

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)
Cc:
Subject: FW: WSJ - Gun-Rights Activist Charged With Acting as Russian Agent
Date: Monday, July 16, 2018 4:34:22 PM

Huh. ([REDACTED]) - the Hill asked about Torshin recently)

From: [REDACTED] (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)
Sent: Monday, July 16, 2018 4:32 PM
To: _DL_TFI_Alerts
Subject: WSJ - Gun-Rights Activist Charged With Acting as Russian Agent

[Gun-Rights Activist Charged With Acting as Russian Agent](#)
[Maria Butina worked at direction of a 'high level official in the Russian government,' Justice Department says; attorney denies charges](#)

By Del Quentin Wilber

Updated July 16, 2018 4:21 p.m. ET

A Russian working in the U.S. as a gun-rights advocate was arrested over the weekend on charges of being an agent of a foreign power and ordered held without bail pending a hearing on Wednesday, according to the Justice Department.

Maria Butina, 29 years old, was charged in a criminal complaint with working at the direction of a "high level official in the Russian government" starting as early as 2015 and continuing through at least early 2017, the Justice Department said in a press release announcing the charges.

The Russian official, who was sanctioned by the Treasury Department in April, was described by federal prosecutors as a former "member of the legislature of the Russian Federation and later became a top official at the Russian Central Bank."

Court papers allege that Ms. Butina acted as an agent of Russia by developing relationships with unnamed U.S. persons and infiltrating organizations having influence in American politics.

Ms. Butina's attorney issued a statement denying the charges.

In an appearance before a federal magistrate judge in Washington, Ms. Butina was ordered held pending a bail hearing scheduled for Wednesday, the Justice Department said.

The charges were announced as President Donald Trump is in Helsinki for a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ms. Butina was the subject of multiple news reports in the past year about her contacts with the National Rifle Association and conservative activists, and her work for a Russian official who was sanctioned by the U.S. in April, Alexander Torshin.

This document is made available through the declassification efforts
and research of John Greenewald, Jr., creator of:

The Black Vault



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document clearinghouse in the world. The research efforts here are
responsible for the declassification of hundreds of thousands of pages
released by the U.S. Government & Military.

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According to the charging papers, Mr. Butina allegedly continued to work for Mr. Torshin while she was in Washington, and they together took steps to “infiltrate” political groups including the National Rifle Association to “advance the interests of the Russian Federation.”

An NRA representative had no immediate comment. The NRA and Mr. Torshin are not named in court papers, but the facts provided about them allow them to be easily identified.

Write to Del Quentin Wilber at del.wilber@wsj.com

Corrections & Amplifications

President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are meeting in Helsinki. An earlier version of this article incorrectly said they were meeting in Moscow.

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: The Kremlin and GOP Have a New Friend—and Boy, Does She Love Guns
Date: Thursday, February 23, 2017 11:02:13 AM

The woman is new, but I am familiar with the Torshin case.

From: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2017 10:53 AM
To: (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)
Subject: The Kremlin and GOP Have a New Friend—and Boy, Does She Love Guns

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C), have you seen this article? Are you familiar with the Alexander Torshin mentioned?

<http://thebea.st/2meF20G>

The Kremlin and GOP Have a New Friend—and Boy, Does She Love Guns

Depending on who's asking, Maria Butina is either a Russian central bank staffer, a gun rights advocate, or a connection between D.C. Republicans and Russia.

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CQ Congressional Transcripts

Jul. 25, 2018

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Jul. 25, 2018 Revised Final

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearing on American Diplomacy to Advance our National Security Strategy

LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS AND WITNESSES

CORKER:

The Foreign Relations Committee will to order. I know that sometimes these hearings can generate a little emotion. I -- I just want to say again, we've been very generous on the committee in the past when people have been arrested, when you're hauled out of here you're arrested and I've gone down in the past and caused people to be unarrested but that can't happen anymore so if you would, please respect others who are here. This is what great democracies do. We're glad to have our outstanding witness her and we will begin our work.

Secretary Pompeo, we are glad to have you here today. We're grateful for your service to our country. I have faith in your leadership and I appreciate what you're doing to change the culture of the State Department in positive ways but I want to get straight to the point. You come before a group of Senators today who are filled with serious doubts about this White House and its conduct of American foreign policy.

