

TRANSCRIPT

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DWG: It is 8:15 so we'll go ahead and get started. Thank you everybody for coming in. And thank you to our guest. The Honorable Rose Gottemoeller, the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. Ma'am, we do appreciate you making the time to meet with us this morning. As you can see from the size of the table there's a lot of interest in your portfolio today as well.

You wanted to make a comment right off the top about this week's Nuclear Security Summit. Let's begin with that.

U/S Gottemoeller: Yes. I was keenly interested in meeting all of you this morning because next week there will be an historic fourth Nuclear Security Summit here in Washington, DC, and it will be the wrap-up of President Obama's goal of ensuring that over the years of his administration that we get our arms around the problem of securing fissile material and ensuring that it does not fall into the hands of terrorists.

If you will hark back to the 2009 Prague speech, the President zeroed in on the threat of nuclear weapons in the hands of terrorists, fissile materials in the hands of terrorists, as being the greatest threat to not only the United States of America but to the entire international community, all countries in the world.

So the President with his series of Nuclear Security Summits, the first in Washington in 2010; the second in Seoul, South Korea; the third in The Hague, in the Netherlands; and the fourth now wrapping up here in Washington, DC, is really going to be an enormous accomplishment.

What we'd like to do is email you a little fact sheet. There were a few editorial glitches we had to take care of on this, but if you will give Alex or Abigail Denberg -- this is Alex Bell, my PA senior person, and Abigail Denberg in the back row there. If you give one of

them your card we'll email this to you later today because it runs down what will be the signal accomplishments that will be highlighted at this summit, including for example, the fact that we have gotten approximately 138 metric tons of Russian weapons origin HEU that experts confirmed was permanently eliminated under the HEU purchase agreement. That is enough for 5,500 weapons. And in addition to which over 29 metric tons of U.S. surplus HEU, Highly Enriched Uranium, that the United States has down-blended, enough for over 1,100 nuclear weapons.

And most importantly for me, frankly, is the fact that we have gotten over 3.8 metric tons of foreign material that the United States and its partners under the Nuclear Security Summit have removed or confirmed the disposition of, and that's enough for 150 nuclear weapons.

So the goal of these summits has been, really, to get this issue of fissile material under better international scrutiny and control and the President always wanted to bring his counterparts -- presidents and prime ministers -- to the table in order to raise attention to this nuclear security matter to the very highest levels in government, and he has succeeded in doing so.

Next week will be the culmination of this series of summits, but now it passes into an institutionalization phase with five organizations, again, organizations like the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna involved in carrying this work forward with full support, once again, of the highest levels of governments around the world.

So I'm not going to go on further about this, but I did want to emphasize that I'm very proud of this effort overall. I think it does fulfill the goals that President Obama laid out in Prague in 2009, and I think it has done an enormous amount to raise awareness at the top levels of governments, about the necessity of really tackling this problem of preventing nuclear weapons and fissile materials from falling into the hands of terrorists.

And nothing I can say would highlight it, sadly, better than this tragic attack in Brussels this morning. Thank God those terrorists do not have their hands on nuclear materials. And I think, I won't say anything further at the moment except to say we condemn absolutely such attacks. My heart reaches out to the people of Brussels and especially to the victims and their families, and I can let you know that there will be a statement out of the White House shortly on this. So that's all I'd like to say about it at the moment. But in any event, I do think it highlights the importance of the work that has been done in the Nuclear Security Summit context.

So with that, I will throw open the floor to your questions.

DWG: Thank you.

I'd like to begin with a big picture, international security issue, and that's the relationship between the United States and Russia. At this point and with the hindsight

of your time I your various positions, would you say that Russia today needs to be engaged or deterred? And why?

U/S Gottemoeller: Both. But that's been our policy towards Russia from the Cold War years on. We are both engaged with Russia and very successfully engaged with Russia. I will say I noted the fact that we worked with them in the so-called HEU purchase agreement to down-blend Highly Enriched Uranium. That is the equivalent of 5,500 nuclear weapons. That has been a very successful project.

I have found in the course, coming from working for President Clinton in the 1990s to working for President Obama in this decade, that we have been able to do quite a bit of very successful work with the Russian Federation on matters of both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear arms control. I'm obviously the chief negotiator of the New START Treaty, so I like that treaty very much. But as a matter of fact, it is being very well implemented, even during this period of profound crisis with Russia over the incursion by Russia into Ukraine and seizure of Crimean territory.

