel are pressing for access to a Kenyan shopping mall where a terror attack and subsequent armed standoff killed at least 67 people. - CNN's Security Clearance

Al-Shabab's attack on an upscale mall in Kenya could be a bitter taste of future violence from a surging international coalition of al-Qaida fighters, says a former top U.S. official for Africa. - U.S. News and World Report

The former head of the Somali central bank hired Podesta Group to strengthen relationships with American contacts shortly before stepping down amid graft allegations from the United Nations. - The Hill's Global Affairs

Al Shabaab emerged as a regional threat funded by millions of dollars from activities ranging from extortion to taxing charcoal exports, but its attack on a Kenyan shopping mall is expected to provoke a counter-terrorism response aimed at crippling the Somali Islamist group's finances. - Reuters

Josh Rogin reports: The Somali-based terrorist organization al-Shabab, which claimed credit for the devastating attack in Nairobi this week, is an international organization that could attack anywhere, including the United States, according to the president of Somalia. - The Daily Beast

Nigeria

Nigeria's Senate has opened an investigation into the killing of at least seven people by security forces in Abuja in what authorities said was a gunbattle with Islamist militants but witnesses said was an attack on unarmed squatters. - Reuters

Sudan

Sudan lashed out Wednesday at the Obama administration for what it called a deliberate attempt to delay a visa for the country's indicted president until after his turn to address the UN General Assembly is over. – The Hill's Blog Briefing Room

Colum Lynch reports: Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who is indicted for war crimes, has cancelled his plans to address a high-level meeting of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly's general debate, according to U.N. officials and diplomats. – The Cable

At least 27 people have been killed in protests in Khartoum over fuel subsidy cuts announced by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, a medical source said on Thursday, in the worst outbreak of unrest in Sudan's capital in years. - Reuters

Central African Republic

France's foreign minister called on Wednesday for the U.N. Security Council to adopt a resolution next month to boost U.N. operations in the Central African Republic, which he said risked becoming a new Somalia if it did not get immediate support. - Reuters

[Return to Top](#)

Obama Administration

Analysis: President Barack Obama this week bet much of his international legacy on resolving two of the Middle East's most stubborn problems—Iran's nuclear advances and the Arab-Israeli conflict—gambling on a second term of diplomacy where past presidents have failed. – Wall Street Journal (subscription required)

Editorial: Mr. Obama may believe that minimizing values in foreign relations is tough-minded and realistic. In fact, it can only diminish U.S. influence, including in matters that he defines as core. “It was not all that long ago that farmers in Venezuela and Indonesia welcomed American doctors to their villages and hung pictures of JFK on their living room walls,” Mr. Obama wrote as a presidential candidate in 2007. “We can be this America again.” He was right. We could be that America again — but not by cherishing oil over liberty. – Washington Post

Lee Smith writes: If the president of the United States wants to hazard his own prestige on a diplomatic breakthrough with Rouhani that's one thing. It's something else when he uses American prestige in order to defend the interests of our adversaries, like Russia, Syria, and the Iranian-led resistance bloc. – The Weekly Standard Blog

[Return to Top](#)

Events

Nomination Hearing
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 26

Nomination Hearing
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 26

A Closer Look at Cuba and its Recent History of Proliferation
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Western Hemisphere Subcommittee
September 26

Fulfilling A Key 9/11 Commission Recommendation: Implementing Biometric Exit

House Homeland Security Committee
Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee
September 26

Minimal Deterrence: Examining the Evidence
Heritage Foundation/National Institute for Public Policy
September 26

AFA September Breakfast
Air Force Association
September 26

A Discussion With Stephen Cohen, Author of Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum
Middle East Institute
September 26

The Federal Budget and Appropriations for FY 2014: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights in the Middle East
Project on Middle East Democracy, Heinrich Böll Foundation
September 26

The Tragedy of Liberation: A History of the Chinese Revolution 1945-1957
Cato Institute
September 26

Reinventing Mexico
New America Foundation
September 26

Surveillance, Privacy, and Freedom of Expression
Open Society Foundation
New York City
September 26

Taiwan's Trade Politics
Stimson Center
September 26

Potential Benefits of Economic Cooperation in the Maghreb
Stimson Center
September 26

A Global Conversation: Why the UN Must Focus on Women's Leadership
Wilson Center
September 26

China's New Reform Agenda
Brookings Institution
September 27

uVirtus Linux Launch Party
Freedom House
September 27

Women in the Syrian Crisis
United States Institute of Peace

September 27

Challenges of Chemical Weapons Disarmament in Syria
Wilson Center
September 27

Kosciuszko Chair Military Lecture: The Battle for Westerplatte, 1939
The Institute of World Politics
September 27

Implosion: The End of Russia and What It Means for America
Heritage Foundation
September 30

The U.S.-Russia Relationship: Transcending Mutual Deterrence
Brookings Institution
September 30

Lessons from the United States African Development Foundation
Center for Strategic and International Studies
September 30

Putin vs. Civil Society
National Endowment for Democracy, George Washington University
September 30

Covering Syria
New America Foundation
New York City
September 30

Film Screening: The Network
Open Society Foundation
September 30

Expanding the U.S.-India Defense Partnership
Center for American Progress
September 30

Reform Under Rouhani: Assessing Positive Change in Iran
Stimson Center
September 30

The China-Russia Reversal
Wilson Center
September 30

Business Meeting
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 1

The Navy Yard Tragedy: Examining Government Clearances and Background Checks
Senate Homeland Security Committee
October 1

Human Rights Abuses in Egypt

House Foreign Affairs Committee
Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee
October 1

Pain and Promise for Women in the Middle East and North Africa
Heritage Foundation, SAT-7
October 1

Keeping the Promise: Maintaining the Health of Military and Veteran Families and Children
Brookings Institution
October 1

Book Launch Event: "Thank You For Your Service" by David Finkel
Center for a New American Security
October 1

Yoshihiko Noda, 95th Prime Minister of Japan, to speak at Stimson
Stimson Center
October 1

Foreign Investment and Myanmar's Reform
Stimson Center
October 1

An Assessment of Rouhani's Visit to New York: Real Diplomacy or Failed Expectations?
Wilson Center
October 1

Strategy: A History
Wilson Center
October 1

Islamic Law and Finance Incubator Module
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 1

Markets, Civil Society, and Democratic Change in the Middle East
Hudson Institute
October 2

The Business of Defense in an Age of Austerity: Perspectives from the Mid-Tier
Atlantic Council
October 2

Unheard Voices: Civil Society Perspectives on Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations
Project on Middle East Democracy, OneVoice
October 2

The WTO and the Uncertain Future of Multilateralism
Cato Institute
October 2

U.S. Drone Strikes: Voices from the Ground
Open Society Institute
New York City
October 2

Leadership in the Asia-Pacific: The Road Ahead for Japan and the United States
Wilson Center
October 2

Nomination Hearing
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
October 3

What Japan Can Gain from Sound Innovation
Heritage Foundation
October 3

Transatlantic Cooperation on Energy Security and Climate Change
Atlantic Council
October 3

Freedom on the Net 2013: Internet Freedom In Decline, But Activists Fight Back
Freedom House
October 3

Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe
Wilson Center
October 3

China's Strategies for Lowering Energy's Environmental Footprint
Wilson Center
October 3

Application Deadline for FPI Director of Development Position
Foreign Policy Initiative
October 4

Germany's Decision: Post-Election Analysis
Brookings Institution
October 4

The meaning and implication of the "Mensalão," Brazil's largest trial on political corruption
Wilson Center
October 4

North American Rally for Tibet
International Campaign for Tibet
October 7

Deciphering Russian Policy on Syria: What Happened...and What's Next
Wilson Center
October 7

Rethinking U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy
Cato Institute
October 8

Israeli Security Policy in an Uncertain Middle East
Washington Institute for Near East Policy

October 9

Two States or One?: The Future of Israelis and Palestinians
Middle East Policy Council
October 9

NSA Surveillance: What We Know; What to do About It
Cato Institute
October 9

Community Security and Protection from Deliberate Violence
Stimson Center
October 9

NSA Surveillance Programs and the Najibullah Zazi Terrorist Threat
Brookings Institution
October 10

Assessing Warsaw Pact Military Forces: The Role of CIA Clandestine Reporting
Wilson Center
October 10

The Faulty Logic of the EU and its Consequences
Alexander Hamilton Society
October 10

Among Enemies: Counter-Espionage for Business Travelers
The Institute of World Politics
October 10

Global Economic Issues: Perspectives from Kazakhstan
Atlantic Council
October 11

Fall 2013 AILA International Fellows Program
Center for Strategic International Studies
October 13-18

JFK, Conservative
Politics and Prose Bookstore and Coffeehouse
October 15

The Russian Orthodox Church and Russia's Foreign Policy Vectors
Wilson Center
October 15

A Discussion with Ken Pollack, Author of Unthinkable
Middle East Institute
October 16

The Role of Economics in Democratic Transitions: Kenya
National Endowment for Democracy
October 17

The New Political Landscape of Afghanistan's Neighborhood After '2014'
Wilson Center

October 21

The World that Faces President Obama: A Conversation with Ian Bremmer
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 21

2013 FPI Forum: Will America Lead?
Foreign Policy Initiative
October 22

Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991
Wilson Center
October 23

Social Networks and Public Support for the European Union
The Institute of World Politics
October 23

Dangerous World? Threat Perception and U.S. National Security
Cato Institute
October 25

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy
October 25

PONI 2013 Fall Conference
Center for Strategic and International Studies
October 28-29

Constructing Nation: National Narratives of History Teachers in Ukraine
Wilson Center
October 28

Does the Treaty Power Threaten Our System of Limited Government?
Heritage Foundation
October 30

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Japan
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

International Affairs Fellowship in South Korea
Council on Foreign Relations
October 31

CSIS-U.S. Army War College International Strategic Crisis Negotiation Exercise
Center for Strategic International Studies
November 1-2

Obama's Foreign Policy: What is it and is it Working?
Alexander Hamilton Society

November 5

Application Deadline for Stanton Nuclear Security Fellowship
Council on Foreign Relations
December 16

Application Deadline for International Affairs Fellowship in Nuclear Security
Council on Foreign Relations
January 17, 2014

[Return to Top](#)

Overnight Brief is a daily product of the Foreign Policy Initiative, which seeks to promote an active U.S. foreign policy committed to robust support for democratic allies, human rights, a strong American military equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century, and strengthening America's global economic competitiveness. To submit comments or suggestions, email overnight@foreignpolicyi.org.



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RELEASE IN PART B6

B6

From: Marc Ginsberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2013 11:18 PM
To: undi-sclosed <undi-sclosed@usa.net>
Cc: undi-sclosed <undi-sclosed@usa.net>
Subject: Marc Ginsberg Becomes CEO of Peaceworks LLC & OneVoice Movement Foundation
Attach: MCG Announcement 9-3-13 MCG_Final.docx; OneVoice - Peacworks Overview 9-16-13.pdf

<div style="font-family: tahoma,arial,Helvetica,sans-serif; font-size: 10pt; color: #000000;">

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<div style="FONT-SIZE: 10pt; FONT-FAMILY: tahoma,arial,Helvetica,sans-serif; COLOR: #000000">

<div style="FONT-SIZE: 10pt; FONT-FAMILY: tahoma,arial,Helvetica,sans-serif; COLOR: #000000">

<p>Friends and Colleagues:

</p>

<p>At the beginning of September I accepted an offer to become CEO of the Peaceworks LLC enterprises in Palestine, and the One Voice Movement Foundation based in New York, London, Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Gaza. On the margins of my new role I will continue my other private investment work and media-related activities and divide my time regularly between DC and NY.

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</p>

<p>I am attaching my formal announcement letter along with a brief overview of Peaceworks and the One Voice Movement Foundation.

</p>

<p>I will need your counsel and support to help make a real difference in the weeks and months ahead. I look forward to talking with you soon.

</p>

<p>Best personal regards

</p>

<p>Marc

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Marc Ginsberg, CEO
Daniel Lubetzky, Founder
John Lyndon, COO
Samer Makhoul, Director, OneVoice Palestine
Tal Harris, Director, OneVoice Israel
Honorary Board of Advisors

September 16, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am very pleased to inform you that earlier this month I was named CEO of the PeaceWorks Foundation and OneVoice Movement – an outstanding and highly respected nonprofit organization dedicated to forging a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine.

My life's work has been devoted to achieving a just and lasting peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. This passion has spanned from my formative years spent in the Middle East to my service in the U.S. government, as well as my career as a businessman, international attorney, and pioneering Arabic language television producer and commentator; building bridges among Arabs, Israelis, and Americans has been the driving force in my career.

In 2002, Daniel Lubetzky (founder of the enormously successful KIND food products) created the PeaceWorks Foundation to develop economic and social entrepreneurial initiatives in both Israel and Palestine. Together with staff in New York, Washington, London, Ramallah, Gaza City, and Tel Aviv, the foundation has engaged over 660,000 advocates for a two-state solution under the most difficult and trying of circumstances.

Thousands more Israelis and Palestinians have benefited from the untiring efforts of its dedicated staff to keep the faith of a peaceful solution alive. The fact that the foundation has an office in Gaza is testament to its staff's resourcefulness and willingness to challenge even the most vociferous opponents of Israel's right to exist.

Through its PeaceWorks ventures, Daniel pioneered economic entrepreneurial projects which trained and employed two generations of Palestinians, Israelis, Turks, Egyptians, and others to produce and market unique food products for export.

In order to develop sustainable Israeli and Arab support for the U.S.-brokered peace negotiations over the coming nine months, the foundation has formulated a creative cross-border integrated grassroots/media/public diplomacy campaign. This initiative has already held a series of unique events bringing together Palestinian and Israeli leaders to enhance the chances for these negotiations' success. Our goal is to deploy traditional political advocacy tools along with 21st century social and digital media to encourage Israelis and Palestinians to directly petition their leaders to advocate support for the talks. This campaign will enable a broad cross-section of Israelis and Palestinians to realize that a two-state solution is within their grasp and has great benefits to both peoples.