CORKER:

There are a number of reasons to be concerned. Among them is the lack of information the administration has provided to members of this committee. It is our hope that you will reduce our level of concern by providing us with clear answers that might help convince us that those at the White House know what they are doing and that to be candid, you know what they are doing.

I can't say it more forcefully, we really need a clear understanding as to what is going on, what our President is agreeing to and what our strategy is on a number of issues.

Last week, President Trump held a summit with Vladimir Putin, someone who has violated the most fundamental international norms through his efforts to annex Crimea, has interfered with elections including our own, has supported the brutal Assad regime in Syria, has used chemical weapons to poison a Russian agent and his daughter in the United Kingdom, has occupied portions of Georgia, continues to violate the IMF treaty, has reportedly hacked U.S. utilities, the list goes on and on and you know the list.

In the face of these hostilities, in the summit's aftermath, we saw an American President who appeared submissive and deferential. We've heard that some agreements were reached, but as of yet have little idea what those might be, even though the President has already extended an invitation to Putin to come to Washington to discuss the implementation quote quote "of these undefined agreements."

The President also recently met with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, one of the most ruthless leaders on the planet, who has continued to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that could hit the United States, has executed his half brother with poison in Malaysia and reportedly killed his uncle back home, has essentially murdered an American college student and has enslaved millions of his own people.

One in 10 North Koreans are living in slavery today, and one in five children are stunted due to malnutrition. In the face of these realities, the President has called him very talented, and that he loves his people.

Really? At the recent NATO summit, the President not only pushed NATO members, member countries to dedicate more of their budgets to defense, a goal we all share, he went on to berate them, question the very premise of NATO and in my opinion used false information to turn public opinion of the United States against the alliance.

He even went so far as to cast doubt on the United States willingness to enforce Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. We want to know if this is real or just another off the cuff statement. And the confronting of our partners goes beyond traditional security and extends to the economic space, as well.

I know you're aware of my strong feelings about the administration's abuse of its authorities in using Section 232 to implement tariffs in the name of national security. So far we have zero clarity from the administration as to what the end game is on the Trump-Pence tariffs, which in reality are a massive tax increase on American consumers and businesses.

And now the administration appears ready to offer welfare to farmers who would rather have trade than aid. As you know, Senators have gone to the White House in groups to discuss these actions, and not a single person that I'm aware of has left those meetings with the sense that there's a coherent strategy driving these policies.

The administration tells us don't worry, be patient, there's a strategy here, but from where we sit it appears that in a ready, fire, aim fashion, the White House is waking up every morning and making it up as they go.

This is the first in a series of hearings we will hold in coming weeks dealing with the troubling dynamic I've described, one in which we are antagonizing our friends and placating those who clearly wish us ill. This series will deal specifically with Russia as perhaps the most troubling example of this emerging reality.

I hope that in your position you will do all in your power to provide us with the answers we need today, and as we move forward in our future hearings. I look forward to your testimony and I want to thank you again for being with us and for the many outstanding people you're bringing on to the State Department to work with you.

With that, I'll turn to Senator Menendez.

MENENDEZ:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Let me start by saying I applaud you for making this the first of a series of rigorous oversight hearings on Russia. The committee's gone for about a year without a full committee hearing on either Russia or North Korea, so I appreciate your leadership in this regard.

And now it seems to have taken a three ring circus of a debacle of a meeting with President Putin, a walk back of whether the President trusts his own intelligence officials, that suggested that it might be even OK for a U.S. diplomat to be interrogated by Russian intelligence, and a reality TV summit that was a little more than a photo op with a brutal dictator to merit one hearing with the Secretary of State.

Having said that Mr. Secretary, welcome and thank you for your service to our country. The members of this committee are strongly supportive of strategic, well-crafted diplomacy to advance America's foreign policy interests.

Unfortunately, all we've come to expect is a saber-rattling President who embraces and provides legitimacies to some of the world's most notorious bad actors and who denigrates our closest allies whose sons and daughters have gone to war alongside Americans.

We've not seen any substantive deals or strategies that put Americans or American national security first. We've seen our President look weak as he stands beside our adversaries and intends to roll out the red carpet at the White House - I hear that's postponed until January, but nonetheless, to invite Putin to the White House, a thug who is actively trying to undermine our elections.

Well Mr. Secretary, we in this body are taking heat of our intelligence and law enforcement officials in working to protect our country from the flashing red lights of ongoing Russian aggression. Senator Graham and I and others plan to introduce legislation in the coming days to ensure we have the toughest tools to go after Russian bad actors.