So we have, I like to think of it as, we have to work both sides of that track. We have to continue to work with Russia on important existential problems such as reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons, fissile material. But we also must continue to deter them from further threats against our European allies, very importantly, in the context of what is going on in Europe today. So I very much support, for example, the European Reassurance Initiative which has brought new capabilities forward to Europe, has enhanced cooperation with our allies in training and exercises, and I want to stress, we have brought some new capabilities to our European allies in terms of enhanced storage of military equipment among the NATO allied countries in Europe, but we are not permanently renewing deployments of troops in Europe. We're not -- I want to say I've seen some remarkable comments in the Russian press that somehow we are returning to Cold War levels or renewing the Cold War. It's nothing like that. We will be bringing troops in and out of Europe as necessary to train, to work with our allies. It's a reassurance initiative that we believe will enhance the deterrence of further Russian action against our NATO allies in Europe.

DWG: Good morning, Madame Secretary. I wanted to ask you about IMF, not surprisingly.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a couple of days ago you sort of stressed cautious optimism on how the thing's going to play out in the near future. You also said pretty much the same thing my colleagues in Moscow, a couple of news media outlets.

So what's happened? What has changed? Why this optimism right now?

U/S Gottemoeller: First of all, I think that, I've always felt that we need to work with Russia to reemphasize the importance of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty to European security. We are concerned that Russia has violated the treaty with the development of a new, very capable, ground-launched cruise missile that has been

tested to intermediate ranges. So we are gravely concerned about this violation of the treaty. But frankly, I certainly have taken strong note of the clear statements among Russian decision-makers about Russia's renewal of its commitment to the IMF Treaty, its importance for security. And that has, I would say heartened me in terms of renewing our diplomatic efforts.

I will say, I have stressed to Russian counterparts that I think 2016 is the year to make progress. We need to try to resolve this issue because, frankly, it's dragged on long enough, so let's try to get a resolution.

DWG: Does that mean that you have any [news conferences] with your Russian counterpart, Sergei [inaudible] or you are going to bring this issue up at the higher level? And since you, again, manage this what you call state of the BLCM, what exactly, is it [the Caliber] that was fired from the ground-based launcher? Or why don't you [inaudible] issue?

U/S Gottemoeller: First of all, once again, a ground-launched cruise missile that has been tested to intermediate ranges. So it is not the Caliber. And there have been a lot of systems thrown out, like the Iskandar and so forth. It is a missile that is uniquely capable of flight to intermediate range and therefore in our estimation is in violation of the IMF Treaty.

Second, I would not like to conduct negotiations in the press. That never makes any sense for anything. But I will emphasize that I have had steady and productive discussions throughout this very difficult period of trying to address this missile with my Russian counterparts, and I see no reason why those cannot continue and be even more productive.

DWG: Following upon Dmitry's question, last year's [inaudible] required the Pentagon to develop military means that would counter any advantage Russia got from the treaty violation. Is there an update on what kinds of technologies are being developed? And the available [inaudible] testing of that which would violate the IMF. Is that still the plan?

U/S Gottemoeller: I'd have to refer you to my colleagues in DoD, Rachel, on that. I think the best public statements and clearest public statements have been by my colleague Bryan McQuen] in his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Strategic Forces in December of this year and December of last year. I think those are good sources to look at, but it's not in my job jar to comment on our military programs.

DWG: Following up on that, the New START Accord expires in February of 2021. Is it too early to begin thinking about how we're going to replace that, are we going to replace that treaty?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well I have been continuing to urge my Russian counterparts that we should indeed be thinking about what comes next. The value of the New START

Treaty, and I want to underscore especially in this period of crisis, bilateral crisis with the Russian Federation, is that it lends a considerable predictability, mutual predictability. They know what's going on with our strategic forces; we know what's going on with their strategic forces. And it means we do not have a headache in this essentially existential area of our nuclear arsenals.

I will say I've been concerned and perturbed that there seems to be nuclear saber rattling that goes on from time to time, most recently at the Munich, not the Munich Security Conference, the Brussels Forum right over the weekend. And to us, that is simply unwarranted and does not make any sense whatsoever. But at the same time I will say that having the New START Treaty in force lends considerable predictability because we keep each other informed on a day in/day out basis about the status of our nuclear forces. The Russians have to notify us every time. They, for example, moved an ICBM from deployment status to maintenance and back again. We have to notify them whenever we move a bomber out of its deployment base for more than 24 hours. So there are particular aspects of the New START Treaty that really lend predictability and mutual confidence to both capitals at a time of difficulty in our relationship.

So we have continued to say to the Russians that we need to be thinking about the future. President Obama made clear in June of 2013 the importance of pursuing further reductions when he proposed in Berlin an up to one-third reduction in operationally deployed strategic nuclear forces. So it's long been on the table from our perspective, and we think it is important to indeed think about the future.

DWG: Mark Thompson, then Andrea.

