

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 25, 2018

Good afternoon, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you today.

During my confirmation hearing you asked me to work on a host of world problems – so I did. In the last few weeks I’ve been engaged on three areas of great importance to SFRC members: North Korea, NATO, and Russia.

Our diplomacy on these issues is advancing the goals of President Trump’s National Security Strategy, which laid down guiding principles for American foreign policy in December. In late April, I started executing on the strategy as Secretary of State. And today in July I present to you the progress we are making.

The National Security Strategy established “Protecting the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life” as one of the pillars of our national security. On July 17th, President Trump stated his firm conviction that “diplomacy and engagement are preferable to conflict and hostility.” These principles have guided our actions on North Korea. President Trump’s diplomacy de-escalated a situation in which the prospect for conflict was rising daily. Americans are safer today because of his actions.

As far as the Trump Administration's goals on North Korea are concerned, nothing has changed. Our objective remains the final, fully-verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong Un.

As a follow-up to the President's successful summit with Chairman Kim, on July 5th I traveled to North Korea to make progress on the commitments that were made in Singapore. We are engaged in patient diplomacy, but we will not let this drag out to no end. I emphasized this position in the productive discussions I had with Vice Chairman Kim Yong Chol.

President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects of North Korean denuclearization. Progress is happening. We need Chairman Kim Jong Un to follow through on his commitments made in Singapore. Until North Korea eliminates its weapons of mass destruction, our sanctions, and those at the United Nations, will remain in effect. Multiple UN Security Council resolutions require North Korea to eliminate all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Those resolutions were passed unanimously, and are binding. We absolutely need every single nation to maintain the enforcement of those sanctions to which every nation is committed. The path ahead is not easy, but our hopes for a safer world – and a brighter future for North Korea – endure.

The National Security Strategy also calls for "Peace through Strength." President Trump's engagement on NATO has resulted in greater burden sharing that will strengthen the entire alliance against myriad conventional and unconventional threats. Allies have spent \$41 billion in increased defense investment since 2016.

Last year's \$14.4 billion in new spending, a 5.1 percent increase, was the largest in a generation. Eight allies will meet the 2% pledge this year, and eighteen are on track to do so by 2024.

NATO will remain an indispensable pillar of American national security. We know weakness provokes our enemies, but strength and cohesion protect us. The more every NATO member contributes, the better the Alliance can fulfill its mission of deterring threats to our nations. This increased commitment is what the President wants.

From the outset of this administration, as outlined in the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, and the Russia Integrated Strategy, our approach has been the same: to steadily raise the costs of aggression until Vladimir Putin chooses a less confrontational foreign policy, while keeping the door open for dialogue in our national interest. Between our two nations, the U.S. and Russia have 90% of the world's nuclear weapons. President Trump believes that two great nuclear powers should not have such a contentious relationship. This is not just in our interest, but in the interest of the whole world. He strongly believes that now is the time for direct communication in our relationship in order to make clear to President Putin that there is the possibility to reverse the negative course of our relationship. Otherwise, the Administration will continue imposing tough actions against Russia in response to its malign activities.

We can't make progress on issues of mutual concern unless we are talking about them. I am referring to key issues like stopping terrorism, obtaining peace in Ukraine, stopping the civil war in Syria and delivering humanitarian assistance, ensuring security for Israel, and shutting down all of Iran's malign activity.

On Iran, President Trump has said that “Iran is not the same country it was five months ago.”

That’s because our campaign of financial pressure, our withdrawal from the nuclear deal, and our full-throated support for the Iranian people, which I articulated in a speech this past Sunday, are having an impact.

In Helsinki, we sought to explore whether Russia was interested in improving the relationship, but made clear that the ball is in Russia’s court. We defended America’s fundamental strategic interests in Syria and Ukraine, and I personally made clear to the Russians that there will be severe consequences for interference in our democratic processes.

I would also add that President Trump is well-aware of the challenges that Russia poses to the United States and our partners and allies. And he has taken a staggering number of actions to protect our interests. As just a few pieces of proof that President Trump holds Russia accountable when warranted, I cite, as a sample:

- the 213 sanctions we have imposed on Russian entities and individuals,
- the 60 Russian spies expelled from America and the closure of Russia’s consulate in Seattle in response to Russia’s chemical weapons use in the UK,
- the closure of Russia’s consulate in San Francisco, in response to Russia’s cutting U.S. diplomatic staffing in Russia by almost 70 percent,

- the 150 military exercises we have led or participated in in Europe this year alone,
- the more than \$11 billion we have put forward for the European Deterrence Initiative,
- and the defensive weapons we have helped make available to Ukraine and Georgia.
- And just last week the Department of Defense announced an additional \$200 million in security cooperation funds to Ukraine.

If that is not enough for you, I brought a long list with me today of other actions the Administration has taken in response to Russian malign activity.

Additionally, I want to assure this Committee that the United States does not, and will not, recognize the Kremlin's purported annexation of Crimea. We stand together with allies, partners, and the international community in our commitment to Ukraine and its territorial integrity. There will be no relief of Crimea-related sanctions until Russia returns control of the Crimean peninsula to Ukraine. To this end, today we are formalizing United States policy of non-recognition by releasing a Crimea Declaration.

Finally, President Trump has stated, “I accept our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia's meddling in the 2016 election took place.” He has a complete and proper understanding of what happened. This is perfectly clear to me personally based on the many hours I have spent briefing President Trump on Russia-related issues as CIA Director and Secretary of State.

I am also certain he deeply respects the difficult and dangerous work that our patriots in the intelligence community do every single day.

I'm now happy to take your questions.