As of this moment, we find ourselves in an unimaginable situation. The American people, elected officials in this body and members of the President's own Cabinet have heard more about the meeting in Helsinki from Putin and his associates than from our President.

We know that the Kremlin's state-run media operations have a dubious commitment to the truth, but we don't know what the truth is because nobody else was in the room where it happened. The American people expect and I believe they deserve to know what happened.

I also have serious questions about the summit in Singapore that took place nearly two months ago. In that time, we have yet to hear or see anything that provides us with real confidence that North Korea, as the President gloated quote "no longer poses a threat to the United States" or that we have a coherent strategy to achieve a verifiable denuclearization agreement.

We've only seen a vague agreement of promises to make more promises, but of weaker commitments than North Korea has previously made. The United States and North Korea seem to remain far apart on even basic issues such as the definition of denuclearization.

In fact, over the past 18 months under this administration's watch, North Korea has perfected its intercontinental ballistic missiles and tested its largest nuclear detonation rather than any verifiable steps to dismantle their program.

It seems Kim Jong-un got everything he wanted in Singapore, including international recognition and the suspension of U.S. military exercises. Now, this week's reports of dismantlement at a launching station may be good news, but it may simply be a signal that North Korea has completed all the testing it needs to. Frankly, the Singapore Agreement seems more the art of concessions than the art of the deal, and we are weaker for it.

Last week, Russia and China blocked a U.S. request to impose penalties on sanctions violations, calling our maximum pressure posture into question. As you know, I've introduced bipartisan oversight legislation, along with Senator Gardner, to provide the sort of support and guidance this -- this diplomatic effort needs, and exercised the oversight

responsibility Congress owes to the American people. Goals that you previously laid out before this committee are incorporated.

Finally, let me raise one more deeply alarming issue that broke this week. I understand that despite its ability to stop this ridiculous notion, the State Department is about to allow Internet posting of do-it-yourself 3-D printable firearm blueprints. Why on earth would the Trump administration make it easier for terrorists and gunmen to produce undetectable plastic guns? I remain deeply concerned by administration's incoherent and contradictory views. We need comprehensive strategies across the world, because a result of the lack thereof is chaos and confusion, or even worse.

I recognize the president considers himself to be a masterful dealmaker and a very stable genius, but we need to call the president's statements out for what they are. At this point, I find them to be misleading and untruthful. So I look forward to your testimony to find out what the truth really is.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CORKER:

Thank you, thank you very much.

Mr. Secretary, we welcome you again, and if you could summarize your comments. If you have any written materials you'd like to enter on the record, we will do so. And with that, we look forward to your testimony.

POMPEO:

Good afternoon. Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez and distinguished members. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today.

During my confirmation hearing, you asked me to work on a host of world problems, and through 12 weeks I've been doing just that. I hope we'll get a chance to talk about each of those today.

The last few weeks, I've engaged in three areas of particular interest to this committee: North Korea, NATO and Russia.

On the subject of Russia, I want to bring something to your attention right off the bat today. Today, the Trump administration is releasing what we're calling the Crimea Declaration. I won't read the whole thing. I will submit it for the record. It's been publicly released, as well.

But one part reads as follows, quote, "The United States calls on Russia to respect the principles to which it has long claimed to adhere, and to end its occupation of Crimea," end of quote.

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. This Crimea declaration formalizes United States policy of nonrecognition.

There's another indicator of diplomatic progress I want to mention. This morning, Pastor Andrew Brunson, who was imprisoned in Turkey for nearly two years, has been let out of jail at Buka (ph). He's still under house arrest, so our work is not done, but it's welcome progress, one that many of you have been engaged, and something the State Department has been -- been working on diligently, as well.

We will continue to work for the speedy return of all Americans unjustly held captive abroad. President Trump will never forget about our own.

POMPEO:

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. Today, on July 1 -- excuse me. Today, here we are, and I want to present you some progress. The

National Security Strategy, established protecting the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life, as 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 which the prospect for conflict was rising daily. Americans are safer because of his actions.

As far as the Trump administration's goals on North Korea are concerned, nothing's changed. Our objective remains the final, fully verified de-nuclearization 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're engaged in patient diplomacy. But we will not let this drag out to no one. I emphasize this position in the productive discussions I had with Vice-Chairman Kim Yong Chol. President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects for North Korean de-nuclearization. Progress is happening. We need Chairman Kim Jong-un to follow through on his commitments that he made in Singapore.