DWG: You're pending move to NATO has generated some ire from some Republicans. Some of us around this table are old enough to remember when Senators [inaudible] would say that politics stops at the water's edge. We would send our folks abroad, you know, with the firm support of America behind them.

As this kerfuffle involves you, does it dent you before you head over there? Is it good? Is it bad? Is it white noise? How does it affect your ultimately official [inaudible]?

U/S Gottemoeller: First of all, let me underscore that being nominated for this position is an enormous honor. I am the first woman who would hold such a senior post at NATO. So it is, first of all, a huge honor to be nominated full stop. But the idea that I could fulfill this role and be the first woman to hold that kind of job is very very, very much an honor for me too, as well.

I will also underscore that I am not presuming on the process. This nomination goes to the Secretary General, has gone to the Secretary General under the signature of Secretary Kerry and Secretary Carter. It is a nomination but not a selection, and I don't want to presume on the SecGen's process. He will decide. I think that's all I'd like to say about this at this point.

DWG: It does not require Senate confirmation.

U/S Gottemoeller: No.

DWG: Just over there.

U/S Gottemoeller: Correct, and the SecGen will decide, so I am not presuming on the selection process.

DWG: And you don't have any comment on the grumbling.

U/S Gottemoeller: No.

(Laughter)

DWG: Very diplomatic.

U/S Gottemoeller: Except for one thing I will take note of. Some of you may have seen my testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week. If you are interested in any further comment on this matter from me, I refer you to the testimony. I stand by it. And I was very glad to have that opportunity to put those comments on the record.

DWG: Andrea Shalal with Reuters.

I wanted to ask you about the relationship with Russia more broadly. There's been a lot of attention in terms of the Russian rocket engine issue, and I wonder if, tell us how these relationships are working that are so complicated. You said that it's going quite well, actually, the implementation of the treaty on one hand, but how do you expect that going forward to develop as there are just these combining and complicating pressures on the relationship, whether it's through bans on engines or other pressures that are coming up. Sanctions are increasing.

Can you just help us understand how exactly the relationship, how you think that relationship's going to go, and how you expect to manage that, those expectations?

U/S Gottemoeller: First and foremost, the key is the so-called Minsk Accords and implementation of the Minsk Accords to resolve some of the issues, to solve some of the issues that have emerged since essentially the instability in Eastern Ukraine has become part of this serious crisis over Crimea. So the first order of business is to work as hard and as cooperatively as possible. Moscow, the so-called Normandy countries who are involved in implementing. Kiev, of course, very much involved. Washington is doing what it can to help. But moving forward on implementation of the Minsk Accords is the most important thing to bring about relief from sanctions that have been imposed on Moscow, in my view quite rightly, because of this egregious affront to international law. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

So I underscore and I know across my government the message is the same, that let's get on with implementing Minsk and get that done.

I do want to underscore that there are sanctions that are unique to the Crimean incursion and if we address the issues in Eastern Ukraine, that still leaves the Crimean situation out there. That is an issue that also must be addressed.

That said, there are some areas that have remained walled off for cooperation. In our view, work to do with weapons of mass destruction should continue. I referred a moment ago to the existential nature of threats that pertain to nuclear weapons and fissile material. So we've been keen to continue to cooperate in those areas with Russia.

I mentioned the New START Treaty as being, I think that's a good example of that, you know, that policy. But also, we worked very well with Moscow throughout the depths of the crisis over Ukraine on the removal of 1,300 tons of chemical weapons from Syria, and thank God we got those chemicals out of Syria at the time we did, because obviously ISIL is keen to get their hands on that kind of thing.

So we had a very good cooperation with Russia on that matter. Weapons of mass destruction work is one area.

My boss, Secretary Kerry, has also been pushing to advance the peace process overall in Syria, working together with his counterpart, Minister Lavrov, and that too is a high priority and one that we are working hard to continue and the Secretary is working hard to continue to advance.

So I think it's a very careful process of seeing how and where we can work together, but we do understand that in some circumstances it's very important to be working together with Russia to try to make progress.

DWG: Can you see danger for this ongoing effort, particularly in the nuclear arena, if given some of the rhetoric that we've seen from the Republicans and particularly Donald Trump about changing the nature of the relationship?

U/S Gottemoeller: All I can do to answer that, it's very unpredictable of course, now. We don't know who our next President will be and we don't know, I hate to speculate on various candidates and the remarks they might make during the heat of a debate. But I will say historically if we cast our memory back throughout really the most difficult years of the Cold War, we always managed to, from the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, to cooperate on trying to ensure that nuclear weapons did not lead us to nuclear war. And the Cuban Missile Crisis I think was a huge wakeup call for both Moscow and Washington, as well as the rest of the international community, and led to a whole series of disarmament agreements starting with the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963, but moving on then by the end of that decade to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and afterwards to the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.