In Palestine, the foundation is launching a new PeaceWorks entrepreneurial initiative in cooperation with the Quartet and the Palestinian Authority to develop the first agra-PeaceWorks venture. This venture will train young Palestinians in 21st century water and irrigation technologies by developing crop-yielding groves, food processing centers, restaurants, and other integrated facilities.

The window of opportunity that Secretary Kerry has opened compels me to devote this latest chapter in my career to what has driven me all my years: a safe, secure Israel living side by side with a viable and peaceful independent Palestinian state. It is no fool's errand no matter how formidable the obstacles may be, and believe me, I have witnessed and been party to many a failed effort to break through to the solution we all know is on the horizon, but so often beyond reach.

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf
Azzam Al-Shawwa
Muhammad Ali
Colette Avital, MK
Avishay Braverman
Danny DeVito
Amb. Stuart Eizenstat
Talab El-Sana, MK
Dr. Saeb Erekat
Imad Falouji
Rabbi Harvey Fields
Shafik Gabr
Gary Gladstein
Frederic H. Gould
Yoel Hasson, MK
Stephen Heintz
Samir Hulieh
Dr. Irwin Mark Jacobs
Samer Khoury
Dr. Alon Liel
Stanley Litow
Eti Livni, MK
Rabbi Brian Lurie
Sir Paul McCartney
Mike Medavoy
Rabbi Michael Melchior
John Edwin Mroz
Archbishop Boutros Moualleem
Dr. Bernard Patry
Rhea Perlman
Amb. Thomas Pickering
Brad Pitt
Natalie Portman
Rabbi David Rosen
Amb. Dennis Ross
Gen. Danny Rothschild
Lord Jonathan Sacks
Fred Schaufeld
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Imad Shakur, PC
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Jonathan Prince
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Daniel Lubetzky, Founder
John Lydon, COO
Samer Makhlouf, Director, OneVoice Palestine
Tal Harris, Director, OneVoice Israel

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Erez Meltzer
Richard Menell
Thaer Mukbel
Walid Najjab
Craig Newmark
Jonathan Prince
Annie Spar
Richard J. Urowsky

There is no other foundation in the region that has the expertise, experience, and staff to answer the typical Israeli and Palestinian refrain: “Why should I support a two state solution... what’s in it for me?” To answer this question everyone committed to a two-state solution must act, and act again and again in the weeks and months ahead to rebuild faith that settlement is within reach.

Please join me in our efforts to challenge the cynicism and the voices of opposition. I am eager to tell you more about what the PeaceWorks Foundation and OneVoice Movement is planning to do to confront this unacceptable status quo. I will be reaching out to you in the coming weeks to discuss my recent visit to the region and your potential participation in the critical work we are undertaking.

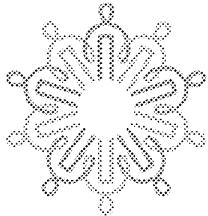
Sincerely,

Amb. (Fmr) Marc Charles Ginsberg

RELEASE IN FULL

HEAR the movement

@OneVoice



ONEVOICE

Who We Are

The PeaceWorks Foundation and OneVoice Movement, an Israeli-Palestinian parallel grassroots initiative promoting a two-state solution, is a 501(c)(3) international nonprofit headquartered in New York City, with offices in Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Gaza, and London.

Since 2002, our youth-led movement has engaged over 660,000 voices and counting. Our mission is premised on the notion that everyday people have a critical role to play in finding a resolution, and yet their voices remain largely absent from the peace process. We empower the existing Israeli and Palestinian moderate majorities who support two states for two peoples to hold their elected officials accountable to ensure an end to the conflict. Through OneVoice, young grassroots activists in Israel and Palestine are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be heard as they build momentum and a constituency for the two-state solution locally and internationally.

The Problem

Although the recently announced resumption of negotiations after more than a three year hiatus presents a significant opportunity, the renewal of talks have been met with cynicism, resentment, and apathy by large swathes of the Israeli and Palestinian populations, reflective of longer term trends in both societies. To leverage this moment and OneVoice's capacity toward a truly historic goal, we aim to counter this detachment with an expansion of our programming, harnessing our existing organizational ability to build grassroots support for the negotiations. Achievement of a peaceful resolution to the conflict necessitates the empowerment of the moderate majorities, as an actively supportive civil society is a fundamental element for success in the peace process. President Obama underscored this point when addressing the Israeli public in March 2013, stating that, **"political leaders will not take risks if the people do not demand that they do."**



The Solution

OneVoice offers a distinctive approach to address the conflict – using parallel grassroots activism to promote the two-state solution as the means of conflict resolution. We apply our skills in two main areas:

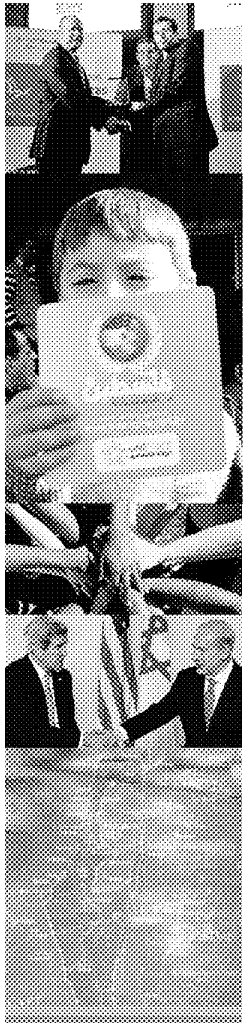
- Promoting advocacy for two states for two peoples by educating the public and training youth activists with our grassroots and outreach programming
- Actions that build positive facts on the ground, examples of which are our legislative work in Israel and Palestinian National Peace Forest and Youth Entrepreneurial Hub in Palestine

While these two program areas are distinct, in combination they create powerful synergy as agents for change. Our grassroots and outreach programming harnesses the momentum of the citizens in the region, while positive facts on the ground reinforce cooperation and build a path of peace and trust between the two sides.

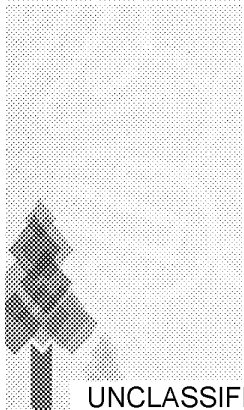
Our Strategy

OneVoice's **grassroots and outreach programming** responds to a region in need of services that strengthen the presence of the moderate majorities in both societies who are in favor of a two-state solution, thereby representing the will of the people. Our newest initiative, **OneVoice for Two States**, is a bold grassroots and media campaign that empowers ordinary citizens to create a positive environment of support for the current negotiations, establishing the political climate necessary to make two states for two peoples a reality.

Our **Youth Leadership Program (YLP)** trains promising young Israelis and Palestinians to become engaged grassroots activists and provides a critical constructive outlet for the current youth frustration stemming from the existing political status quo. Emphasis is placed on participants gaining the skills to become successful political advocates for a two-state solution, who mitigate conflict at the grassroots level by mobilizing the moderate non-



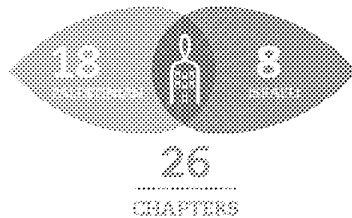
WE ARE THE
GRASSROOTS
MOVEMENT
EMPOWERING
THE PEOPLE TO
CHANGE THE WORLD



BE the movement

OneVoice

violent majority in their communities. Youth Leaders spearhead unique activities – from town hall meetings that build consensus for tough compromises, to public awareness campaigns that underscore the urgency of a peace agreement, to initiatives that pressure leaders to take constructive action to move the peace process forward. This work is further complemented by **Women of Influence (WOI)**, a YLP initiative that empowers Palestinian women to become politically active and assume leadership roles within their communities. This three phase training project seeks to counter women's historic political underrepresentation in Palestine by endowing them with leadership skills, giving them a voice and ability to impact community decisions that will determine the future for themselves, their families, and their homeland.



Selected graduates of our leadership training initiatives go on to serve as ambassadors as they reinforce the voices of the moderate majority on the global scale through outreach programming. To date, we have engaged 100 American universities and scores of communities across the US with our **International Engagement Program (IEP)**. Similarly, our **Outreach & Education Programme (O&E)** based in London, joins UK communities that have found themselves torn apart by extremist narratives surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Through IEP and O&E, international audiences are asked to identify their role in ending the conflict as they connect with Youth Leaders from Israel and Palestine. This, in turn, inspires those audiences to play a positive role by responding to international calls to action and showing solidarity with the efforts of those in the region.

As we continue to build **positive facts on the ground** toward two states for two peoples, PeaceWorks and OneVoice are unveiling the first ever **Palestinian National Peace Forest**: a combined peace forest and sustainable, environmentally advanced initiative to be located in Area C of the West Bank. Set against a recent history of exponential Israeli settlement growth on such lands, this will be a very tangible positive fact—a concrete step that allows youth a means to challenge settlement construction both non-violently and pragmatically. Furthermore, youth in Palestine are also in need of a way to overcome the current economic situation, as youth economic participation is vital for responsible and active citizenship.

The **Youth Entrepreneurial Hub** was conceived in response to the current staggering 51% unemployment rate among Palestinian university graduates. This online search platform for workforce development will enable young Palestinians to acquire the vocational and life skills needed to obtain and retain employment and advance along a career pathway. At its core, the Youth Entrepreneurial Hub offers a pipeline of services in a coordinated effort to compile and link young Palestinians to commercial activities in one central location. Together in partnership with other NGOs, young Palestinians will have access to social and economic entrepreneurial tools that will help build a stronger, more economically viable Palestinian State.

These efforts in Palestine to build positive facts on the ground are enhanced by parallel efforts underway in Israel. Through the **Caucus for the Resolution of the Arab-Israeli Conflict**, OneVoice has connected grassroots activists in Israel to political decision makers. Together, OneVoice and the dedicated cross party Caucus' 40 Members of Knesset (MKs) draft and propose legislation that supports the two-state solution. Using our local chapters and our YLP network, OneVoice is able to introduce elements of representative accountability, demanding MKs to be held responsible for their actions and inactions.

The Time Is Now

The recent renewal in negotiations presents an invaluable opportunity for a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Never in the history of this movement have the stakes been as high for OneVoice, for the two-state solution, and for the future of Israel as a Jewish democracy, and Palestine as an independent state. OneVoice is committed to mobilizing all of its capacity, networks, and expertise toward this goal. Your important financial contribution will help make it possible for Israelis and Palestinians to work together to demand peace. For those looking to turn the two-state solution into a reality, we cannot allow this opportunity to pass us by. **The time is now.**

RELEASE IN PART
B6

From: Marc Ginsberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2013 11:38 PM
To: undi-sclosed <undi-sclosed@usa.net>
Subject: Marc Ginsberg Becomes CEO of Peaceworks Foundation. Take #2
Attach: Test.msg

B6

My apologies for sending an email impolitely coded by web gremlins. Here is the abridged message hopefully "de-gremlined". Marc
Forwarded message is attached.

From: Marc Ginsberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2013 11:28 PM
To: Marc Ginsberg [REDACTED]
Subject: Test

Friends and Colleagues:

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I will need your counsel and support to help make a real difference in the weeks and months ahead. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Best personal regards

Marc

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OneVoice - Peacworks Overview 9-16-13.pdf
1120K [View](#) [Download](#) [Remove](#)

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From: Marc Ginsberg [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 18, 2013 11:27:40 PM
To: Marc Ginsberg
Subject: Test

B6

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From: Tala Haikal, ATFP News Roundup [redacted]
Sent: Friday, September 26, 2014 10:30 AM
To: Burns, William J <BurnsWJ@state.gov>
Subject: ATFP News Roundup September 26, 2014

B6

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ATFP News Roundup September 26, 2014



News:

The text of the recent Fatah-Hamas agreement is released. (Jerusalem Post)

Pres. Abbas will ask the UN to set a timeline for the end of the Israeli occupation. (Ma'an/Times of Israel/Ynet)

Palestinians in Gaza displaced by Israel's military offensive are still waiting for solutions. (Ma'an)

Israeli occupation forces impose restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshipers to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. (Ma'an)

The PA tourism ministry encourages more travel to Palestine. (Ma'an)

OneVoice Palestine launches "the land is ours" campaign to promote the role of young Palestinians. (PNN)

For the second day, US-led air strikes hit oil installations held by ISIS in Syria. (AP/Reuters/New York Times/Washington Post)

PM Cameron urges the British parliament to approve "years" of air strikes against ISIS in Iraq. (Reuters)

Denmark joins the fight against ISIS. (AP/Ha'aretz)

PM al-Abadi expresses support for American-led airstrikes in Syria against ISIS, with some reservations. (New York Times)

ISIS advances towards a strategic town on northern Syria's border with Turkey.