Until North Korea eliminates its weapons of mass destruction, our sanctions and those of the United Nations will remain in effect. Multiple U.N. 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 they remain binding. We absolutely need every single nation to maintain the enforcement of those sanctions to which every nation has 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 has spent more than \$40 billion in increased defense spending since 2016.

And there will be hundreds of millions -- billions of dollars more in the years ahead. Last year's \$14.4 billion in new spending was a 5.1 percent increase -- was the largest in a generation. Eight allies will meet the 2 percent this year, 18 are on track to do so by '24. The Trump administration is demanding that every country make its own commitment. 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 each of our nations. This is the increased commitment that the president wants.

From the outset of this administration, the National Defense Strategy and The Russia (ph) Integrated Strategy, our approach has been the same, to steadily raise the cost 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 United States and Russia possess over 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. President Trump believes the two great nuclear powers should not have a contentious relationship. This is not just in our interests but in the interests of the whole world.

He strongly believes that now is the time for direct communication, our relationship in order to make clear to President Putin that there is the possibility, however remote it might be, to reverse the negative course of our relationship. Otherwise, the administration will continue opposing tough actions against Russia in response to its malign activities.

POMPEO:

We can't make progress on issues of mutual concern unless we're talking about them. I've heard many of you on this panel say that for years and years. I'm 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.

And on the subject of Iran, President Trump has 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 he articulated in a speech this past Sunday, are having an impact.

In Helsinki, we sought to explore whether Russia was interesting in improving our relationship, but made clear that the ball is in Russia's court.

We defended America's fundamental strategic interest in Syria and Ukraine. And I, personally, made clear to the Russians, 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. He's taken a staggering number of actions to protect our interests.

As just a few pieces of proof, I'd like to cite the following: 213 sanctions on Russian entities and individuals in the Trump administration, 60 Russian spies expelled from the United States of America, and the closure of Russia's consulate in Seattle in response to Russia's chemical weapons use in the United Kingdom, the closure of Russia's consulate in San Francisco, cutting U.S. diplomatic staffing by Russia by almost 70 percent, 150 military exercises have been led or participated in Europe this year alone.

More than \$11 billion had been put forward for the European Defense Initiative. We made defensive weapons available to Ukraine and to Georgia. And just last week, the Department of Defense -- this is after Helsinki, added an additional \$200 million in security cooperation funds to Ukraine.

None of this happened for the eight years that preceded President Trump.

If it's not enough for you, there's a long list. I'm happy to go through them. I'm guessing some time today I'll get that opportunity. I look forward to it.

Finally, I want you to know, President Trump has stated that he accepts our intelligent community's conclusion that Russia meddled in the 2016 election. He has a complete and proper understanding of what happened. I know, I briefed him on it for over a year. This is perfectly clear to me, personally.

I am also certain he deeply respects the difficult and dangerous work that our patriots in the intelligence community do every single day. And I know that he feels the same way about the amazing people that work at the United States Department of State.

Thank you, Chairman Corker.

CORKER:

Thank you - thank you, very much.

The Secretary's staff has asked that we absolute - absolutely stay to the seven minute deal. So, if we could not ask five part questions and end at six fifty-eight. If you could give the respondent time to answer within the seven minutes, too, I'd appreciate it.

With that, I'll - I'll defer to Senator Menendez. And I'll withhold my time for interjections along the way.

Senator Menendez?

MENENDEZ:

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, when the President meets alone with President Putin, it allows the Kremlin sponsored state media and the Russian Ministry of Defense to provide more information, at least from their perspective, not only to the American people, but sometimes it seems to the members of the President's own cabinet.

So, I'd like to ask you some questions to get to understanding what actually happened. Has the President told you what he and President Putin discussed in their two hour closed door meeting in Helsinki?

POMPEO:

Senator Menendez.

MENENDEZ:

You could put your microphone on.

POMPEO:

Excuse me, I'm sorry. The presidents have a prerogative to choose who's in meetings or not. I'm confident you've had private one-on-one meetings in your life, as well.

You've chosen that setting as the most efficient way to.

MENENDEZ:

I just asked you a simple question, did you...

POMPEO:

I just - I (inaudible).