So I don't foresee another Cuban Missile Crisis. In fact, we have quite a different situation in Cuba in these days. But I do think it's important to recollect that it was that sharp shock in the early 1960s that led us to this mindset of cooperation on weapons of mass destruction, no matter what is going on in the bilateral relationship.

DWG: Okay, [Shini Chiru]. Then Dan.

DWG: I'd like to jump to Japan. First of all, thank you for visiting Japan.

U/S Gottemoeller: It was a great honor. For those of you who don't know, I had the opportunity to represent the United States with Ambassador Caroline Kennedy at the 70th Anniversary Commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki last August and it was a huge honor. So thank you.

DWG: I think it was a tough decision [inaudible] high-ranking officials from the nations that [inaudible] Japan.

What were your feelings? And what did you tell President Obama about your visit to Hiroshima?

U/S Gottemoeller: First of all, it was not my first visit to Hiroshima. I'd been there before on the margins of meetings of countries who have been working together with Japan among one of the leaders to think about the future of nuclear disarmament. So I attended a conference there the previous year as well, so I'd had an opportunity to be there.

It's a very moving experience I found, both in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, having a chance to talk with the survivors who are still with us, to hear their first-hand stories. It was extremely moving. And to see how all ages in Japanese society are very much attuned to the memory of those events from the small school children up to the elderly survivors of the attack, and all of them participating in the ceremonies was extremely moving for me.

So I would say it made a big impression from that perspective.

DWG: People in Japan hope that President Obama will visit Hiroshima and what is the chances of a visit to Hiroshima during his visit to Japan?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, the White House is in charge of the President's schedule, so I won't presume to comment. But I know it's under consideration.

DWG: Thanks for doing this. Back to Russia.

What is your current understanding of Russia's involvement in the upcoming Summit? Because they had had some difficulties on some of the elements of the process, and as I understand it were wanting to have a [inaudible] or high level involvement. So what is the current situation on that?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, you know, Russia participated in the first three Summits. Obviously we have a lot, I've been talking all morning about how much we have to do with Russia in terms of trying to get our arms around the problem of fissile material control -- protection, control and accounting. And that continues.

Russia declined to participate I this summit. They made that very clear, starting last fall. So well, it's their decision. It's up to them.

I do think it's very interesting that we have continue to work on signal projects, essentially under the aegis of the Nuclear Security Summit Agenda, to advance this work, and I welcome that very much. We just got Highly Enriched Uranium out Uzbekistan last year. Removing it from a research reactor in Uzbekistan. And it's that kind of project that, again, it's another example of how we have worked very very well with Russia throughout this crisis period. And they took the HEU out of Iran as well, just now under implementation of JCPOA. So we continue to have very good cooperation with them on particular projects. But again, I have to refer you to Moscow to ask that question. I don't understand myself why they decided they didn't want to come to the summit itself, because we are continuing to work together so well, and Russia obviously, has taken a very responsible role worldwide on trying to wrestle with these problems.

DWG: But you have concerns, you said that cooperation with Russia continues on these nuclear material issues even when relations in other areas were soured. Does this bode ill for the future of those efforts and also for the continuation of the summit work after this last summit?

U/S Gottemoeller: I don't think so. And when we send you around this fact sheet you'll see that there are actually five institutions and organizations that will carry this work forward that are so-called institutionalizing the process. And one of them, I'm happy to say, is the so-called Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. It's got an acronym called GICNT, so it's hard to get your mouth around. But you know, Russia helped to create this initiative. They are one of the co-chairs of the initiative. And it is actually a very effective and pragmatic, it was started under President Bush, effective and pragmatic way of tackling nuclear terrorism issue around the world. So we'll continue to hope that we can work with Russia in that context, and I hope in others as well on these problems.

DWG: Amy McCullough, with Air Force Magazine.

You've mentioned several times today the importance of looking back at the Cold War and the New START Treaty. Russia's Foreign Minister recently said that even though both countries have less nuclear weapons than they did during the Cold War, he thinks that the chance of using those weapons is much higher than it was in the '80s. So I'm interested in your take on that, if you agree with that statement.

U/S Gottemoeller: That's Mr. Ivanov's statement at the Brussels Forum that I mentioned just made over the weekend. I was frankly puzzled by it because we believe

that deterrence is stable between our countries. We believe that certainly we have under the aegis of President Obama's Nuclear Posture Review and its implementation measures, we have deemphasized nuclear weapons in our own national doctrine and strategy.

I take note although clearly Russia does place a major emphasis on nuclear weapons in its own military doctrine, nevertheless, when Russia first made public its new military doctrine a year ago in December it talked about the emergence of on-nuclear deterrence as being an important new factor. So I'm a big puzzled. Where does this come from, this sudden notion that the threat of nuclear war is greater. I just don't understand it.