(Reuters)

Members of the Al-Nusra Front are pushing their group to cooperate with ISIS in the face of US-led airstrikes. (Reuters)

The FBI says there are about 12 Americans fighting in Syria, not 100. (AP)

The FBI says they have identified the ISIS extremist who appeared on two videos in which American journalists were beheaded. (New York Times)

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says more than 200 fighters have joined ISIS since Pres. Obama said he would strike the group in Syria. (Reuters)

A woman in Raqqa is filming life under ISIS rule by concealing a camera in the folds of her cloak. (New York Times)

Pres. Obama says Egypt is crucial to US security in the Middle East. (AP/Times of Israel)

The US is reportedly considering presenting a new offer to Iran for the P5+1 negotiations. (AP)

Pres. Rouhani says the west's "blunders" aided the rise of ISIS. (New York Times/Washington Post/The National)

Commentary:

Asmaa al-Ghoul says Islamic Jihad's popularity is growing after the Gaza war. (Al-Monitor)

The National says Obama's UN General Assembly speech lacked harsh words for Israel. (The National)

Alan Philps says after the air strikes, Iraq will require a political solution. (The National)

David Ignatius looks at the jihadist manual that foreshadowed ISIS. (Washington Post)

Fareed Zakaria says the fight against ISIS must include Iran. (Washington Post)

H.A. Hellyer says the battle against ISIS cannot "blind the world" to Pres. Assad's sins. (The National)

The Daily Star says, without a concerted effort to remove Assad from power, the ongoing bloodshed in Syria will continue unabated. (Daily Star)

David Kenner looks at Turkey's welcoming of Syrian Kurdish refugees. (Foreign Policy)

Abdallah Schleifer says solar energy is the solution to Egypt's power cuts and pollution. (Al Arabiya)

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Suite 725
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United States
- 202-887-0177 - info@atfp.net - The American Task Force on Palestine

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From: Price, Gabrielle M <PriceGM@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2016 6:35 PM
To: EAP-FO-Office-DL <EAP-FO-Office-DL@state.gov>; EAP-ChinaMongolia-Transcripts-DL <EAP-ChinaMongolia-Transcripts-DL@state.gov>; EAP-MaritimeSEA-Transcripts-DL <EAP-MaritimeSEA-Transcripts-DL@state.gov>; EAP-MainlandSEA-Transcripts-DL <EAP-MainlandSEA-Transcripts-DL@state.gov>; EAP-TC-Office-DL <EAP-TC-Office-DL@state.gov>
Cc: Urbom, Sonia F <UrbomSF@state.gov>; Bookbinder, Joseph A <BookbinderJA@state.gov>; Edwards, Alicia K <EdwardsAK@state.gov>; Malone, Bettina A <MaloneBA@state.gov>; Schaefer, Marrie Y <SchaeferMY@state.gov>; Stewart, Jonas D <StewartJD2@state.gov>; Turnbull, Daniel <TurnbullDE@state.gov>
Subject: FW: BACKGROUND BRIEFING: Senior State Department Official On South China Sea Arbitration

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: State Department Press Office [mailto:usstatebpa@subscriptions.fcg.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2016 6:29 PM
To: EAP-Press
Subject: BACKGROUND BRIEFING: Senior State Department Official On South China Sea Arbitration

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

July 12, 2016

Senior State Department Official

On South China Sea Arbitration

July 12, 2016

Via Teleconference

MODERATOR: Great. Thank you. And thank you all for joining us today on this call on the arbitration decision. For your information, this call is embargoed until the end of the call. The call will be on background. For your information, not for reporting purposes, our speaker today is [Senior State Department Official], moving forward [Senior State Department Official] will be known as Senior State

Department Official. We have a hard stop with this call at 4:30, so we'll get right to that.

Senior State Department Official, the floor is yours.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Thanks very much, [Moderator]. I'm sure that all of the folks on the line have seen the statement that was issued by our spokesperson here at the State Department John Kirby this morning, and you've probably all either been in the press briefing or seen the transcript of the Qs and As there. So I'm not going to cover that ground.

I will say that, of course, the decision announced by the Law of the Sea Tribunal in The Hague today was a very sweeping and decisive ruling. Four key elements from our point of view are, first, the invalidation of the nine-dash line claim; secondly, the determination that the features in the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Reef are entitled to no more than 12 nautical miles by way of maritime space; that the construction of artificial islands by China and the conduct of Chinese fishing fleets violated the rights of the Philippines; and that the large-scale reclamation and constructing these military outposts in the Spratlys damage the environment.

But while the decision was quite clear and authoritative, it was also immensely complex. The press release alone is 11 pages long. I am not a lawyer. And everyone – all the parties, and certainly the United States – need time to digest it and make an assessment of the implications of the ruling.

What I would say is that the important thing, from our perspective, is that this ruling – although it was a technical assessment of maritime rights and doesn't address or alter the question of who has sovereignty over the land features in the region – does create an important diplomatic opportunity. And we believe strongly that once the dust settles and the rhetoric subsides, this decision opens the door to some very practical and potentially productive discussions among the various claimants in the South China Sea, in part because the ruling significantly narrows the geographic scope of the areas in question.

So we are working diplomatically with each of the parties to try to encourage them to use this decision as the basis for discussions and potentially the basis for agreement on what constitutes acceptable behavior in the disputed areas and to explore the potential down the road for things like joint development. Again, I won't rehash the statement that John Kirby made, but I will emphasize the importance that the United States places on restraint by all the parties. We call on them to refrain from coercion or the threat or the use of force, to respect the rule of law, and to clarify their claims consistent with the Law of the Sea, which we think will accelerate the process of finding an acceptable formula for reconciling differences peacefully.

So let me stop there and take your questions.

MODERATOR: That's great. Operator, if you could give the directions for questions again, and then we can take our first question.

OPERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, please press * followed by 1 for any questions, *1. We'll go to the first question from Nick Wadhams with Bloomberg News. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi. Thanks very much for holding this briefing. I just had a question on next steps and talking about encouraging the two sides to use this as a basis for discussion. I mean, given China's very swift response, also the foreign ministry spokesman's formal complaint to the U.S. against John Kirby's fairly evenhanded comments earlier today, do you see China as being willing to use this as a basis for discussion? I mean, you say after the rhetoric dies down. So do you see China's response so far as just rhetoric? I mean, is there some – is there some place to go from here after this ruling, given how strongly China has come out against it?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Well, first of all, Nick, I'd take violent exception to your

modifying John Kirby's statement as "fairly evenhanded." I think it was a model of balance and of moderation. But in all seriousness, look, there is a lot of maximalist rhetoric right now. Emotions are running high, and it will take some time for the dust to settle, for tempers to cool down, and for a sober analysis of both the tribunal's decision itself and the ramifications of it, but also an assessment of the way forward.

China isn't going to stop being a major player in the region or a neighbor. The Philippines aren't going away; Vietnam isn't going away, and the South China Sea remains a vitally important waterway. China's relationship not only with the United States but with ASEAN as a group, with the individual 10 ASEAN members, with the other claimants, are important to China and, frankly, good relations between and among them are important to the region, to the U.S., and to the world.

So look, it's not my place to tell China what's in its interests, but surely to be regarded with respect and not fear, to be seen as faithful to international law and not flouting it has got to matter. If China weren't concerned about its international reputation, surely it wouldn't have gone to the extraordinary length that it has gone to try to win the battle of international public opinion.

Now, the decision is quite clear and very decisive. I think that removes a certain amount of ambiguity. But it in no way impedes the prospect of China and the other claimants working on a path forward. And that's something that the United States will assist and will strongly support. I'll teach you a Chinese phrase: "win-win." You hear that a lot from the Chinese, and "win-win" is a way of characterizing compromise, often without acknowledging that there's been compromise if that's politically difficult.

And so we are putting a great deal of importance on the process that can unfold once China, the Philippines and the other claimants in the South China Sea have had an opportunity to fully assess the decision and to resume a more constructive diplomatic process. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Okay. Operator, if we can move to our next question, please.

OPERATOR: We'll go to the line of Lesley Wroughton with Reuters. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Yes, hi. When would be the first opportunity for either you or the Secretary or any other senior U.S. official to directly have discussions with China on the result of this? And number two, do you expect other countries, such as Vietnam, to now feel a little bit more emboldened by such an outcome and to perhaps take the same path, meaning going to the international tribunal with their claims?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: I see. Well, Lesley, we are, as a government, in regular touch with the Chinese Government, and I was in touch with the Chinese ambassador in the last 24 hours. I and Secretary Kerry will shortly be in Laos for the ASEAN Regional Forum. The Chinese foreign minister will be there, the vice foreign minister will be there. And we may be backwards in the State Department, but telephones, internet, and other forms of technology have arrived and we use those as well to maintain an ongoing dialogue with China. And I would say that one of the real hallmarks of the Obama Administration has been the development of a really robust and wide-ranging set of lines of communication with the Chinese that I think serve in many instances as a safety net, such that when there are problems or serious disagreements, we know that we have the ability to talk and to try to be understood and try to understand the other guy. Face-to-face talks I'm sure will be possible when the Secretary and the foreign minister meet.

In terms of Vietnam, I'm certainly not in the business of predicting what foreign governments will do or decide. I wouldn't imagine that any interested party would make any decisions about next steps until, number one, they had a chance to digest 447 or some-odd pages of dense legal writing from the tribunal. Secondly, after they had had a chance to observe not only what China is saying, not only what the Philippines are saying, but what each of them are doing, that will be particularly important. And thirdly, there will be widespread consultations between and among the various claimants as well as within ASEAN.

as a group. So my expectation is that there will be a period of assessment, discussion, and consultation that lies directly ahead.

For our part, Lesley, the United States and Secretary Kerry in particular will redouble efforts to focus each of the claimants on restraint, on diplomacy, and on exploring avenues for compromise and cooperation. There is more reason to think that this decision can be the predicate for progress than to think it would precipitate a crisis.

Thank you.

MODERATOR: That's great. Operator, if we can move to our next question, please.

OPERATOR: Matthew Pennington with Associated Press, your line is open.

QUESTION: Hi, [Senior State Department Official]. Thanks for doing the call. You mentioned that the ruling has sort of narrowed the geographic scope of the disputes in the South China Sea. Just by extension, does it remove any ambiguity about the – whether U.S. treaty obligations might lie with the Philippines if some of these features, which before were considered to be subject to dispute, now clearly lie inside the Philippines EEZ and outside China's potential claims?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Thanks, Matt. You are really testing my ability as a non-lawyer to navigate some immensely complicated terrain here. Speaking as a layman, the two points that I would make just to cast your question in a more, say, legally compliant way is first, that the U.S.-Philippine defense treaty is not exclusively or perhaps even primarily about geography. It addresses the prospect of an armed attack.

Secondly, the geographic scope of the maritime disputes I believe is drastically reduced by the decision. But the decision does not touch on the issue of sovereignty over recognized land features anywhere in the South China Sea. So the tribunal, as a technical matter, based on the authority vested in it under the treaty, has pronounced on the question of whether feature X is an island with certain entitlements or a rock with more limited entitlements, or not even a rock – a submerged feature with no maritime entitlements – but in no way, shape, or form spoke to the question of whose island or whose rock that might be.

So again, with the caveat that I will defer to and be corrected by the lawyers, I don't believe that this decision alters the question of what land feature belongs to what country. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Great. Operator, our next question.

OPERATOR: Missy Ryan, *Washington Post*, your line is open.

QUESTION: Hi. Do you see the ruling as a validation of the American freedom of navigation operations? And will this have any effect on the frequency or the location of those operations?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: That's a very interesting question. And again, I am not erudite enough or sufficiently schooled in the details of the decision itself to be able to answer definitively yes or no. However, the right to free navigation and overflight – which I stress is a right and entitlement of all nations, not merely of the United States – permits movement through international waters as well as movement through EEZs and in some cases through territorial seas as well. And so the redrawing or the clarification, I should say, of the maritime space in terms of EEZs or territorial seas shouldn't, at least by that logic, have any impact on freedom of navigation.

I do think, however, that it is certainly a vindication of the principle that the United States has strongly

defended, that the rights of small countries under the law are equal to the rights of large countries. It is certainly a vindication of the principle that any country can rightfully avail itself of legitimate mechanisms under international law. The tribunal, which is constituted under the treaty for this purpose, carefully examined China's arguments that the Philippines had no right to bring this case and that the tribunal had no jurisdiction over the case. Even though China is not a party to the – did not engage as an active party to the arbitration, it submitted the equivalent of a legal pleading in the form of an extensive and very, very meticulously developed legal brief that was given the benefit of a full review by the tribunal, which clearly took it very seriously.

And so the decision that was announced today is a binding and a final determination. We think that it ought to mark the beginning of a new phase in which the parties themselves – the claimants, not only China and the Philippines – begin exploring diplomatic paths forward that will allow them to cooperate and to coexist peacefully in this extraordinarily important waterway. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Great. And now, Operator, our last question, please.

OPERATOR: Geoff Dyer with *Financial Times*. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Apologies; my questions have been asked and answered already.

MODERATOR: Okay, super. Operator, we can move to the next question.

OPERATOR: Nike Ching, Voice of America. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Thank you very much for this briefing. My question is focused on the resource management and joint development. Could you please elaborate on the point that you said about this ruling could open up opportunity for joint development? And will that be – will this be discussed during the ASEAN meeting?

Secondly, as a matter-of-fact question, now that the ruling all land features in the Spratly are rock, does that mean that any fishermen from any countries or political entities can fish there because they are not under the 200 miles of EEZ? Thank you.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Okay, thank you. So let me begin by saying very clearly that the United States is not making a prescription for what it is precisely that the claimants should reach agreement on in terms of their use of the sea, nor are we being specific or attempting to dictate terms for how they should interact, other than to say that it should be peacefully.

But the problem that the various claimants have encountered in the past when they explored options for joint development is their inability to agree on what areas were genuinely in dispute and what areas were credibly within the EEZ of a single coastal state. So nobody has been thus far willing to share with another claimant parts of the ocean that they are absolutely convinced belong to them and where they see the competing claim as utterly without merit. But now that the tribunal has defined much more clearly the definition of maritime entitlements, it may be much easier to ascertain the parts of the South China Sea that the claimants can accept are legitimately in dispute. And that's the place where dividing 50/50 or dividing three ways makes sense and has been successfully employed elsewhere in the world and, in fact, elsewhere in the region.

I think that the other area that is now fertile ground for diplomatic creativity and exploration is the longstanding questions about what is and isn't acceptable behavior by the parties in disputed areas and around disputed areas. So for some time, the ASEANs have been attempting not only to successfully reach agreement with China on what it would mean to fully implement the 2002 declaration of conduct they had negotiated, but the code of conduct also, which is something that they have been exploring but have made precious little headway on. It's possible to imagine and we certainly would hope that in the aftermath of this decision, China and ASEAN can take advantage of their upcoming meetings to make accelerated progress in

reaching basic understandings and finally a code of conduct pertaining to acceptable patterns and norms of behavior in the South China Sea. That would be, we would think, a major step forward towards enhanced stability and security in the region.

You are correct in pointing out that all the features named in the case brought by the Philippines to the tribunal have been determined to be rocks. That means that none of them generate EEZ. They have at most a 12 nautical mile maritime entitlement. But there are plenty of other features outside of the Spratlys which do generate an EEZ. Certainly the coastal territory of the Philippines or of Malaysia or elsewhere in the region, obviously any of the coastal states, generate an EEZ. And if it's uninterrupted by a competing nation's EEZ, then it extends 200 nautical miles. But there are islands in the South China Sea – just not in the Spratlys – that are presumed to be islands, and presumed therefore to generate 200 nautical – or at least generate an EEZ.