(CROSSTALK)

MENENDEZ:

You can't eat up my seven minutes, Mr. Secretary. Did - did you - did he tell you what - whether or not - what happened in those two hours?

POMPEO:

Yes, Senator. The predicate of your question implied some notion that there was something improper about having a one on one meeting. I completely disagree with the...

MENENDEZ:

Just...

POMPEO:

... premise of your question.

MENENDEZ:

I didn't ask you a predicate. I asked you a simple question. I hope we're going to get through it. Did he tell you what transpired in the two hour meeting?

POMPEO:

I've had a number of conversations with President Trump about what transpired in the meeting. I was also president when - present when he and President Putin both gave us a sense of what they discussed in the meeting that followed immediately after.

MENENDEZ:

Did you have (inaudible)...

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

I also had the chance to speak with Sergio Lavrov twice about the Russian Bureau and what takes place. I think I am a pretty complete understanding --

MENENDEZ:

Did you speak to the translator who was at that meeting?

POMPEO:

No I haven't.

MENENDEZ:

Have you seen any of her notes?

POMPEO:

Senator, I have never -- I've been in lots of meetings, I've had lots of notetakers, and lots of translators -- I've never relied on the work that they did. But I understand what took place in that meeting and it does not need to be done here -- and won't be

MENENDEZ:

Did the president -- did the president discuss relaxing U.S. sanctions on Russia including Casa (ph) sanctions?

POMPEO:

Uh Senator, the U.S. policy with respects to sanctions remains completely unchanged. So the president did not --

MENENDEZ:

So what you are telling me -- that I asked a very specific question --

POMPEO:

Yes, Senator, and I --

MENENDEZ:

Did the president tell you that he discussed relaxing Russia sanctions, yes or no?

POMPEO:

Senator, presidents are entitled to have private meetings. I'm telling you what U.S. policy is. I came here today --

MENENDEZ:

No, but you -- you told me you had a conversation --

POMPEO:

Yes.

MENENDEZ:

-- with you in which he told you what transpired. I think the nation, and -- all of us who are policymakers deserve to know, so that we can fashion policy accordingly. Did he tell the -- Putin, that I'll release or ultimately relax sanctions?

POMPEO:

Senator, what you need to conduct your role, your appropriate role, I will provide you today. That is United States policy with respect to the issues you request. You asked about U.S. policy with respect to the sanctions and I can confirm to you that no commitment has been made to change those policies in anyway.

MENENDEZ:

Did the president at this meeting, call upon President Putin to withdraw from Crimea and eastern Ukraine?

POMPEO:

Senator, I began my statement today with the United States government policy --

MENENDEZ:

I understand the declaration and I welcome it. I'm glad that it seems like we had to do a lot of effort to get there, but the question is -- when he had a chance, did he confront Putin and say we do not recognize your annexation of Crimea. We do not recognize your continuing hostilities in Eastern Ukraine and there's consequences for this?

POMPEO:

No, the president was very clear with Vladimir Putin about U.S. positions -- they are the U.S. positions that are the Trump administration's positions and he spoke about the very firmly and clearly when he met with Vladimir Putin.

MENENDEZ:

And that he told that?

POMPEO:

Senator, I'm telling you what he had a conversation about, and I'm telling you what U.S. policy is today. I -- Senator, I understand the game that you're playing --

MENENDEZ:

No, no, Mr. Secretary? With all due respect, I do not appreciate you characterizing my questions. My questions is to get to the truth. We do not know what the truth is. The only way that we will know the truth is, what transpired in those two hours, in an highly amazing a period of time to spend alone one-on-one, is by understanding at least that if you were briefed by the president, what he told you.

I do not think that's unfair to know, to understand what policies -- let me ask you this, where -- did the president say we're going to change our force structure in Syria?

POMPEO:

Senator, presidents are permitted to have conversations with their cabinet members that aren't repeated in public. I owe the president the capacity to have conversations with him, provide him the best foreign policy advice that I can. It was what I was brought on to do --

MENENDEZ:

Let me ask you this, Mr. Secretary. Here's something you can answer from Bri (ph), because you aren't going to answer any of the questions that would get us to the truth. As CIA director, you stated in an interview the BBC that you fully expect Russia to continue its attacks on our democracy by attempting to interfere in our midterm elections as we speak.