So it's a good reason, I think to get experts talking wherever we can, and I welcome, there are a number of so-called track-two activities that are going on that I think give us opportunities to air these kinds of issues, because I have to tell you, I'm puzzled.

DWG: Do you think statements like that should make the U.S. reconsider its policy of deemphasizing nuclear weapons?

U/S Gottemoeller: I don't see any reason why.

We have a very very powerful conventional capability deployed worldwide. We are focused, and intently so, on ensuring the strength of our conventional forces. I want to emphasize that our concept of deterrence is made up of all aspects, not only nuclear weapons. It's our very capable conventional forces, our very capable command and control system, our ability to defend in some cases missile defense capabilities in limited circumstances, and our nuclear weapons. So they're all part of, they're all a piece of the puzzle and they all add up to a very strong deterrent force, so I frankly don't see any reason why we would reemphasize nuclear weapons.

DWG: Aaron Meadow with Defense News. Thanks again for being here.

There's a lot of talk in the Pentagon and with foreign partners and the defense industry about trying to change the foreign military sales system. Obviously that's a State Department controlled system. Do you, from where you sit, see a need to change the way that system works presently?

U/S Gottemoeller: Nope.

DWG: Easy enough. Put it this way. How do you answer critics who say, either from the Pentagon or from Department of State, it's too slow, it needs to be changed? Because we are hearing a lot of this from the Secretary of the Air Force people inside the Pentagon.

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, I have to say that I think we need to continue to communicate clearly how foreign military sales work. One of the aspects, and it's interesting. You know, I'm the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, and so I'm both in charge of our disarmament work, our non-proliferation

work, but I also am in charge of our political/military work which include foreign military sales. And it's part and parcel of our responsible attitude to how we do military sales, that when we decide that a sale will go forward, we ensure that there is proper licensing done, that there are proper end use controls in place. This does not need to slow things down. I have many examples of how we've been able to move expeditiously, but it's in our national interest, our national security interest, to ensure that we have eyes on and some knowledge of how foreign partners are using weapons after we make those sales, and I think it's very important to recognize that as a nation, the United States takes a very responsible attitude toward weapon sales and ensures that not only do we have end use promises made by countries, but we have an opportunity afterwards to go back and check and make sure that they are actually living up to those commitments that they make when the sales are promulgated.

So I understand that there's a kind of, I consider it a kind of mythology out there about the slow movement of foreign military sales, foreign military financing, but I think that we can clearly set the record straight with many examples, and also look to cooperate more intensively to ensure our partners across the interagency and also in foreign capitals understand completely how the system works, but also how beneficial it is for U.S. national security.

DWG: There's some talk in Congress about looking at maybe introducing legislation about this. Do you believe that's going to happen before the end of the Obama administration?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, we're always attentive to what's happening on Capitol Hill so I can't make a prediction in that regard. We'll clearly continue to work very directly with our partners on Capitol Hill as well to talk about how we work this system.

DWG: Then there was a change made, I believe it was last year, at the State Department, about weapon sales to Vietnam. Do you think over the next five to ten years we'll see something similar happen in Cuba?

U/S Gottemoeller: I can't speculate. We've got a long way to go with Cuba. Yuk, we haven't even released the trade embargo yet, so I'm not going to speculate on that at all.

I did think it was the right thing to do in Vietnam. I was out in Vietnam just about this time last year, and was very impressed. My brother served in Vietnam, he did three tours there, and was also one of the Swift Board guys, and to see now how deeply and seriously we are cooperating with Vietnam is fantastic.

One of the big PM programs, pol/mil programs we have there has not only to do with weapon sales, and foreign military financing, but demining. The United States is responsible for an enormous amount of successful work demining.

I went out to Quang Tri Province and got out into the countryside to see some of the mine clearing activities, and it really meant a lot to me after my brother having served

there, to see that work going on. Anyway, Vietnam's really a good success story. The President, by the way, is going out there this spring, so he'll be there before too long.

DWG: Regarding the Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement with Russia in 2000, have you spoken with your counterparts about updating that? And if so, are they amenable to doing so? Or just the DOE's hope?

U/S Gottemoeller: Again, I don't want to comment on diplomacy and ongoing work. Clearly, we do have some diplomatic work to be done in this area, and we'll, I think because of the context I mentioned earlier, that we do seem to be able to develop good cooperation in areas that are related to weapons of mass destruction. New START, I mentioned Syria's chemical weapons, and I briefly mentioned the JCPOA where obviously we had excellent cooperation with the Russian Federation on first the negotiation and now the implementation of the Iran deal. I would think that this PMDA matter could be one where we could have some good solid cooperation, but I don't want to talk further about diplomatic efforts.

