

Beat: Miscellaneous

FINAL PART - TO THE PRESS - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH SERGEY LAVROV & JOHN KERRY

VIENNA, AUSTRIA - NOVEMBER 14, 2015

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USPA NEWS - SECRETARY KERRY: Can I just mention one thing to build on what Sergey said quickly, though not asked, but I think it's important. First of all, we are focused on the oil, and Sergey is correct that it has moved in unwanted directions inappropriately....

SECRETARY KERRY: Can I just mention one thing to build on what Sergey said quickly, though not asked, but I think it's important. First of all, we are focused on the oil, and Sergey is correct that it has moved in unwanted directions inappropriately. And we are focused on that, and that's why we did embrace in this communique today focus on the resolution that Sergey talked about.

But more importantly, I want to make sure that even as we have some disagreements about Assad, people understand that we are in agreement with respect to the process that we see unfolding here with respect to Assad and transition.

Sergey mentioned Iraq and he mentioned Libya, and we have no disagreement that those are not models. And that is specifically why we have come to the table together with all of our partner countries in order to try to negotiate a very orderly transition, a structured transition,...

one that maintains the structures of the state, which is one of the specific principles we embraced a week ago, that happens by consent so that it's happening in a way that is organic to Syria, and therefore doesn't interrupt the civil structures that are there to maintain society and provide stability.

So we're all focused on stability, and we're focused on a continuity with the exception, obviously, of one principal player, but some others I'm sure. And that's what we're going to have to struggle through over the course of these next weeks.

But I think we're all approaching this with a very good-faith effort to try to use the best of diplomacy, the best of Staffan and the UN, to try to see if that process can produce the change that is needed.

MR KIRBY: Next question comes from Olga Golovanova from Interfax.

QUESTION: Mr. Kerry, don't you want that terror attacks in Paris, Beirut, and Iraq for the past few days give us and give you and U.S.-Russian relations enough basis for resuming in full our counterterrorism cooperation, which had been frozen by Washington unilaterally? And you had bilateral meeting with Minister Lavrov today.

Have you discussed any measures that could be taken except one of incidents in Syria? Maybe you could offer exchange of intelligence data, or creation some channels for blocking financing of terrorism. Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you, Olga.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: She doesn't want to ask me; she believes you would be a better source. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: (In Russian.)

SECRETARY KERRY: I think you're a source available all the time; I'm not. (Laughter.)

I think that "" we did talk about cooperation, and I have said for some period of time, as has President Obama, that cooperation makes a lot of sense. But we need to make certain of where we're going with it and of exactly what the dynamics are with respect to the end

game. We need to be certain, obviously, that the fight is the fight against ISIL/Daesh, against Nusrah, and not against the moderate opposition.

And Sergey and I talked about how we can work together now to try to make sure those intentions are clear and the choices that people are making are clear and coordinated. We, I think, discussed some options that we have available to us. I'm going to talk "" I'll be meeting President Obama tomorrow in Turkey at the G20. I will discuss those with our security team and with the President, and we'll see if we can follow up in a way that does make sense.

Obviously, if we can cooperate and get the political process moving, it opens enormous possibilities for other cooperation which is much more effective and broader. But we have to come at this in a way that makes certain of what we're both undertaking.

And the second piece, on the data and the intelligence and counterterrorism overall, I think it's always better when all countries are cooperating and able to work together. Everybody knows that we've faced a few challenges. Foreign Minister Lavrov and I have worked hard to try to keep those challenges from getting in the way of important work that we've been able to do together.

And so we've cooperated on the Iran nuclear agreement; we've cooperated on chemical weapons; we've cooperated in the UN on some things; and we've cooperated here. And our hope is that that can build a road ahead for us with this political process now to be able to do more. And we will test it carefully, and I'm confident both of us want to try to see if we can maximize the opportunity.

FOREIGN MINISTER LAVROV: (Via interpreter) I would like to add a couple of words. Of course, we discussed it today and John has mentioned it. We are convinced that coordination is in the interests of us and all humanity. We should not allow terrorists to take over the region just because U.S., Russia, and the rest of the world cannot agree on some things.

The situation is truly complex due to intertwining political interests in the region and Syria. There are a lot more than two agendas. And this process that is launched here today allows us to clear the situation, to discuss things maybe not exactly friendly, but involve the stakeholders.

Fighting terrorism should not depend on any conditions; we are convinced on that. It's good that Russian and U.S. military have contacts, at least in the field of preventing conflicts. We are for the deepest cooperation possible. Our president has reconfirmed that. U.S. has some issues with Russian operation, and we have questions to the coalition on how they are doing things.

Multiple times we have asked to sit down together to have a meaningful, specific conversation "" with maps, with specific targets. We have asked our U.S. colleagues and other Western colleagues. We could clear all the concerns and ask questions what we are doing wrong. This type of dialogue has not yet taken place, and all these concerns and mutual questions can be cleared only through a direct dialogue.

MR DE MISTURA: Let me add one thing here, perhaps, that you can see how important it is, the issue about the ceasefire and of a political process connected with the ceasefire, because many issues about coalition and about who to target will be clarified. That's why we are so eager to have both starting very soon. Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you all.

MR KIRBY: One more question. The last question is from Andreas Mitschitz from ORF TV.

QUESTION: Thank you. Secretary Kerry, can you give us any details about the opposition groups which will be invited to the talks? Do you have anyone in mind? (Laughter.)

SECRETARY KERRY: (Inaudible.) I have lots of people in mind. We want "" well, to the degree that we "" this is something that needs to be worked through with Staffan de Mistura and the United Nations and the various opposition entities.

We are working within our group to try to do as much as we can to guarantee it is as broad-based, as diverse, as representative of all aspects of Syrian society and opposition, as possible. And I'm confident that the UN special envoy will keep that at the forefront of his mind. But "" and Syrians will decide their own team out of that. They'll pick their negotiators. They'll pick their leadership team. And that's as it ought to be, because we have said all along this is to be a Syrian process. It wouldn't have credibility without that.

So all of the countries have submitted ideas, lists, names, et cetera. And I am quite confident that within a short span of time some sort of meeting will come together in order to try to meet Staffan's goal of trying to get this going in December and our goal of getting the two parties together by January. Every day that goes by that we don't have a ceasefire is a day too many, and the best way to get there is to get this political process moving as fast as possible. That's what we're committed to do.

MR DE MISTURA: Let me add one point on this. Sorry, because "" (laughter) "" because it's a delicate issue. Among those countries who were sitting in the room today, most of them have an influence on opposition and on the government. So when we are asked to invite the opposition, well, we are counting, and we heard today, they will be supported by those countries who will have an influence on the opposition to actually attend those meetings. And the lists are there and we can work on that. Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you all very much. Appreciate it.

MR KIRBY: That concludes the press conference. Thank you, everybody.

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