The right to fish or exploit resources in an area is a function of whether that marine area is in someone's EEZ territorial waters, or outside of it. If it falls in the EEZ, say, of the Philippines, then by rights to fish there would require the permission of the Government of the Philippines. If the area in question was international water then no national permission is required.

Let me just take this opportunity very briefly, though, to make a plug for the importance of responsible fishery practices by all parties. The scourge of illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing is devastating the Pacific in general and the South China Sea in particular. And we call on all nations to be responsible for their nationals' fishing activity and to do everything in their power, including by ratifying the Port States Measures, to combat illegal fishing.

Thank you.

MODERATOR: Great. Thanks to our Senior State Department Official for this call. The embargo is now lifted. We'll post a transcript as soon as we're able. And thanks to all of you for joining us today. The call is complete.

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Briefer: John Kirby, Spokesperson

~SOUTH SUDAN~

~CHINA/PHILIPPINES/REGION~

~DEPARTMENT~

~CHINA/PHILIPPINES/REGION~

~SYRIA/RUSSIA~

~TURKEY~

~NORTH KOREA/SOUTH KOREA/REGION~

~DEPARTMENT~

~MIDDLE EAST PEACE~

~SYRIA/RUSSIA~

~INDIA~

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPB # 122

TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2016
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

2:07 p.m. EDT

MR KIRBY: Afternoon, everybody.

QUESTION: Good afternoon.

MR KIRBY: Book gets heavier every day. A couple things at the top, so please bear with me.

First on South Sudan, we understand that the unilateral ceasefires called by both the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and government and in opposition on July 11th appear to be holding despite reports of sporadic gunfire in some parts of Juba and scattered fighting in the town of Wau. The Secretary spoke for the second time with the prime minister of Ethiopia, President Kenyatta of Kenya, and for the first time with President Museveni of Uganda yesterday, regarding next steps in a coordinated regional response. We are, of course, working closely with international partners to address the conflict in South Sudan.

Both the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union Peace and Security Council have released communiques calling for enhancements to the UN mission in South Sudan and the mandate for that mission, and an increase in the number of peacekeepers. We are reviewing these communiques and discussing with our partners in the Security Council.

The U.S. embassy is reducing its staff still in South Sudan. The embassy released a security message today stating that the U.S. Government brought assets to Juba to implement the decision for a reduction in embassy staff, otherwise known as an ordered departure, and to provide support to conduct a safe and orderly departure of private American citizens and third-country nationals as needed over the coming days. I want to stress again what I said yesterday: The embassy is not evacuating. Non-emergency U.S. embassy personnel continue to depart the country via this ordered departure process.

Due to ongoing security concerns, we do want to again say that citizens should remain vigilant when moving about the city. We continue to press, obviously, the leaders in South Sudan to end the fighting and to provide unfettered humanitarian access to those that are in need. So we're staying on top of this. We're watching it very, very closely. The Secretary remains engaged, our ambassador in Juba remains engaged, and we are continuing the ordered withdrawal of embassy personnel.

QUESTION: Is the ambassador leaving also?

MR KIRBY: The ambassador is still there.

QUESTION: Is she going to be – he or she going to be part of this?

MR KIRBY: I don't foresee that. I don't foresee that. Again, as you know, an ordered departure is non-emergency personnel; it's not everybody. The ambassador is essential personnel.

On the South China Sea, I think you've seen my statement this morning on the decision by the tribunal and the Philippines-China arbitration. The United States strongly supports the rule of law. We support efforts to resolve territorial and maritime disputes in the South China Sea peacefully and through arbitration such as this. As I said, this decision is an important contribution to the shared goal of a peaceful resolution to disputes in the South China Sea.

When joining the Law of the Sea Convention, parties agree to the convention's compulsory dispute settlement process. And as provided in the convention, the tribunal's decision is final and legally binding on both China and the Philippines. The onus is now on them to meet that obligation. We urge all claimants to avoid provocative statements or actions. This decision can and should, as I said in my statement, serve as an opportunity to renew efforts to address maritime disputes peacefully.

Finally, on a programing note, later today the Secretary will speak briefly at the Washington Passport Agency – this is at 4:30 p.m. – where he will introduce MissionOne, which is an initiative that we've started here that expands and modernizes the services that the State Department offers U.S. citizens. He will also urge American citizens planning overseas travel to apply early for their passports in the midst of a current record-breaking passport application surge.

Later on this evening, I think you know the Secretary will host a reception to mark the Muslim holiday Eid al-Fitr to mark the end of Ramadan. The Secretary will highlight citizen diplomacy and highlight ways as well for ordinary individuals to forge and strengthen ties with countries, communities, and individuals around the globe.

With that, Brad.

QUESTION: On the South China Sea, I saw in your statement you urged the claimants to avoid provocative actions or statements. In light of that, how do you respond to China's immediate reaction?

MR KIRBY: Well, I mean, first of all --

QUESTION: I guess you saw they called it a farce, among other things, and reiterated it would have no --

MR KIRBY: Yeah, no, no, we saw. No, we certainly saw the -- we certainly saw the comments. I would hasten to say that that reaction was not a surprise. They had certainly signaled their intention to rebut the decision even before it was rendered. But as we've said, all claimants should exercise restraint both in action and in rhetoric, and should, again, take advantage of this

opportunity to observe the rule of law, to observe their international obligations, and to work through the details of the arbitration in a peaceful, reasonable, sensible manner.

QUESTION: So since China has so consistently said it will not abide by this ruling and it said again today, I'm confused why you say you expect both parties to comply with this ruling. It would seem like a bad expectation unless you don't believe that China – you think China is lying and they are going to abide by this ruling?

MR KIRBY: Well, I'm not going to speak for the Chinese. They can say what they will. But that they have – that they have --

QUESTION: On what basis do you expect that?

MR KIRBY: That they have made these unhelpful comments doesn't mean that our expectations should change. It is a legally binding tribunal decision, and our expectation was before it was made and is now after it's made that all claimants are going to abide by it.

QUESTION: But expectation is what you think will happen, not what you hope will happen. Your expectation – you actually think China is going to abide by this ruling even though they say they're not?

MR KIRBY: It is both our hope and our expectation that China will --

QUESTION: All right.

MR KIRBY: -- will abide by its legally binding obligations under this decision. So it just got rendered. Let's see where we go from here.

QUESTION: And last one from me on this. Since foreign policy is more than hopes and expectations --

MR KIRBY: Should be, yeah.

QUESTION: -- how do you plan to ensure that China will indeed abide by this ruling? Or are you just --

MR KIRBY: Well, look, as I --

QUESTION: -- just going to hope for that? Or --

MR KIRBY: As I said in my opening comments, the onus is on them. The decision has been rendered. For our part it's some 500 pages. We're still going through it so we can better understand it here. I suspect that the claimants are probably still reading through it, as it is pretty lengthy. But the onus is on them now. The tribunal has spoken, and it's up to the parties now to abide by their legally binding obligations in there.

QUESTION: Can I follow up?

QUESTION: If China fails to abide by the ruling, then it will be in breach of international law?

MR KIRBY: Yes.

QUESTION: A follow-up. In a statement you said you ask for all parties to respect the rule of law and you support arbitration. Can you give me any example that the United States has ever complied with any of the rulings on international arbitration, particularly when it's weighed against your interest?

MR KIRBY: Yeah, actually I think I've got one in here somewhere. Hang on a second. I know I've got one in here.

QUESTION: Don't look in Nicaragua. (Laughter.)

MR KIRBY: You've been reading ahead, haven't you? Ah, where is it? Here we go. I knew I'd find it.

So we believe an example can be found in the resolution of a contentious and long-disputed maritime boundary between the United States and Canada in the Gulf of Maine. To resolve that dispute, the U.S. and Canada brought the legal question to third-party dispute settlement before a chamber of the International Court of Justice and argued the case on its merits and complied with the decision. So we have – we've done this ourselves.

QUESTION: But you know, as Brad just mentioned, there are other cases that you didn't really complying with the ruling. And there was this article yesterday written by the Harvard professor Graham Allison. Actually, he pointed out that none of the UN security permanent members, none of them has ever applied by the ruling of the permanent court of arbitration when it comes to the issue about their sovereignty or the Law of the Sea.

MR KIRBY: That doesn't change the fact that it's a legally binding decision. That might – that's very interesting. I'm not a lawyer, but it doesn't seem relevant to the fact that this tribunal decision is legally binding.

And on Nicaragua, so I'm told – or at least I have here – that this case was over 30 years ago in which the U.S. participated at a jurisdictional stage. The U.S. and Nicaragua ultimately resolved this case bilaterally, which Nicaragua withdrew their position voluntarily. So just so you know I got that in there.

But again, to your – I haven't read this gentleman's argument, and I'm no lawyer. I was barely a good history student, so – what I can tell you, though, is that this is a legally binding decision and it's our expectation – and, oh – and frankly, it's the world's expectation. This is – it's not just the United States. The world is watching now to see what these claimants will do. The world is watching to see if China is really the global power it professes itself to be and the responsible power that it professes itself to be. The world's watching this.

QUESTION: Yes. Just to follow up on that, other great powers before – as I mentioned, the UN Security Council members, they haven't even complied with their ruling before. So how would you expect China to comply with the ruling?

MR KIRBY: Again, I think that's an interesting case that's not relevant. I mean, your argument is not relevant. This is a – I can't speak for every other member of the UN Security Council. I gave you two examples where the United States worked these kinds of things out peacefully, one through arbitration. It is a legally – there's no dispute here. I understand that the Chinese have made an argument that they're not going to abide by it. I've heard that loud and clear, okay. But that doesn't change the fact that it's still a legally binding obligation. And it's the world's expectation that China will abide by its obligations under this legally binding decision.

QUESTION: What if China doesn't?

MR KIRBY: I'm not going to get into hypotheticals. China should care about abiding by it, because China should care about the fact that the entire world is watching what they'll do now, in this – in the event of the tribunal's decision.

QUESTION: And the final one. In a statement, you also mentioned you – we are still studying the decision and have no comment on the merits of the case. Does that mean you may not necessarily agree with all the rulings? Because one of that Taiwan actually objected was the island Taiwan controlled called Taiping Island and the arbitration ruling said it's a rock instead of island.

MR KIRBY: I'm – what I'm – my comment stands. We're – it's a 500-page decision. We're still working our way through it; it just got rendered today. And so I'm not going to make any specific comment on this particular case.

QUESTION: But if you haven't studied – if you haven't finished studying it, how can you support everything the --

MR KIRBY: We certainly – we are certainly familiar enough with the decision and the components of it to say what we say before it got rendered, which is it will be legally binding. I've said the same thing for a matter of days now, even before we knew what it was – that it was going to be legally binding and that the expectation would be that all claimants would abide by their responsibilities under it. That point hasn't changed since before the decision got rendered, and it's certainly not going to change now.

I'm not going to talk about the specifics of the case, as you – as I've said also many times, the United States isn't taking a position on individual claims. We do take a position on coercion and the use of force or military pressure to try to change or to try to affect the outcome on these claims. We've long said that we want these disputes resolved peacefully, in accordance with international law. This tribunal decision represents that law and, again, it's our expectation that all sides are going to abide by it. Okay.

QUESTION: Can I ask – just following up on this – I mean --

MR KIRBY: Who are you?

QUESTION: Nick Wadhams from Bloomberg.

MR KIRBY: Okay.

QUESTION: So China already responded to your statement, filing a solemn representation, basically protesting it. We had Senator Dan Sullivan today calling for a review of U.S. force posture in Asia, possibly considering putting a second aircraft carrier strike group in the region in response to this ruling. So what is the next step for the U.S.? It was totally anticipated that China would reject this ruling. They've now done so. Aside from urging them to adhere to a ruling that we already knew they were not going to respect, what is your next step?

MR KIRBY: Well, it's day one. And the next steps are for the parties to determine, not for the United States to determine. As I said, the onus is on them now to abide by the obligations set forth in the decision. It's day one, so let's see where it goes. And I'm not going to get --

QUESTION: But --

MR KIRBY: Wait a second. I'm not going to get ahead of hypothetical situations of what the United States will or won't do. We -- our expectation, the world's expectation is that all claimants -- both claimants in this case -- are going to abide by their obligations. So let's see if that actually happens.

And then I'm certainly not going to speak to hypothetical military movements one way or the other. We have a strong presence in the Asia Pacific, not -- for a variety of reasons, not aimed at any one country. And I don't see any change to that presence. In fact, it's all part of the President's rebalance to the Asia Pacific, where you have a majority of the U.S. Navy out there as well as many assets from other of the services.

Now we're -- we -- five of our seven -- five of our seven security alliances are in the Pacific region. We have enormous commitments from a security perspective that we absolutely will abide by. But I'm not going to speculate one way or the other about intransigence on this and what that might mean for military posture going forward.

QUESTION: Now, given that China has now basically made this a bilateral issue by directly protesting your statement, I mean, does the Secretary have any plan for contact with Wang Yi again? Are there any channels that you guys are going to open up with the Chinese about -- I mean, it seems like we've now moved pretty far beyond both sides calling for abstaining from provocative statements. I mean, we've now got pretty provocative statements on both sides.

MR KIRBY: It doesn't mean that we're going to stop urging restraint and calm and sensibility and a sense of maturity and leadership in the wake of this decision. Those are still required.

Number two, as I mentioned, he did speak to Foreign Minister Wang Yi before -- obviously a few days ago -- before the decision. I don't have any future phone calls to announce today or to speak

to, but he routinely speaks to his Chinese counterpart on a range of issues, and I suspect those conversations are going to continue.

And as for opening up new channels, there's no need to do that. We have lots of communication channels open with the Chinese here at the State Department, the Defense Department as well, and of course, the President also has a way of communicating with President Xi. So there's lots of ways that we will continue to stay in touch with China going forward.

QUESTION: John, can I follow up on Itu Aba?

MR KIRBY: On what?

QUESTION: Itu Aba, the Taiping Island in the South China Sea. Can I follow up on that quickly?

MR KIRBY: Sure.

QUESTION: I'm not going to quiz you on 500-page details of the ruling. (Laughter.)