DWG: You mentioned in the beginning Russian saber rattling [inaudible]. The North Koreans have been busy on that front with a whole series of activities. Obviously I don't need to tell you, but you know, the missile launches, the recent nuclear test and they're talking about another test coming.

What is your level of concern about that situation getting out of hand? Is it an accelerating threat, do you think?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, it's clear that they've been intensively responding and interacting recently with, you mentioned a number of tests that have been launched. This is in some sense predictable behavior, because we do have our annual exercises going on right now, so we're used to that pattern of behavior, so I don't think there's anything particularly surprising. But we have been concerned about North Korean actions now, well, for many years. And particularly in my bailiwick, the intensification of work on their nuclear program and the intensification of work on their missile program including their long range missile program is cause for great concern.

So it's a combination of I would say these are expected actions, but also great concern that they have started intensifying some of their work in these areas in response to which, as you'll know, we intensified our response through the UN Security Council.

I was very glad that we were able to get an unprecedented UN Security Council Resolution that really does tighten down constraints on their ability to ship, both in and out of the country, constraints on their ability to get luxury goods in to the small leadership elite. All of these things are a real step up from where we were in the past.

In addition, many of you are aware that the President signed an executive order within the past few days that places additional strong constraints on their banking and finance potential, and furthermore on very important sectors for the North Korean economy

such as mining. And so I think we have really, in response to their intensified efforts, ratcheted up the response and I think that's the right thing to do.

DWG: For about the past year and a little more we've seen generals from the Pentagon one by one go to Capitol Hill and repeat the statement that Russia is the number one threat to the United States. More recently, we've seen Pentagon leaders advocate for a new nuclear weapon, specifically a cruise missile, in addition to new submarines and new bombers. How does that impact your job?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, I support modernization of our nuclear forces. I think it is important.

It's very interesting, there's a time lag here because the Russian strategic nuclear arsenal became obsolescent in the past decade, and so they've done a lot to modernize their strategic forces. In the past decade we see them bringing on-line new ICBMs and so forth. There's a time lag because our arsenal is now moving to the period of becoming obsolete. The Trident submarines, for example, really must be replaced.

So I think first of all, it's valuable to have New START in force because we understand, both of us, Moscow understand we're not going to deploy beyond 1,550 warheads and 700 delivery vehicles; importantly, we understand they are not going to, even with their modernization intensively ongoing, they will not deploy above those numbers. So that's another reason, we talked about the future, that's another reason why it's important to think about the future I think in keeping some of those constraints on.

But I do think it's important for us to deal with the fact of obsolescence in our strategic nuclear arsenal, and so I support moving forward with modernization and I think we do need, and several of the generals you referred to have made the point including I was reading Paul Selva's testimony which was very clear on this point, that we need to have a big national discussion and debate of this issue, and I support that as well. We shouldn't walk into this without ensuring that the U.S. public is fully apprised and mindful and able to participate in the debate.

DWG: Thanks for speaking with us.

Speaking of military leaders, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joseph Dunford; Army Secretary Mark Milley; you know, they list Russia as the top threat. Others have said Russia should be considered an adversary because it sounds like the Cold War is back. And when they talk about the rotation of troops in Eastern Europe, it sounds like a permanent rotation. They say it's back to back, so that it's a permanent presence, whereas you said this is, you characterized it as not.

I was wondering if that military rhetoric, is that helpful? Or is that helpful in your job? What do you think the right tone is to have and the right posture should be towards Russia? Or is someone like Donald Trump, you know, is his rhetoric more helpful that we need to get along with Russia, and should they be considered more of an ally than an adversary?

U/S Gottemoeller: That takes us back to the first point we discussed, you know, is this a deterrence issue or is this a cooperation issue? I do think that we need to be mindful of both requirements. There are areas where we continue to successfully cooperate with Russia. Again, I'll just refer to the weapons of mass destruction work that we do. And again, that has deep roots, deep roots in the Cold War era.

But I think it also is important, and bear in mind the particular responsibilities of our Department of Defense are to defend our country. So they are going to be very very much focused on the concerns I think many of us have about the threatening behavior of the Russian Federation, the fact that, you know, the Russian Federation has been moving forces forward toward the borders of NATO. We have to watch that. We have to be concerned about it. That is their job and it's I think, from my perspective, they're responsibly fulfilling their responsibilities.

DWG: Do you think Russia has played a positive role in Syria overall? Recently withdrew some strike aircraft from Syria and we've got the cessation of hostilities. Do you think it's playing a positive role in Syria and possibly in the Middle East in general?