In his conversation with Putin, I hope the president laid out the consequences of interference into the 2018, but I know you can't tell me that, so --

POMPEO:

Actually, I can tell you that --

MENENDEZ:

Oh, you want to share that one with me --

POMPEO:

I can't -- no, I can't --

MENENDEZ:

-- that one you want to share with me?

POMPEO:

No Senator, I can tell you that because the president has disclosed that.

MENENDEZ:

OK.

POMPEO:

The -- the president disclosed what he said to Vladimir Putin about Russian interference in our elections. And he said that he is confident that as result of the conversation, Vladimir understands that it will not be tolerated.

MENENDEZ:

I wish he has said that in public in Helsinki. Let me ask you this Senator Graham and I and others are working on a new bill to hold Russia accountable. Given that you assert the administration is tough of Russia, will you commit to working with us on a new Russia sanctions bill?

POMPEO:

Yes, sir.

MENENDEZ:

Thank you.

North Korea: when you last appeared, I asked you a series of critical questions about what's our policy in North Korea? And to your credit, I must say that I largely agreed with what our goals are.

Now I want to ask you, since we haven't heard anything -- not a classified briefing, not anything as it relates to North Korea, did North Korea agree with our definition of denuclearization? Meaning the dismantlement, removal of all nuclear weapons, facilities, technology, and material from North Korea?

POMPEO:

I think I can answer your question. But let me begin by saying, I'm engaged in a complex negotiation with the North Koreans. So I don't intend, in this public setting, to share the

details of every conversation that took place in those. But I will -- I will attempt to answer your questions with out disclosing the contents of the negotiation.

I am very confident that the North Korean's understand our definition of denuclearization, and a very broad one, that it goes from infrastructure of nuclear war heads, though chemical biological weapons systems...

MENENDEZ:

We understand that, because you laid it for the record.

POMPEO:

Yes, sir.

MENENDEZ:

Did they -- have they agreed with you, that that is the definition (inaudible)...

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

I believe they thoroughly understand that. And they...

MENENDEZ:

They understand it, but they didn't agree.

Did they agree to end the production and enrichment of uranium and plutonium for military programs?

POMPEO:

Senator, I -- I would welcome the chance to respond to your questions, if you'd let me finish.

It would be most -

MENENDEZ:

It's a simple yes or no.

POMPEO:

I think it would be most illuminating for the folks watching.

MENENDEZ:

It's a simple yes or no.

POMPEO:

Could you repeat the question please, Senator? It was the previous question I didn't have the chance to answer.

MENENDEZ:

Surely. Did you - did North Korea agree to end the production and enrichment of uranium and plutonium for military programs?

POMPEO:

They've agreed to denuclearize fully. Yes, Senator.

MENENDEZ:

OK, well we don't have that...

POMPEO:

Yes, it includes - and it certainly includes - it certainly includes the full measure...

MENENDEZ:

I would love for you to come to a classified setting and tell all members what exactly transpired, because we don't know.

Thank you.

Senator Risch?

RISCH:

Mr. Secretary, thank you for doing this job. The president made a wise decision in appointing you Secretary of State. And you're acquitting yourself very well here today and we appreciate that. You've always been strait forward with us.

And I appreciate that. I know many of my colleagues -- not all, but many of my colleagues fully appreciate that.

I want to talk...

POMPEO:

Are you prepared to say most, Senator? Or are you just going to go with many?

RISCH:

I'm going to stay with many.

Let me say that as far as what happened at the NATO summit, very few American's heard anything except the argument that went on about the - about funding.

Now I know the president believes, I know you believe and I believe, and I think most everyone believes that NATO is the most successful military alliance in the history of the world. And as you pointed out, it's certainly one of the pillars of our national security, and one that we need to support, and one that we need to work well.

There are very few down sides of NATO. But there is one blemish. And the president has underscored that publically and well. His predecessor attempted to do it. All their

predecessors attempted to do it. All those of us that meet with the Europeans from time to time underscore it. And that is the funding, or the lack thereof, that the Europeans have done.

Only eight of the NATO nations are actually meeting the commitment of two percent. But first of all, the president is to be commended for underscoring this, as only he can do in his unique way, and actually getting them to start talking about it, and now finally starting to agree to that.

RISCH:

But there were other things that were lost, as far as that meeting is concerned. And I'd like you to talk about those things for a few minutes. Number one is on the deterrent side the "Four 30s" commitment to increase NATO readiness, and speed up the time it take allies to assemble and deploy forces. And that's a huge step forward; the efforts to improve mobility and establish a process to enhance the speed at which NATO can make decisions. They fight against terrorism and increase in allied resilience against terrorist threats through a new framework to share biometric data is a major accomplishment.