MR KIRBY: Good.

QUESTION: Itu Aba – some called Taiping Island – is the largest land feature in the Spratlys chain. And so today's ruling, to some of the legal experts, a little bit surprising because it was defined as rock, not island. Given the fact that Taiwan has about 200 people post in Taiping or Itu Aba, what role does the United States want Taiwan to play going forward?

MR KIRBY: Well, look, again, I'm not going to speak to the specifics of this case, as I said at the outset. Nothing's changed about our "one China" policy and our desire to see cross-strait relations be productive and peaceful. But other than that, I'm not going to comment.

QUESTION: Shouldn't Taiwan be – does the United States consider bringing Taiwan to a negotiation table to – when trying to find a peaceful and diplomatic way to solve the disputes?

MR KIRBY: I know of no such plans. Again, nothing's changed about our "one China" policy, nothing.

Barbara.

QUESTION: In March, the Chinese pulled back from what looked like land reclamation plans for the Scarborough Shoal, reportedly under U.S. pressure. Just wondered if you were confident that they would keep that stance after this ruling or whether there was sort of diplomatic exchanges or urges from here that they don't take that action.

MR KIRBY: We have been nothing but consistent for many months about our concerns about militarization of features in the South China Sea. President Xi, when he was here standing next to President Obama, made clear that they weren't going to do that. We have seen some signs in recent weeks that some of that activity continues, and we have been, again, very consistent, very

clear with our Chinese counterparts about our ongoing concern with – in that regard, and that's not going to change.

Now, I can't possibly speculate what China may or may not do going forward after this decision, but they themselves have committed to not militarizing features, and that's our expectation. And frankly, that's the expectation of plenty of countries there in the region and many countries around the world.

Yeah.

QUESTION: Mr. Kirby, very quickly, you said you are consistently concerned about land reclamation activities by China. Some people in China point out that, in fact, China is hardly the first country to do so. Vietnam, the Philippines did that in past, but in those cases the U.S. was not so eager to project their anger or protest. Is there a double standard here?

MR KIRBY: Look, I'm not going – again, we're not taking individual positions on individual claims, but I think it's a far cry and a stretch to compare what China has done in just recent months and certainly over the last year or so with land reclamation and militarization with any such potential like situations from other countries in the region. There's absolutely no way to compare the scope and the size and the character of it.

QUESTION: But from your statement this afternoon, it seems that Washington can imply, if not dictate, what countries in the region in South China Sea should or should not do based on a piece of treaty, UNCLOS – which, of course, the U.S. did not ratify. This Administration, along with others --

MR KIRBY: And we continue to urge the Senate to --

QUESTION: -- tried to push for it, but you never get the two-third majority of the Senate.

MR KIRBY: We continue to urge the Senate to ratify. We've --

QUESTION: Do you think the U.S. --

MR KIRBY: This Administration has been very, very clear about that. But we still abide by the central tenets of it, even though we aren't a signer.

QUESTION: But when you abide by the central tenets, do you think the U.S. loses kind of the moral authority to do that when it does not ratify it?

MR KIRBY: This isn't about expressing moral authority, and I kind of reject the implication in the question. This isn't about the United States projecting moral authority. This is an international tribunal which came up with a legally binding decision that the United States didn't influence. We said before that they reached it that it would be legally binding; so did the world. Now they've reached it; it's still legally binding, and the world is going to be watching what both claimants do in terms of meeting their obligations on this.

As I said at the outset, the United States doesn't take a position on individual claims. We do take a position on coercion, and part of coercion is the potential militarization of land features that appear to have only one outcome in mind, and that is to press, potentially through force, these claims when those claims ought to be settled through exactly this kind of a process.

QUESTION: And finally, do you think the U.S. in any ways contributed to the rising of tensions, militarization in South China Sea when they send bombers and cruisers, frigates in the region so often?

MR KIRBY: No, I don't, and here's why: The United States military has a presence in the Pacific. We are a Pacific power. Five of our seven treaty alliances are in the Pacific. We have enormous security commitments in the region. And when we operate our ships and our aircraft, we do so in international airspace and international maritime space, and we train with our allies and our partners. And those are serious obligations, because our military has an – has a responsibility to protect and defend the United States national security interests. And we've been doing that for a long time, well before these issues in the South China Sea came up. So the short answer is, no, I don't.

Said.

QUESTION: Can we move to a new topic?

MR KIRBY: Yeah.

QUESTION: Are we done?

QUESTION: Just follow on that point – in the statement, you asked for all claimants to avoid provocative actions and rhetorics. Does that also include United States?

MR KIRBY: The United States isn't committing provocative rhetoric or actions. I've said, again, we don't take a position on these claims, and our military operations in the region are 100 percent aligned --

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MR KIRBY: Listen, now, I know where you're going here. I get that you don't like this, but that doesn't make it less true, that our military operations in the region are designed to look after U.S. national security interests, including the interests of five of our seven treaty alliances. We have enormous responsibilities. We have been and remain and will remain a Pacific power. And so as the Secretary of Defense has said, we're going to fly, sail, and operate in accordance with international law where we need to to protect those interests. That is not something new. That is something that the United States military takes very seriously, and has for decades – well before this discussion was even being had about the South China Sea.

Said.

QUESTION: Can we go to Syria?

MR KIRBY: Yeah.

QUESTION: Yeah. Today --

MR KIRBY: I can't believe I'm actually glad to move on to Syria. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: All right. (Inaudible.) Today, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, Sergey Lavrov, said in Baku that -- he basically gave a scathing criticism of UN Envoy Staffan de Mistura. He accused him of not carrying on with his responsibilities in organizing a meeting among Syrian -- basically, he was very critical of Mr. de Mistura's statement that he's waiting for American-Russian agreement. Do you have any comment on -- have you seen those comments, and do you have any comment?

MR KIRBY: I have not seen the foreign minister's comments, but -- so without addressing -- without addressing comments I haven't seen, I do think that it's incumbent upon me to restate what the Secretary has said many times in applauding the UN Special Envoy de Mistura's efforts to try to get the political process back on track. And he has tried mightily, and it has been extraordinarily difficult. And you know one of the reasons why it's been so difficult for him? Because when you try to bring the opposition together, try to get them to start having even proximity talks with the regime, and their people are still being bombed; and innocent civilians are still being bombed; hospitals are being bombed; and there are continued ground offenses by the regime that are still happening, like places in and around Aleppo; and millions of Syrians are still starving, not getting the medicine they need, not getting food and water -- makes it real difficult for the opposition to move forward with meaningful talks or to believe that there's even a hope for that.

So what would make Staffan de Mistura's job enormously easier would be for the Russians to use the influence that we know they can have on the Assad regime to get the violence to stop, to cease with the temporary regimes of calms, and let's get to something that's real -- which, oh by the way, Moscow signed up to in three communiques and a UN Security Council resolution when they said that they supported a nationwide cessation of hostilities. So what would be, again, helpful to Mr. de Mistura is for Russia to use that influence to that end and to press the regime to allow the humanitarian access to continue unimpeded and unfettered to the still millions of Syrians that are in need. I think that would go a long way to helping the political process get back on track and to seeing Staffan de Mistura achieve the kind of success that the Secretary believes that he still can achieve.

QUESTION: So the two positions -- the Russian and the American position are so far apart. What is hoped to be achieved when the Secretary makes his trip to Moscow on --

MR KIRBY: I actually don't agree, Said, that our positions are far apart. I mean, we've signed up to these communiques. We've signed up to a UN Security Council resolution. Russia is a co-chair with us in the task force on cessation of hostilities. So there's near-daily communication between the U.S. and Russia on what's going on on the ground, and what the Secretary looks forward to talking about in Russia is how we can take that same spirit of uniformity on what we both want to see in Syria to the next level. Let's get the cessation of hostilities applied

nationwide, let's make it enduring, let's get the humanitarian access to flow unimpeded, let's see if we can help de Mistura get the political process on track. And so we have teed up ideas to the Russians, and I think you'll see that this trip to Moscow will be an indicator – we believe will be an indicator of Russia's – the sincerity of Russia's own statements about their commitment to going after Daesh in Syria and going after al-Nusrah and trying to see that a whole, unified, pluralistic Syria can be had.

QUESTION: And my final on this one – the Secretary a couple months ago, or a month and a half ago, spoke about his patience running out or the United States' patience running out.

MR KIRBY: Yeah.

QUESTION: Will that be the message he's driving home, especially in the aftermath of the meeting with the Saudi foreign minister Adel Jubeir last week, where they talked about sending ground troops to Syria and maybe becoming even more involved in the effort to bring down the Assad regime?

MR KIRBY: I think if you're asking me is the Secretary still frustrated by what's going on in Syria, the answer is yes. In fact, I'd say he's extremely frustrated, and we want to see real change in what's been going on. And that's one of the reasons why we're going to Moscow, to see if that change is actually going to be possible – if the Russians are going to do what they've said that they were going to do. So, again, he looks forward to having these conversations. He's convinced that there can be progress. He's convinced that the Russians can contribute to real political and peaceful solutions in Syria. We've seen in the past where, when they choose to exert their leadership and their influence, the positive effect that it can have. And so, again, we – he's going to once again probe the sincerity of their own stated commitments to those outcomes.

But I believe he meant every molecule of what he said when said that his patience was growing thin. I think the patience of the international community is growing thin with respect to what's going on in Syria. Still too many people are being innocently killed and injured; still too many people are being driven from their homes; still too many people are without basic food, water, and medicine, and the basic necessities of life; and still we have a regime in power that refuses any effort to try to move this political process forward in a way that gets to an end state where we have a government in Syria which is responsible for and responsive to the Syrian people.

Yeah.

QUESTION: I guess – I assume you saw the *Washington Post* story today entitled, "Kerry touts the Russian line on Syrian rebel groups."

MR KIRBY: I did see that piece. I am actually quoted in that piece.

QUESTION: I wonder what your response to that piece is.

MR KIRBY: You saw my quote, right? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Maybe I didn't read it carefully. Would you mind --

MR KIRBY: Oh, you didn't see my quote.

QUESTION: Or maybe I have an old version of it. I don't see --

MR KIRBY: Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, I was in the original piece. I talked to Josh Rogin for that story. My reaction is my quote. You can just read it right there.

QUESTION: I apologize.

MR KIRBY: That's okay. It's all right.

QUESTION: On the same point, are you considering -- can I go ahead?

MR KIRBY: Am I considering?

QUESTION: Are you considering, like, designating Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam as terrorist groups, as the Russians asking for?

MR KIRBY: I know of no such consideration that's being considered. Again, Samir, we've talked about this. The -- in the UN Security Council resolution governing the process here, the -- and this was agreed to by the -- by every member of the ISSG, including Russia, that groups designated by the UN -- not by the U.S., by the UN -- as foreign terrorist organizations would not be party to the cessation of hostilities, and the UN has not designated those groups as foreign terrorist organizations. And we're going to abide by the agreement that we also signed up to inside the ISSG.

QUESTION: I believe that was the UN Security Council --

QUESTION: What did the --

QUESTION: -- not UN.

MR KIRBY: What did I say?

QUESTION: UN. The UN Security Council, which is the United States, Russia, and three other countries, so --

MR KIRBY: No, I know who's a member of it. Did I say it wrong?

QUESTION: Well --

MR KIRBY: The UN Security Council resolution --

QUESTION: Which would -- right, which means --

MR KIRBY: -- which said that --

QUESTION: -- you have a say in that, in defining which groups are terror groups.

MR KIRBY: Yeah, but not the U.S. unilaterally.

QUESTION: No, no, no, but --

MR KIRBY: That's what my point was, Brad.

QUESTION: But the point is if Russia and the U.S. disagree and then --

MR KIRBY: Well, then --

QUESTION: -- you decide to agree, you can change that UN resolution. That's --

MR KIRBY: That could be a matter for the Security Council to bring up. I'm not aware of any --

QUESTION: Right, but it's not out of your hands.

MR KIRBY: -- coming conversations in that regard. I -- my point to Samir was that this was decided on by all the members of the ISSG, endorsed by the Security Council in a resolution that only UN-designated foreign terrorist organizations would not be party to the cessation, and there's been no change to that. And I don't see any changes coming to that.

QUESTION: But --

QUESTION: Can I follow up on this?

QUESTION: -- what did the --

MR KIRBY: Hang on a second, Said.

QUESTION: What did the Secretary mean when he was in Aspen? At Aspen he said the Jaysh al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham are under groups of ISIL and Jabhat al-Nusrah.

MR KIRBY: Did you read my quote in Josh's story?

QUESTION: Yes. (Laughter.)

MR KIRBY: Because that lays it right out for you. Look, as I said, there's no change to our policy -- and I just stated our policy, thanks to Brad's clarifications, but I stated the policy. And the Secretary was simply referring to the fact that we're not blind to the notion that some of these fighters shift their loyalties and some go from fighting in one group to another. And that's all the point he was making. He wasn't changing our policy with respect to who is or who is not a part of the cessation of hostilities.

QUESTION: In that same UN resolution, you set a target date of August --

MR KIRBY: UN Security Council resolution.

QUESTION: -- UN Security Council resolution --

QUESTION: No, I was clarifying that it wasn't UN-named terrorist groups; it was UN Security Council --

MR KIRBY: But it was --

QUESTION: The U.S. had a role in that, not -- it wasn't just --

MR KIRBY: Well, of course we did.

QUESTION: -- some UN functionary --

MR KIRBY: No, of course we did.

QUESTION: -- who declared it a terrorist group.

MR KIRBY: Well, of course not.

QUESTION: No --

MR KIRBY: Of course not, of course not. But you were wrong. It isn't a UN resolution; it's a UN Security Council resolution.

QUESTION: In that same UNSC resolution, you set a target date of August 1st to create a framework for a political transition.

MR KIRBY: Yeah.

QUESTION: How would you evaluate how close you are to meeting that target date of August 1st?

MR KIRBY: As -- you're right, the Secretary talked about it as a target, so did Foreign Minister Lavrov talked about it as a target. And we're mindful of the clock; we're mindful of the calendar, I can assure you that. Again, another -- it underscores the importance of the Secretary's trip to Moscow and the conversations that he intends to have there. We're obviously also mindful of where the political process sits right now, which is that there hasn't been suitable progress moving forward. I'm not going to predict what's going to happen in a couple of weeks or not, but clearly, we are not ignorant to the fact that achieving some sort of groundbreaking political development in two weeks is not likely.