U/S Gottemoeller: I think it is a mixed picture because during the period of the most intensive Russian air strikes we were very concerned that their targeting was not paying due attention to damage on civilian targets. And we of course were concerned that they were attacking targets that were, in our view, not ISIL targets but moderate opposition to the Assad regime. So we've been clear about our concerns in that regard, but it's a mixed picture.

Again, Secretary Kerry has been working with Minister Lavrov. They achieved, at the negotiating table the cessation of hostilities. They are trying to strengthen the political process moving forward to get a resolution of the civil war in Syria. So it's a mixed picture.

But I do want to refer back to, again, I, looking back on the 2013-2014 time period, which spanned the era of the Russian incursion into Ukraine, the fact that we could work very closely together to get chemical weapons out of Syria was very important. So you know, the mixed picture there, but there are definitely good things and bad things, both sides of the ledger.

DWG: I wanted to follow upon Aaron's question, then ask a separate one.

On the FMS question I'm wondering specifically about the sale of F-18s to Kuwait. What is the holdup there? Is it concern that you have over how those aircraft will be used?

U/S Gottemoeller: No. I have nothing really to say about that except that it is still under consideration and it's part of the, it's part of the normal interagency process in this case that it's being reviewed.

DWG: And then separately I wanted to ask about weapons in space and what you see as the current level of risk there? The Obama administration seems to have put more money now into defending its space assets. Does that increase the risk at all of some kind of accidental encounter there?

U/S Gottemoeller: Our policy is very very clearly focused on ensuring that we do not in fact create more debris in outer space, and that's one of the, that is really one of the international initiatives that are pushing to pursue at this point. We need to be concerned about events like the 2007 Chinese satellite that the Chinese essentially blew up on orbit that created a whole lot of debris. And so we've been very concerned to ensure that in the future we don't have more incidents of that kind, and that means attention to ASAT capabilities that are emerging, and trying to get countries in fact to recognize that the space environment is an economic asset also for the entire international community and we need to preserve it for peace time, economic and commercial health.

So I would say that yes, we're focusing on these issues but we're also trying to find ways to make practical progress in getting countries to sign up to certain kinds of normative measures, certain kinds of agreements to really not create debris in outer space.

DWG: And are they obliging, the right countries? Have they [inaudible] in that regard?

U/S Gottemoeller: I would say that countries recognize the problem and we've succeeded in getting countries to recognize the problem now, you know, the diplomacy will take some time to bring about.

DWG: [Kitai Kuniyaki] and then we may have time for one or two in round two after that.

DWG: Thank you very much for letting us ask questions of you.

I have two separate questions. One is [inaudible]. On North Korea, [inaudible] what would be the next step? And do you feel the need to take measures against the Chinese [inaudible] and the Chinese support for North Korea? [Inaudible] in Korea [inaudible].

U/S Gottemoeller: One of the great things I would say about this recent phase of international policymaking is that the Chinese have been working very well in the UN Security Council. They actually agreed to this very tough UN Security Council Resolution that I mentioned earlier, and they are working with us to implement it.

Again, the proof of the pudding will be in the making. Will they actually join fully and intensively in implementation? Even being willing to constrain, because a lot of the commerce does, with North Korea, does run through China so it will require them to do some heavy lifting with their companies that are in the North Korea trade. But we see, you know, that they are ready to implement the UN Security Council Resolution and we

are ready to work with them on that, and we are hopeful that in fact they will fully implement the UN Security Resolution.

DWG: Another one, [inaudible]. My question is, [inaudible] Secretary Kerry [inaudible] Hiroshima [inaudible]. So at that time do you support [inaudible] commemorate [inaudible]?

U/S Gottemoeller: I will just say that he is looking forward very much to the G7 meeting in Japan, looking forward to being there with Minister [Kashita] who after all, that is his home town, Hiroshima. And the details of the arrangements are still being worked out.

DWG: We have six minutes left so we can probably do three more. We will make that Dmitry, Andrea and Mark.

DWG: In response to Senator Rubio's question while appearing at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you said that Russia's request to certify a new digital sensor on 154, which supposedly should be used during the open skies flights is absolutely in compliance with the agreement. Does that mean that the United States government is going to certify that sensor?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well what it means is that we are entering into the process. I can't say for any treaty signatory at this point. It's a process that is, according to the obligations of the Open Skies Treaty, well set out. There's a procedure that must be gone through.

For those of you who don't know the Open Skies Treaty, it was negotiated, actually it was first inspired by our President Dwight Eisenhower back in the '50s. It was finally negotiated under the first Bush administration in the 1980s and brought into force as a confidence building measure between then the Soviet Union, now The Russian Federation, and the NATO Alliance.

And it's, I testified last week that it has really been proving its worth during this current period of crisis in Europe. Our NATO allies, the Ukrainians are also signatories of the treaty, have found a lot of utility in being able to fly those flights over areas in Russia, for example, adjacent to Ukrainian territory.