And find (ph) the opportunity for Macedonia to receive an invitation to join NATO and fulfill the promise from the Bucharest summit that was a positive step for the alliance and for the Balkans.

Could you comment on those very important steps forward that happened at the -- at this NATO summit?

POMPEO:

(Inaudible) it was an incredibly productive NATO summit by -- from my conversations with Secretary General Stoltenberg, he said among the most productive that he had ever been part of.

And he's been doing this a little while. You talked about the Four 30s, 30 squadrons, 30 battalions and 30 naval combatants ready to go in 30 days is something NATO has not been able to do for quite some time.

There's now a real commitment, we have to follow through to make sure that the implementation that occurs, it would be -- it would be a great thing to deter Russia if we can get those countries and our allies to get to that level.

You talked about the increase in burden sharing. It seemed to get all the focus. It's certainly important that the Europeans are as committed to deterring Russia as the United States of America and need to demonstrate that through their defense.

Not only dollars, but readiness as well. We've seen reports about the absence of German readiness. They -- they -- they need to truly be ready. The president also raised another issue about energy and energy security at the NATO summit.

He talked about the Nord Stream II pipeline and the risk that that creates to the alliance in the event that Russia should decide to use energy as a weapon to coerce either formally or informally Germany or other European countries.

He raised it to the forefront and frankly there are European countries that understand that risk and support America and our position on that as well. And then finally you talked a little bit about the NATO mission, its -- its new role in fighting terrorism.

I want to -- I want to say thanks to so many of the European countries that have stepped forward. Even just this past few -- I guess it's now two weeks since the NATO summit, over 1,000 additional commitments from allied NATO partners headed to assist us in Operation Resolute Support in Afghanistan.

That's a great commitment, something that President Trump worked hard on at the summit and really good outcomes for America.

RISCH:

Well thank you so much. You're -- you're to be personally committed for those great successes as is the president for leading that regard. It's unfortunate that our friend's and allies' feathers were ruffled a little bit just because we said they weren't paying their bills.

But that's been going on for some time, and I think we're going to tolerate that, but they've got to step up and I know you underscored that and the president has certainly underscored that with them.

I want to talk about Iran for just a moment. They're one of the big unreported stories as far as foreign relations is concerned is the issues and the difficulties that the Iranian people are having internally, financially and under -- and otherwise.

And I know we're not in a classified setting, but there -- there is some open reporting on these sources, and the regime that's there is struggling with this. Indeed I think that's probably why they tried to poke the president the other day to try to take their -- to try to take the -- the heat off of the heat they're getting at home.

Could you talk a little bit about what's going on internally again knowing that we're in an open setting?

POMPEO:

Senator, there is enormous economic challenge inside of Iran today. It's a -- it's an economic structure that simply doesn't work. When you foment to that -- when you're a country of that scale that foments terror through Lebanese Hezbollah, through Shia militias in Iraq, into Yemen, conducts assassination attempts in European countries, provides enormous support for Assad outside of Lebanese Hezbollah in Syria, that's expensive, and I think Iranian People are beginning to see that that is not the model that they want. That the Iranian expansionism, that the supreme leader in Qasem Soleimani so favor, is not what they're looking for.

I think you're beginning to the economic impact, combined with understandings inside of Iran of the Kleptocracy that it is, leading to fundamental decisions that the Iranian people

will ultimately have to make.

RISCH:

Do you agree with me that that acceleration of that understanding by the Iranian people has been very rapid over the last six months?

POMPEO:

Yes. It's -- I think it's -- I think it's been going on longer than that, but yes.

RISCH:

It's been going on longer, but I'm talking about the acceleration.

POMPEO:

Yes, Senator, I think that's a fair statement.

RISCH:

Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CORKER:

If I could, just one interjection. I know that the phrase "paying their bills" has been used. And we need -- every NATO country needs to be contributing 2 percent to defense. And I've noticed those near the Russian border always do.

But there is -- that's a misnomer, is it not? What we want them to do is contribute at least 2 percent. There is not -- these NATO countries are not -- not paying bills to the United States, as sometimes is projected? Is that a -- is that correct?