That doesn't mean that these still aren't discussions worth having and it doesn't mean that we still shouldn't strive to try to meet the basic milestones that were laid out in the resolution, and we're going to do that. And again, that's one of the reasons why the Secretary feels it's important to head to Moscow.

QUESTION: The Secretary also said at the beginning of May that if there wasn't progress in the next couple months on this in working towards that target date that Assad should expect a very different track. Is there any movement on that and the idea of this different track, since we've seen so little progress in the last few months?

MR KIRBY: I'm just going to let the Secretary's comments stand for themselves.

Yeah.

QUESTION: Turkey?

MR KIRBY: Really?

QUESTION: Yes.

MR KIRBY: Okay.

QUESTION: Thank you, Josh – thank you, John.

MR KIRBY: Josh? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: I'm sorry. Josh is a different person.

QUESTION: He's a different one.

QUESTION: Yes. John, yesterday --

MR KIRBY: I don't pretend to be anywhere near as competent as my White House colleague.

QUESTION: Yesterday, you talk about – I ask about Human Rights Watch group report on Turkey southeast, and you said you were going to study on it. Do you have any comment now?

MR KIRBY: I don't have a whole lot more than what I told you yesterday. We're obviously aware of the report stating that the Turkish Government has not responded to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – the letter requesting permission for a UN team to conduct an investigation in southeastern Turkey to examine potential violations by the security forces during military operations in urban areas. We urge Turkey to allow effective investigations by Turkish prosecutors into civilian deaths and destruction of civilian property in Cizre – is that how you say that --

QUESTION: Cizre.

MR KIRBY: -- Cizre, thank you – and other towns in the southeast and give the UN and nongovernmental groups access to the area to document what is taking place. Last thing I'd say is we urge Turkey to take all feasible precautions, of course, to protect civilians and act consistency – consistently with legal obligations.

QUESTION: UN and human rights groups have been asking for this permission for months. In 2016, Turkey is a NATO ally. How do you see – how it is not possible for Turkey, your ally, not to allow investigators to look into the human rights violations?

MR KIRBY: Well, again, I think I've stated our position. We urge them to allow that access and to conduct those investigations. We believe it's important not because they're a NATO ally, but because it's the right thing to do. And again, we're not bashful about stating our views in that regard.

QUESTION: And one more: There is – Hursit Kulter, he is the local pro-Kurdish party member who have been disappeared for five days and been millions of hashtag going on in the Twitter and social media, and there is no comment from Turkish authorities for over four to five days. I wonder if you have anything on that.

MR KIRBY: I've not seen that report. Why don't we see if we can't get back to you.

Janne. Said, I got you. I'll come back to you.

QUESTION: Thank you, John. On North Korea, as you know that North Korea launched the SLBM on last Saturday. Do you think North Korea is in violation of UN Security Council resolution on this?

MR KIRBY: We've seen the reports that they launched what appeared to be a ballistic missile from a submarine in the Sea of Japan. We are obviously monitoring and continue to assess that in close coordination with our regional allies and partners.

QUESTION: On THAAD issue again?

MR KIRBY: What?

QUESTION: Yeah. Do you think --

MR KIRBY: You didn't let me finish my answer.

QUESTION: Okay, sorry.

MR KIRBY: I mean, I had a lot more eloquence here.

QUESTION: Thanks, sir.

MR KIRBY: We strongly condemn North Korea's missile test in violation of UN Security Council resolutions which explicitly prohibit North Koreans' use of ballistic missile technology. These actions and North Korea's continued pursuit of ballistic missile and nuclear weapons capabilities pose a significant threat to the United States, our allies, and to the stability of the greater Asia Pacific. And as I've been saying for much of the briefing today, we take those security obligations very, very seriously.

Now, you had a question on THAAD?

QUESTION: Yes, about the THAAD. North Korea on military headquarters announced yesterday strongly recommend about regarding THAAD deployed to South Korea about North Koreans' declaration of war against the South Korea and United States. What is the U.S. position on their remarks?

MR KIRBY: It's the same as it's been, Janne. I mean look, the whole reason why there are now active discussions about the deployment of a THAAD system is because of the continued threat that the North poses to the people of South Korea and to the region. It is a purely defensive system. We've talked about that. But it is – this is a necessary conversation that our two militaries believe they need to have in terms of this potential deployment.

Again, we continue to call on Pyongyang to cease the kinds of actions and rhetoric and threats that do nothing to ease the insecurity on the peninsula, and in part have, quite frankly, driven our two militaries to having this now active discussion about this potential deployment.

QUESTION: But the China has tolerated a North Korean nuclear program. Why China criticize the United States deployed their THAAD missile for defense, using for defense?

MR KIRBY: I'm not sure I understand the – why --

QUESTION: I mean, Chinese – why they are so against United States?

MR KIRBY: Well, you'd have to talk to Chinese authorities for their reservations. I think you've seen in some of their comments that they're concerned about the perceived threat of this system to their own capabilities in the region. And as we have said many, many times, this is a purely defensive system. We have offered to share certain details of the capabilities of the system with Chinese officials, and I'm not aware that they've taken us up on that offer.

This is a – again, a purely defensive system, so there should be no reason for China or any other nation to be concerned about this in terms of any offensive capabilities. It is purely defensive. And frankly, we wouldn't be having the discussion that we're having with the Republic of Korea if Pyongyang had chosen over these many months and years a different path.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: I have a Clinton emails question and then I have a couple on Israel, but I'll be – try to be fast. Last week there was a State Department deposition and it mentioned that Pat Kennedy asked the FBI to turn over several thousand emails the FBI was able to find on the wiped server. Have you gotten these yet?

MR KIRBY: Hang on a second here. I'm going to have to get my glasses out. I know I have it here. I want to make sure I get exactly what you need.

So as we've said for many months, we're going to work with the FBI to determine the appropriate disposition of potential federal records – federal records, I'm sorry, that it's

recovered. I can confirm that we've sent a letter to the FBI requesting that, to the extent the FBI recovered former Secretary Clinton's work-related emails that were not in the group of emails she provided to the State Department in December of 2014, that they provide us with such emails. And as I've said for many months, we'll work with the FBI to determine the appropriate disposition.

QUESTION: So have you gotten them yet?

MR KIRBY: Again, I don't have any updates for you. I can just say that we have made the request.

QUESTION: Right. Do you plan to release these as part of the full release of the secretary's former work emails?

MR KIRBY: That is – what I would say to that is we're going to continue to work with the FBI on the proper disposition. And I don't have anything with respect to potential release to speak to right now.

QUESTION: Okay. And then on Israel, a couple things. One, the NGO law that you had expressed concerns about in the past has come into effect. Do you have a position now that it is operational?

MR KIRBY: We're aware that the Knesset passed the NGO bill last night. Although some of the issues that we were concerned about were addressed in the final version, we are still very concerned about the potential impacts of this legislation – in particular, the chilling effect that this new law could have on NGO activities. As the President has made clear, a free and functional civil society is essential, and governments must protect freedoms of expression, including dissent and association, and create an atmosphere where all voices can be heard.

QUESTION: I think the EU said it risks undermining democracy. Do you share that opinion?

MR KIRBY: Well, I think I'd point you back to what the President said, that free expression and including dissent and association, a free and functioning civil society – those are all key elements to a healthy democracy.

QUESTION: And then coincidentally but separately, there was a Senate report that came out today on State Department aid to a group. I think it was called OneVoice. And it concluded that some U.S. money went to an effort that was opposing the Israeli prime minister. Do you have a comment on that?

MR KIRBY: As the report was just released, actually we've not had time to go through it closely, so I'm not going to be able to comment on specifics. But I would note that the report makes clear there's no evidence that OneVoice spent State Department grant funds to influence the Israeli election. Again, I just don't have additional comment at this time.

QUESTION: Iran? Iran?

QUESTION: John, could I follow up on Brad's question --

MR KIRBY: Sure. I had a feeling you'd want to.

QUESTION: -- on the NGO? Now, since basically those organizations that get their funding from abroad, there are only -- or most of their funding -- there are 27, 25 of which are human rights organizations that really document Israeli military occupation, abuses, and so on. And it is bound to have a very, very negative effect on the ability to report and record and document these human rights abuses. So I know you mentioned that -- about free press and so on, but also the human rights situation. I wonder if you would have a comment on that.

MR KIRBY: Well, as I said, I mean, it's not just about freedom of expression; it's dissent and association. And when I said dissent and association, I was talking about some of these NGOs that promote civil society and human rights issues. And again -- and I said this in the answer to Brad -- I mean, we're deeply concerned that this law now as passed can have a chilling effect on the activities that these worthwhile organizations are trying to do.

QUESTION: And just related, the foreign minister of Egypt was in Israel and met with the prime minister, and they were talking about maybe restarting some sort of a peace process. He's trying to arrange a meeting, apparently, between Egyptian President Sisi and the prime minister in Israel. Are you aware of these activities? Do you -- are you in communication with them as part of the organizing process? Do you have any comment on them?

MR KIRBY: Well, I mean, we're aware of the Egyptians' interest in trying to contribute to solutions that could get us to a two-state outcome. This is something that the Secretary has routinely discussed with Foreign Minister Shoukry. I can't speak to his specific travel or meetings that he's having in Israel or with Israeli leaders, but -- and I wouldn't -- and I won't speak to specifics of any of the content of those meetings. That's for those individuals to speak to. But as the Secretary has said many times, we're still committed to a two-state solution, and he's not going to turn up his nose at any good ideas that are proffered either here in the United States or around the world that could help us achieve that outcome and could help the leaders in the region to make the kinds of decisions to achieve that outcome for themselves.

QUESTION: John, just a quick one on Syria: What happens -- what's the plan for August 1st? It seems you're treating it like -- more like a goal than a hard deadline, so do you just shift the goal, then, or what?

MR KIRBY: Well, as the Secretary said all along, it was never considered a deadline.

QUESTION: Yes. So --

MR KIRBY: He even said when he talked about it as a target. And obviously we still would like to achieve that target. But --

QUESTION: But you won't be able to use it in the next two weeks, right?

MR KIRBY: -- we're certainly mindful that with two weeks to go, as I said, that a major breakthrough on the political process is most likely not likely. That doesn't mean, though, that it's not important to go to Moscow and to have discussions about how we can better get there, to include a discussion about the cessation of hostilities and the humanitarian aid, which has been a real obstacle to moving the political process forward. And so the Secretary's going to be interested to talk to Russian leaders about their ideas about how we can achieve that outcome. It's not about moving goals. It's about achieving the goal itself, and the larger goal is a political solution to the problem in Syria.

Again, we're mindful that August looms. More critically -- and this is an important point -- the Secretary is mindful that millions and millions of Syrians are still in desperate need inside and outside the country, and that even when, as they call for a regime of calm, ground and air operations continue to occur against opposition forces in and around Aleppo and in and around Damascus. So I certainly understand, and it's a fair question about August 1st, but the Secretary's focused on the much larger goal of achieving a real political solution in Syria.

QUESTION: But -- I mean, I understand that, but if you put a date down as a way to kind of keep the talks focused and --

MR KIRBY: Sure. Dates like that, targets can help to be forcing functions.

QUESTION: Then at a certain point, if there's just no progress, you just indefinitely extend the date or you take a different approach or what?

MR KIRBY: Well, obviously, we need some different approaches, and again, that's one of the reasons why the Secretary is going to Moscow. We have not achieved the level of peace and security in Syria that we want to. And so, as I said earlier, we have proposed some alternatives and some options, and the Secretary looks forward to discussing those ideas with Russian leaders and any ideas they might have in terms of achieving a better outcome. But the tools are all there, Barb. The -- we -- the elements of how to get to success in Syria are laid out in the UN Security Council resolution. The issue has been the execution and the implementation, and a large measure of that has been continued violations and obstructionism and acts of violence against their own people by the regime.

And Russia can play a more productive, more constructive, more useful role in terms of trying to check that behavior and try to turn events to a more -- to more positive outcomes in Syria. And again, that's why we're -- one of the reasons why we're going to Moscow, of course. And so we'll see where we get after the discussions in Russia and we'll see where we get throughout the rest of July.

But again, I mean, it was never intended to be a deadline. It was certainly intended to be a forcing function, a target goal, and I can't predict for you the degree to which there'll be another one on the horizon. But I can tell you that for our part, the U.S. Government, certainly Secretary Kerry, remains committed to the larger goal set -- as set forth in the Security Council resolution about a unified, whole, pluralistic Syria with a government that's responsible and responsive to the people there.

I got time for one more. Yeah, go ahead.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir. Jahanzaib Ali from ARY News TV. Sir, it is about the situation in Indian-held Kashmir. You spoke about it yesterday. I've seen your comments.

MR KIRBY: Good.

QUESTION: But --

MR KIRBY: So I don't have anything more to say. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Yeah, I know.

MR KIRBY: This is an easy last question.

QUESTION: But sir, the Press Trust of India reported that John Kirby says that it is an internal matter of India. I haven't seen those comments in the transcript. Have you said that?

MR KIRBY: I said -- hang on, I'll tell you exactly what I said. I said we've seen reports of the clashes between protesters and Indian forces in Kashmir, we're concerned by the violence, we encourage all sides to make efforts towards finding a peaceful solution, and I said I would refer you to the Government of India for any more specific information about those clashes.

QUESTION: Sir, is it the internal matter of India or do you consider Kashmir the disputed territory?

MR KIRBY: I'm going to leave my answer where I left it. I think I did a pretty good job.

QUESTION: Sir, do you support the UN resolution on Kashmir?

MR KIRBY: I think I did a pretty good job answering it yesterday. I'm going to stick with that. Thanks. Appreciate it, everybody.