So again, it's a kind of bread and butter treaty. But it has depended on old technology up to this point. Wet film cameras. And the treaty, when it was negotiated, foresaw the emergence of digital cameras at that point. It said that they must be no more than 30 centimeters in resolution, which is the same resolution with the wet film cameras; and when countries are ready to acquire digital sensors they will have to go through a procedure of certifying that that is a 30 centimeter resolution and no greater, does not give additional capability to any country wanting to deploy these digital sensors. So that is the process on which the Russian Federation is now embarked.

I also want to stress that any country signatory to the treaty and many countries now signatory to the treaty, are looking at certifying digital cameras because we can't get film for the wet film cameras anymore. It just doesn't exist anymore. Apparently there's a warehouse somewhere that's full of old Kodak film, and when that warehouse is used up, you know, we're going to have to go digital.

So it just so happens that Russia has been first out of the gate asking for certification, so it has drawn some attention from colleagues on Capitol Hill, but I want to stress that these are reciprocal rights for everybody under the treaty. These digital cameras will offer no more capability than cameras that are wet film cameras. And the third point I wanted to make is that if you go with commercial sensors these days, those are 225 centimeter resolution. So think about what additional capability this treaty gives.

I really see it as being very much in the area of mutual confidence building. It is very much important that we have our technicians aboard these aircraft. They're riding along and they see what photographs, you know, the other country is taking. And then we get, every treaty signatory gets a copy of every photograph that is taken by the cameras on these aircraft. So it's a great treaty for building conventional predictability and mutual predictability and confidence.

DWG: Because of time constraints we'll have to finish with Andrea.

DWG: Real quickly to follow up on North Korea, the Chinese in the discussions about putting a SAT system into South Korea, the Chinese have expressed great concern about the radars, the reach of the radar, and they say they don't see it as a defensive mechanism against North Korea, they see it as something that could actually affect them.

But the Foreign Minister when he was here really did sort of seem to open the door to some explanation.

Can you tell us what you're doing to try to reassure the Chinese that that is in fact a defensive system, and how, whether you're seeing any movement on their side in terms of accepting that and how those discussions are going?

U/S Gottemoeller: First of all, we have agreed with President Park that it's timely to begin consultations on this matter, but it's been played in the press somehow that already the decision has been made. We've decided to start consultations, and that's an important point.

The second important point is that THAAD is truly only capable of defending the territory on which it's deployed. It is not capable of the kind of reach that the Chinese seem to be afraid that it has.

And a third point is, we will be very glad and hope we'll have the opportunity to sit down and talk to the Chinese about those very technical limitations and facts about the system. So we hope that that consultation can be forthcoming.

DWG: To clarify, I don't think their concern is that they actually, it's with the missile system; it's with the radar and the reach of the radar that is associated with the THAAD system.

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, if you don't have any missiles, you know, kind of what's the diff, right?

DWG: Okay. Do you know when those consultations will take place?

U/S Gottemoeller: I don't. I'm sorry, I don't.

Let me take the third and final question.

DWG: We actually had two. If we could do one minute each with no follow-up?

U/S Gottemoeller: Okay.

DWG: You talked about concerns that the nation might drift into the modernization of its nuclear forces and that there should be a debate. Bill Perry, a former SecDef was here a couple of months ago and said that it's time to give up the ICBM leg. Does he have a point?

U/S Gottemoeller: I again don't want to enter into this --

DWG: Nobody wants to enter into it until they're out of government.

U/S Gottemoeller: Exactly.

DWG: It's peculiar.

U/S Gottemoeller: No follow-ups. [Laughter].

DWG: And that's on the record.

DWG: Briefly returning to Hiroshima, I had the opportunity to visit the city last month and talk with a bomb survivor and I asked her about what it would mean for the Japanese if a sitting U.S. President visited Japan because some people in the U.S. might see that as a U.S. apology for the bombing. And she said no, we would see that as a U.S. commitment to never again. Would you agree with that?

U/S Gottemoeller: Well, again, I won't presume on the White House decision-making and how they would approach the visit should the President decide to go.

I know in my own case, Ambassador Caroline Kennedy and I went with really the solemn intent of commemorating all of the victims of World War II, whether at Hiroshima, Nagasaki or across Asia, particularly the focus on Asia in that case, and also

Europe is relevant here. But we really emphasized that message when we were there, that we were there to commemorate and to honor all the victims of World War II. Again, I'm not presuming on how the White House would approach such a visit, but I do imagine that that would be one of the points they would like to make.

DWG: We do appreciate your time and the overtime. Your thoughts, as always, are very welcome and very much appreciated.

U/S Gottemoeller: Very very good. Thank you all very much.

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