(The briefing was concluded at 3:02 p.m.)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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For Immediate Release

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

July 12, 2016

Senior State Department Official
On South China Sea Arbitration
July 12, 2016
Via Teleconference

MODERATOR: Great. Thank you. And thank you all for joining us today on this call on the arbitration decision. For your information, this call is embargoed until the end of the call. The call will be on background. For your information, not for reporting purposes, our speaker today is [Senior State Department Official], moving forward [Senior State Department Official] will be known as Senior State Department Official. We have a hard stop with this call at 4:30, so we'll get right to that.

Senior State Department Official, the floor is yours.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Thanks very much, [Moderator]. I'm sure that all of the folks on the line have seen the statement that was issued by our spokesperson here at the State Department John Kirby this morning, and you've probably all either been in the press briefing or seen the transcript of the Qs and As there. So I'm not going to cover that ground.

I will say that, of course, the decision announced by the Law of the Sea Tribunal in The Hague today was a very sweeping and decisive ruling. Four key elements from our point of view are, first, the invalidation of the nine-dash line claim; secondly, the determination that the features in the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Reef are entitled to no more than 12 nautical miles by way of maritime space; that the construction of artificial islands by China and the conduct of Chinese fishing fleets violated the rights of the Philippines; and that the large-scale reclamation and constructing these military outposts in the Spratlys damage the environment.

But while the decision was quite clear and authoritative, it was also immensely complex. The press release alone is 11 pages long. I am not a lawyer. And everyone – all the parties, and certainly the United States – need time to digest it and make an assessment of the implications of the ruling.

What I would say is that the important thing, from our perspective, is that this ruling – although it was a technical assessment of maritime rights and doesn't address or alter the question of who has sovereignty over the land features in the region – does create an important diplomatic opportunity. And we believe strongly that once the dust settles and the rhetoric subsides, this decision opens the door to some very practical and potentially productive discussions among the various claimants in the South China Sea, in part because the ruling significantly narrows the geographic scope of the areas in question.

So we are working diplomatically with each of the parties to try to encourage them to use this decision as the basis for discussions and potentially the basis for agreement on what constitutes acceptable behavior in the disputed areas and to explore the potential down the road for things like joint development. Again, I won't rehash the statement that John Kirby made, but I will emphasize the importance that the United States places on restraint by all the parties. We call on them to refrain from coercion or the threat or the use of force, to respect the rule of law, and to clarify their claims consistent with the Law of the Sea, which we think will accelerate the process of finding an acceptable formula for reconciling differences peacefully.

So let me stop there and take your questions.

MODERATOR: That's great. Operator, if you could give the directions for questions again, and then we can take our first question.

OPERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, please press * followed by 1 for any questions, *1. We'll go to the first question from Nick Wadhams with Bloomberg News. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Hi. Thanks very much for holding this briefing. I just had a question on next steps and talking about encouraging the two sides to use this as a basis for discussion. I mean, given China's very swift response, also the foreign ministry spokesman's formal complaint to the U.S. against John Kirby's fairly evenhanded comments earlier today, do you see China as being willing to use this as a basis for discussion? I mean, you say after the rhetoric dies down. So do you see China's response so far as just rhetoric? I mean, is there some – is there some place to go from here after this ruling, given how strongly

China has come out against it?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Well, first of all, Nick, I'd take violent exception to your modifying John Kirby's statement as "fairly evenhanded." I think it was a model of balance and of moderation. But in all seriousness, look, there is a lot of maximalist rhetoric right now. Emotions are running high, and it will take some time for the dust to settle, for tempers to cool down, and for a sober analysis of both the tribunal's decision itself and the ramifications of it, but also an assessment of the way forward.

China isn't going to stop being a major player in the region or a neighbor. The Philippines aren't going away; Vietnam isn't going away, and the South China Sea remains a vitally important waterway. China's relationship not only with the United States but with ASEAN as a group, with the individual 10 ASEAN members, with the other claimants, are important to China and, frankly, good relations between and among them are important to the region, to the U.S., and to the world.

So look, it's not my place to tell China what's in its interests, but surely to be regarded with respect and not fear, to be seen as faithful to international law and not flouting it has got to matter. If China weren't concerned about its international reputation, surely it wouldn't have gone to the extraordinary length that it has gone to try to win the battle of international public opinion.

Now, the decision is quite clear and very decisive. I think that removes a certain amount of ambiguity. But it in no way impedes the prospect of China and the other claimants working on a path forward. And that's something that the United States will assist and will strongly support. I'll teach you a Chinese phrase: "win-win." You hear that a lot from the Chinese, and "win-win" is a way of characterizing compromise, often without acknowledging that there's been compromise if that's politically difficult.

And so we are putting a great deal of importance on the process that can unfold once China, the Philippines and the other claimants in the South China Sea have had an opportunity to fully assess the decision and to resume a more constructive diplomatic process. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Okay. Operator, if we can move to our next question, please.

OPERATOR: We'll go to the line of Lesley Wroughton with Reuters. Please, go ahead.

QUESTION: Yes, hi. When would be the first opportunity for either you or the Secretary or any other senior U.S. official to directly have discussions with China on the result of this? And number two, do you expect other countries, such as Vietnam, to now feel a little bit more emboldened by such an outcome and to perhaps take the same path, meaning going to the international tribunal with their claims?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: I see. Well, Lesley, we are, as a government, in regular touch with the Chinese Government, and I was in touch with the Chinese ambassador in the last 24 hours. I and Secretary Kerry will shortly be in Laos for the ASEAN Regional Forum. The Chinese foreign minister will be there, the vice foreign minister will be there. And we may be backwards in the State Department, but telephones, internet, and other forms of technology have arrived and we use those as well to maintain an ongoing dialogue with China. And I would say that one of the real hallmarks of the Obama Administration has been the development of a really robust and wide-ranging set of lines of communication with the Chinese that I think serve in many instances as a safety net, such that when there are problems or serious disagreements, we know that we have the ability to talk and to try to be understood and try to understand the other guy. Face-to-face talks I'm sure will be possible when the Secretary and the foreign minister meet.

In terms of Vietnam, I'm certainly not in the business of predicting what foreign governments will do or decide. I wouldn't imagine that any interested party would make any decisions about next steps until, number one, they had a chance to digest 447 or some-odd pages of dense legal writing from the tribunal. Secondly, after they had had a chance to observe not only what China is saying, not only what the Philippines are saying, but what each of them are doing, that will be particularly important. And thirdly, there will be widespread consultations between and among the various claimants as well as within ASEAN as a group. So my expectation is that there will be a period of assessment, discussion, and consultation that lies directly ahead.

For our part, Lesley, the United States and Secretary Kerry in particular will redouble efforts to focus each of the claimants on restraint, on diplomacy, and on exploring avenues for compromise and cooperation. There is more reason to think that this decision can be the predicate for progress than to think it would precipitate a crisis.

Thank you.

MODERATOR: That's great. Operator, if we can move to our next question, please.

OPERATOR: Matthew Pennington with Associated Press, your line is open.

QUESTION: Hi, [Senior State Department Official]. Thanks for doing the call. You mentioned that the ruling has sort of narrowed the geographic scope of the disputes in the South China Sea. Just by extension, does it remove any ambiguity about the – whether U.S. treaty obligations might lie with the Philippines if some of these features, which before were considered to be subject to dispute, now clearly lie inside the Philippines EEZ and outside China's potential claims?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Thanks, Matt. You are really testing my ability as a non-lawyer to navigate some immensely complicated terrain here. Speaking as a layman, the two points that I would make just to cast your question in a more, say, legally compliant way is first, that the U.S.-Philippine defense treaty is not exclusively or perhaps even primarily about geography. It addresses the prospect of an armed attack.

Secondly, the geographic scope of the maritime disputes I believe is drastically reduced by the decision. But the decision does not touch on the issue of sovereignty over recognized land features anywhere in the South China Sea. So the tribunal, as a technical matter, based on the authority vested in it under the treaty, has pronounced on the question of whether feature X is an island with certain entitlements or a rock with more limited entitlements, or not even a rock – a submerged feature with no maritime entitlements – but in no way, shape, or form spoke to the question of whose island or whose rock that might be.

So again, with the caveat that I will defer to and be corrected by the lawyers, I don't believe that this decision alters the question of what land feature belongs to what country. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Great. Operator, our next question.

OPERATOR: Missy Ryan, *Washington Post*, your line is open.

QUESTION: Hi. Do you see the ruling as a validation of the American freedom of navigation operations? And will this have any effect on the frequency or the location of those operations?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: That's a very interesting question. And again, I am not erudite enough or sufficiently schooled in the details of the decision itself to be able to answer definitively yes or no. However, the right to free navigation and overflight – which I stress is a right and entitlement of all nations, not merely of the United States – permits movement through international waters as well as movement through EEZs and in some cases through territorial seas as well. And so the redrawing or the clarification, I should say, of the maritime space in terms of EEZs or territorial seas shouldn't, at least by that logic, have any impact on freedom of navigation.

I do think, however, that it is certainly a vindication of the principle that the United States has strongly defended, that the rights of small countries under the law are equal to the rights of large countries. It is certainly a vindication of the principle that any country can rightfully avail itself of legitimate mechanisms under international law. The tribunal, which is constituted under the treaty for this purpose, carefully examined China's arguments that the Philippines had no right to bring this case and that the tribunal had no jurisdiction over the case. Even though China is not a party to the – did not engage as an active party to the arbitration, it submitted the equivalent of a legal pleading in the form of an extensive and very, very meticulously developed legal brief that was given the benefit of a full review by the tribunal, which clearly took it very seriously.

And so the decision that was announced today is a binding and a final determination. We think that it ought to mark the beginning of a new phase in which the parties themselves – the claimants, not only China and the Philippines – begin exploring diplomatic paths forward that will allow them to cooperate and to coexist peacefully in this extraordinarily important waterway. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Great. And now, Operator, our last question, please.

OPERATOR: Geoff Dyer with *Financial Times*. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Apologies; my questions have been asked and answered already.

MODERATOR: Okay, super. Operator, we can move to the next question.

OPERATOR: Nike Ching, Voice of America. Please go ahead.

QUESTION: Thank you very much for this briefing. My question is focused on the resource management and joint development. Could you please elaborate on the point that you said about this ruling could open up opportunity for joint development? And will that be – will this be discussed during the ASEAN meeting?

Secondly, as a matter-of-fact question, now that the ruling all land features in the Spratly are rock, does that mean that any fishermen from any countries or political entities can fish there because they are not under the 200 miles of EEZ? Thank you.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL: Okay, thank you. So let me begin by saying very clearly that the United States is not making a prescription for what it is precisely that the claimants should reach agreement on in terms of their use of the sea, nor are we being specific or attempting to dictate terms for how they should interact, other than to say that it should be peacefully.

But the problem that the various claimants have encountered in the past when they explored options for joint development is their inability to agree on what areas were genuinely in dispute and what areas were credibly within the EEZ of a single coastal state. So nobody has been thus far willing to share with another claimant parts of the ocean that they are absolutely convinced belong to them and where they see the competing claim as utterly without merit. But now that the tribunal has defined much more clearly the definition of maritime entitlements, it may be much easier to ascertain the parts of the South China Sea that the claimants can accept are legitimately in dispute. And that's the place where dividing 50/50 or dividing three ways makes sense and has been successfully employed elsewhere in the world and, in fact, elsewhere in the region.

I think that the other area that is now fertile ground for diplomatic creativity and exploration is the longstanding questions about what is and isn't acceptable behavior by the parties in disputed areas and around disputed areas. So for some time, the ASEANs have been attempting not only to successfully reach agreement with China on what it would mean to fully implement the 2002 declaration of conduct they had negotiated, but the code of conduct also, which is something that they have been exploring but have made precious little headway on. It's possible to imagine and we certainly would hope that in the aftermath of this decision, China and ASEAN can take advantage of their upcoming meetings to make accelerated progress in reaching basic understandings and finally a code of conduct pertaining to acceptable patterns and norms of behavior in the South China Sea. That would be, we would think, a major step forward towards enhanced stability and security in the region.

You are correct in pointing out that all the features named in the case brought by the Philippines to the tribunal have been determined to be rocks. That means that none of them generate EEZ. They have at most a 12 nautical mile maritime entitlement. But there are plenty of other features outside of the Spratlys which do generate an EEZ. Certainly the coastal territory of the Philippines or of Malaysia or elsewhere in the region, obviously any of the coastal states, generate an EEZ. And if it's uninterrupted by a competing nation's EEZ, then it extends 200 nautical miles. But there are islands in the South China Sea – just not in the Spratlys – that are presumed to be islands, and presumed therefore to generate 200 nautical – or at least generate an EEZ.

The right to fish or exploit resources in an area is a function of whether that marine area is in someone's EEZ territorial waters, or outside of it. If it falls in the EEZ, say, of the Philippines, then by rights to fish there would require the permission of the Government of the Philippines. If the area in question was international water then no national permission is required.

Let me just take this opportunity very briefly, though, to make a plug for the importance of responsible fishery practices by all parties. The scourge of illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing is devastating the Pacific in general and the South China Sea in particular. And we call on all nations to be responsible for their nationals' fishing activity and to do everything in their power, including by ratifying the Port States Measures, to combat illegal fishing.

Thank you.

MODERATOR: Great. Thanks to our Senior State Department Official for this call. The embargo is now lifted. We'll post a transcript as soon as we're able. And thanks to all of you for joining us today. The call is complete.

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<http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://links.govdelivery.com:80/track?type=click&id=ZWfZPTEmbXNpZD0mYXVpZD0mbWpGluZ2kPTIwMTYwNzEYlYxNDU3MzQxMj1c3NhZ2VpZD1NREitUFJELUJVTCoYMDE2MDcxMi42MTQ1NzMoMSZkYXRhYmFzZWkPTurl=http://instagram.com/statedept>

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[type=click&enid=ZWfzPTEmbXNpZD0mYXVpZD0mbWFpbGlzZ2lkPTIwMTYwNzEyLjYxNDU3MzQxMjE3NhZzVpZD1NREltUFJELUJVTG0yMDE2MDcxMi42MTQ1NzM0MSZKYXRhYmFzZWlkaPT](http://www.govdelivery.com/portals/powered-by)
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From: Finney, Clarence N <FinneyCN@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 4:47 PM
To: Kenna, Lisa D <kennald@state.gov>; Kim, Yuri J <KimYJ@state.gov>; Fisher, Julie D <FisherJD@state.gov>; Lakhdhir, Kamala S <LakhdhirKS@state.gov>; Dodman, Michael J <DodmanMJ@state.gov>
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants <S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov>; D_Assistants <D_Assistants@state.gov>; D-MR_StaffAssistants <D-MR_StaffAssistants@state.gov>; P_StaffAssistants <P_StaffAssistants@state.gov>; E_StaffAssistants <E_StaffAssistants@state.gov>; Wasser, Jonathon D <WasserJD@state.gov>; Lang, Karin M <LangKM@state.gov>
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY COB: 9/15/2015
Attach: F-2015-03055 Lightstone, Aryeh.pdf

Lisa, Yuri, Julie, Kamala, and Michael,

S/ES-S is prepared to send A Bureau the Executive Secretariat response to the attached FOIA case requesting all records detailing meetings or discussions between Department of State officials, employees, representatives, or agents and any of the following individuals/organizations:

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Christina Taler	Nimrod Dweck	

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Thanks for your support.

Clarence

Clarence N. Finney Jr.
 Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
 (202) 647-3574 (office)

From: Finney, Clarence N
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 1:22 PM
To: Kenna, Lisa D; Kim, Yuri J; Fisher, Julie D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S; Heidt, William A
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants; E_StaffAssistants; Wasser, Jonathon D; Lang, Karin M; Carlson, MaryKay L
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

Lisa, Yuri, Julie, Kamala, and Bill,

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Jeremy Bird	Daniel Lubetsky	Marc Ginsberg
Christina Taler	Nimrod Dweck	

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Thanks for your support.

Clarence

Clarence N. Finney Jr.
Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
(202) 647-3574 (office)

From: Finney, Clarence N
Sent: Friday, May 01, 2015 4:40 PM
To: Kenna, Lisa D; Rosenberger, Laura M; Logsdon, Kent D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S; Heidt, William A; Lapenn, Jessica; Stevenson, Susan N
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_Officers; E_StaffAssistants; J; R; SES_4; Stana, Katie; Wasser, Jonathon D
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY MAY 18, 2015

Lisa, Laura, Kent, Kamala, Bill, Jessica, and Jennifer,

The Department has received the attached Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests for all records detailing meetings or discussions between Department of State officials, employees, representatives, or agents and any of the following individuals/organizations:

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OneVoice Israel	OneVoice Palestine	270 Strategies
Jeremy Bird	Daniel Lubetsky	Marc Ginsberg
Christina Taler	Nimrod Dweck	

I am contacting you at this time because the subject matter of Plaintiff's FOIA request overlaps substantially with matters on which members in your office may routinely work. To ensure the Department's complete compliance to yield all responsive records, we request your assistance by:

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- **Conducting a search of files and email accounts** of members in your office whose portfolio would have a reasonable possibility of possessing records responsive to the attached FOIA request using the above mentioned search terms.

In order to provide a response to the Department's FOIA Analysts in a timely manner, we are requesting your response by COB Monday, May 18, 2015. Please send your response by e-mail or intra-office mail to my attention. If you have any questions, please contact me or Jonathon Wasser at (202) 647-7587.

Thanks for your support.

Clarence

Clarence N. Finney Jr.
Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
(202) 647-3574

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S </O=SBUSTATE/OU=HR AG/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=LAKHDIRKS>
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 1:32 PM
To: Bair, James P <BairJP@state.gov>
Subject: FW: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED
Attach: F-2015-03055 Lightstone, Aryeh.pdf

Jamie: It has been so long. Is this how we do all of these now? I am very confused.
 Thank you.
 K

From: Finney, Clarence N
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 1:22 PM
To: Kenna, Lisa D; Kim, Yuri J; Fisher, Julie D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S; Heidt, William A
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants; E_StaffAssistants; Wasser, Jonathon D; Lang, Karin M; Carlson, MaryKay L
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

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Jeremy Bird	Daniel Lubetsky	Marc Ginsberg
Christina Taler	Nimrod Dweck	

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Thanks for your support.

Clarence

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 Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
 (202) 647-3574 (office)

From: Finney, Clarence N
Sent: Friday, May 01, 2015 4:40 PM
To: Kenna, Lisa D; Rosenberger, Laura M; Logsdon, Kent D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S; Heidt, William A; Lapenn, Jessica; Stevenson, Susan N
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_Officers; E_StaffAssistants; J; R; SES_4; Stana, Katie; Wasser, Jonathon D
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY MAY 18, 2015

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Clarence N. Finney Jr.
Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
(202) 647-3574

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S </O=SBUSTATE/OU=HR AG/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=LAKHDIRKS>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2015 9:19 AM
To: Finney, Clarence N <FinneyCN@state.gov>
Cc: P_StaffAssistants <P_StaffAssistants@state.gov>; Lang, Karin M <LangKM@state.gov>; Wasser, Jonathon D <WasserJD@state.gov>; Greer, Kevin <GreerK@state.gov>
Subject: FW: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED - P Staff Response
Attach: F-2015-03055 Lightstone, Aryeh.pdf; Litigation Questionnaire.docx

Dear Clarence: I have completed the search under the guidelines for this FOIA request (Lightstone, Aryeh – F-2015-03055) for myself, Amb. Wendy Sherman, and former NEA special assistant Julia Jacoby, and U/S Sherman's personal assistant/scheduler Margo Morris has completed the search in her email/files. We have not found any items that are responsive to this FOIA.

As discussed last week, thank you for reporting the results of this search to the A Bureau POCs.

Thank you.
 Kamala

From: Finney, Clarence N
Sent: Thursday, October 01, 2015 10:45 AM
To: Kenna, Lisa D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; P_StaffAssistants; Lang, Karin M; Wasser, Jonathon D; Greer, Kevin
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

Lisa and Kamala

S/ES-S is prepared to send A Bureau the Executive Secretariat response to the attached FOIA Case. Please forward S/ES-S the results of your search by COB Friday.

Thanks,
 Clarence

From: Finney, Clarence N
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 5:10 PM
To: Kenna, Lisa D; Fisher, Julie D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY COB: 9/15/2015

Lisa, Julie, and Kamala,

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Jeremy Bird
Christina Taler

Daniel Lubetsky
Nimrod Dweck

Marc Ginsberg

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Thanks for your support.

Clarence

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(202) 647-3574 (office)

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Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants; E_StaffAssistants; Wasser, Jonathon D; Lang, Karin M; Carlson, MaryKay L
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

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Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_Officers; E_StaffAssistants; J; R; SES_4; Stana, Katie; Wasser, Jonathon D

Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY MAY 18, 2015

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Jeremy Bird	Daniel Lubetsky	Marc Ginsberg
Christina Taler	Nimrod Dweck	

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In order to provide a response to the Department's FOIA Analysts in a timely manner, we are requesting your response by COB Monday, May 18, 2015. Please send your response by e-mail or intra-office mail to my attention. If you have any questions, please contact me or Jonathon Wasser at (202) 647-7587.

Thanks for your support.

Clarence

Clarence N. Finney Jr.
Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
(202) 647-3574

RELEASE IN PART
B6

From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S </O=SBUSTATE/OU=HR
AG/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=LAKHDIRKS>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2015 9:14 AM
To: Morris, Margo T <MorrisMT@state.gov>
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

Thank you very much. Able to close this one out. I have this desperate need to check stuff off my to do list. [REDACTED]

B6

K

-----Original Message-----

From: Morris, Margo T
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2015 9:10 AM
To: Lakhdhir, Kamala S
Subject: Re: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

Oh sorry I did search and didn't find anything either. Forgot to tell you. [REDACTED]

B6

[REDACTED] M

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 19, 2015, at 9:07 AM, Lakhdhir, Kamala S <LakhdhirKS@state.gov> wrote:

>

> Sorry. I'm sending this to remind. I don't know if you will have time to search. I've found nothing in the Sherman, Lakhdhir, Jacoby emails/files.

> Thank you.

> K

>

> From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S

> Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2015 5:54 PM

> To: Morris, Margo T

> Cc: P_StaffAssistants

> Subject: FW: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

>

> Margo: I came over to discuss this with you but you were busy. I have done this FOIA search for myself, Ms. Sherman, and Julia Jacoby. I would ask that you search under the following to see if you have anything (I don't think you will):

>

> OneVoice

> 270 Strategies

> Jeremy Bird

> Lubetsky, Ginsberg, Dweck, Taler

>

> I have figured out how to do this more quickly with Cindy A's help if you need me to assist.

> Thank you.

> K

>

> From: Finney, Clarence N

> Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 5:10 PM
> To: Kenna, Lisa D; Fisher, Julie D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S
> Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants
> Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY COB:
9/15/2015

>

> Lisa, Julie, and Kamala,

>

> S/ES-S is prepared to send A Bureau the Executive Secretariat response to the attached FOIA case requesting all records detailing meetings or discussions between Department of State officials, employees, representatives, or agents and any of the following individuals/organizations:

>

> OneVoice International OneVoice US OneVoice Europe

> OneVoice Israel OneVoice Palestine 270 Strategies

> Jeremy Bird Daniel Lubetsky Marc Ginsberg

> Christina Taler Nimrod Dweck

>

> Please provide S/ES-S the results of the search conducted of your office shared drive, hardcopy files and email accounts of members in your office whose portfolio would have a reasonable possibility of possessing records responsive to the attached FOIA request using the above mentioned search terms by COB Tuesday, September 15, 2015.

>

> Thanks for your support.

>

> Clarence

>

> Clarence N. Finney Jr.

> Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)

> (202) 647-3574 (office)

>

>

> From: Finney, Clarence N

> Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2015 1:22 PM

> To: Kenna, Lisa D; Kim, Yuri J; Fisher, Julie D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S; Heidt, William A

> Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants; E_StaffAssistants; Wasser, Jonathon D; Lang, Karin M; Carlson, MaryKay L

> Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

>

> Lisa, Yuri, Julie, Kamala, and Bill,

>

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>

> OneVoice International OneVoice US OneVoice Europe

> OneVoice Israel OneVoice Palestine 270 Strategies

> Jeremy Bird Daniel Lubetsky Marc Ginsberg

> Christina Taler Nimrod Dweck

>

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>

> Thanks for your support.

>

> Clarence

>

> Clarence N. Finney Jr.

> Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)

> (202) 647-3574 (office)

>

> From: Finney, Clarence N

> Sent: Friday, May 01, 2015 4:40 PM

> To: Kenna, Lisa D; Rosenberger, Laura M; Logsdon, Kent D; Lakhdir, Kamala S; Heidt, William A; Lapenn, Jessica; Stevenson, Susan N

> Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_Officers; E_StaffAssistants; J; R; SES_4; Stana, Katie; Wasser, Jonathon D

> Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY MAY 18, 2015

>

> Lisa, Laura, Kent, Kamala, Bill, Jessica, and Jennifer,

>

> The Department has received the attached Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests for all records detailing meetings or discussions between Department of State officials, employees, representatives, or agents and any of the following individuals/organizations:

>

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> OneVoice Israel OneVoice Palestine 270 Strategies

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>

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> Clarence

>
> Clarence N. Finney Jr.
> Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
> (202) 647-3574
>
>
>
> <F-2015-03055 Lightstone, Aryeh.pdf>
> <Litigation Questionnaire.docx>

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S </O=SBUSTATE/OU=HR AG/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=LAKHDIRKS>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2015 9:08 AM
To: Morris, Margo T <MorrisMT@state.gov>
Subject: FW: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED
Attach: F-2015-03055 Lightstone, Aryeh.pdf; Litigation Questionnaire.docx

Sorry. I'm sending this to remind. I don't know if you will have time to search. I've found nothing in the Sherman, Lakhdhir, Jacoby emails/files.

Thank you.

K

From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2015 5:54 PM
To: Morris, Margo T
Cc: P_StaffAssistants
Subject: FW: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

Margo: I came over to discuss this with you but you were busy. I have done this FOIA search for myself, Ms. Sherman, and Julia Jacoby. I would ask that you search under the following to see if you have anything (I don't think you will):

OneVoice
 270 Strategies
 Jeremy Bird
 Lubetsky, Ginsberg, Dweck, Taler

I have figured out how to do this more quickly with Cindy A's help if you need me to assist.

Thank you.

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From: Finney, Clarence N
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 5:10 PM
To: Kenna, Lisa D; Fisher, Julie D; Lakhdhir, Kamala S
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY COB: 9/15/2015

Lisa, Julie, and Kamala,

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OneVoice International	OneVoice US	OneVoice Europe
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Jeremy Bird	Daniel Lubetsky	Marc Ginsberg
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From: Finney, Clarence N
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Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_StaffAssistants; E_StaffAssistants; Wasser, Jonathon D; Lang, Karin M; Carlson, MaryKay L
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

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Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_Officers; E_StaffAssistants; J; R; SES_4; Stana, Katie; Wasser, Jonathon D
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY MAY 18, 2015

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The Department has received the attached Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") requests for all records detailing meetings or discussions between Department of State officials, employees, representatives, or agents and any of the following individuals/organizations:

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Deputy Director, Executive Secretariat Staff (S/ES-S)
(202) 647-3574

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Morris, Margo T <MorrisMT@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2015 6:17 PM
To: Lakhdhir, Kamala S <LakhdhirKS@state.gov>
Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

I had moved all of P's email from the year into a folder so it was easy to check that, but I am at a loss where my archive folders went. I will check with POEMS on that so I can sort through those as well.

Margo Morris
Personal Assistant
Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Department of State
202 647-2471

From: Lakhdhir, Kamala S
Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2015 5:54 PM
To: Morris, Margo T
Cc: P_StaffAssistants
Subject: FW: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED

Margo: I came over to discuss this with you but you were busy. I have done this FOIA search for myself, Ms. Sherman, and Julia Jacoby. I would ask that you search under the following to see if you have anything (I don't think you will):

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Thank you.
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Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; D_Assistants; D-MR_StaffAssistants; P_Officers; E_StaffAssistants; J; R; SES_4; Stana,

Katie; Wasser, Jonathon D

Subject: RE: FOIA F-2015-03055 (Requester: Lightstone, Aryeh) - ACTION REQUIRED BY MAY 18, 2015

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