POMPEO:

The shortfalls that the president identified really are in two buckets. There is a NATO common fund that is contributed to by every nation, and the United States is by far the largest contributor to the fund. And then there are monies that are paid for nations to raise their own militaries and to defend themselves. That's the -- that's the 2 percent number to which we've been referring.

CORKER:

Right. Right. But it's not -- it would be a mischaracterization to say -- to make it appear that they're not paying bills to the United States?

POMPEO:

That's correct, Senator, that's correct.

CORKER:

That's correct.

Senator Cardin?

CARDIN:

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here.

It's my understanding that the president is going to invite Mr. Putin to the United States to follow-up on the understandings reached in Helsinki. Can you just briefly tell me what those understandings or agreements reached in Helsinki at the meeting?

POMPEO:

Sure, I can certainly share with you the things that we've been tasked to follow up on by President Trump, following that meeting. There's a handful.

So there is an agreement to establish some business-to-business leadership exchanges; this historically had been undertaken, but had fallen away. It would be business leaders that

would participate in this. I understand that this went on for years and years and -- and -- and was ceased...

CARDIN:

If you could -- if we could do it briefly. I understand you want to give a complete thing, and I appreciate that.

POMPEO:

It's what you asked for.

CARDIN:

I understand that, business-to-business. Next issue?

POMPEO:

The president's has asked us to look at reestablishing a counterterrorism counsel that was held at the level of the deputy secretary of state for many years, but it also ceased to happen. I think at this point, I think that makes sense...

CARDIN:

Counterterrorism cooperation.

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

...counterterrorism. We are working to see, in Syria, what are the possibilities that can be achieved so that the now between 6 million and 7 million displaced -- externally displaced persons have the opportunity to return. We made it clear this should happen through the political process in Geneva. But we are working to see if we can't get Russian -- Russia to be more cooperative, in terms of driving towards a political resolution there that would take

down the violence levels and create some opportunity to begin a political resolution of the process in Syria.

CARDIN:

Any discussions on sanctions? You said there was no easing of the sanctions.

POMPEO:

No, Senator, no easing of the sanctions...

CARDIN:

Was there any...

POMPEO:

I'm sorry, go ahead.

CARDIN:

Was there any discussion about Magnitsky because certain names associated with Magnitsky came out in Helsinki. Was there any discussion with the president on the Magnitsky sanctions?

POMPEO:

There's been no change in U.S. policy with respect to Magnitsky. I -- I think I know what you're referring to. Let me -- let me make clear, the United States will defend our team in the field and the team that's been in the field when it retires and leaves the field.

We -- we understand that Americans deserve the protection of the United States of America but through their time in service and thereafter.

CARDIN:

Was there any agreements reached in regards to Ukraine?

POMPEO:

No, Senator, that's an agree to disagree. That is the U.S. policy hasn't changed and you can see that, right; \$200 million since the Helsinki summit provided to the Ukrainians. I -- I think there was lots of concern that -- and I saw it. I could find your all's quotes if you'd like me to go drag them out -- concerns that President Trump would make a change in position with respect to Ukraine.

CARDIN:

And you made that clear.

POMPEO:

And there -- there is none and it is -- it is a policy that the previous administration refused to undertake. And so I hear comparative -- it's -- it's important Senator. Comparison matters here because there's a narrative that has developed that somehow President Trump is weak on Russia when in fact the converse is true.

CARDIN:

I heard you talk and brag about the number of sanctions that...

POMPEO:

No, these were just facts.

CARDIN:

Facts is that the Congress passed the CAATSA Statute that required sanctions to be imposed and there are sanctions that are to be imposed under CAATSA that have not been imposed and the facts are the administration has sought a waiver in regards to CAATSA in regards to the National Defense Authorization Act so I just really want to point out and we've heard this from previous administrations but not as much as we're hearing today that what Congress is requiring you to do all of a sudden you've found religion and taking credit for it.

POMPEO:
Senator...

CARDIN:
But in reality you haven't implemented one time the sanctions that have been passed by Congress.

POMPEO:
Senator, first of all that's -- that's not true. We've passed a number of sanctions under the CAATSA provisions and it is also true, at least my best recollection of the Constitution is the president signed that law as well...

CARDIN:
And he complained when he signed it.

POMPEO:
...so I thank you -- I thank you for presenting that law. We appreciate it. We think it makes good sense. The president signed it as well. We have passed sanctions under that very law and we have passed sanctions that as I said previous administrations didn't do.

CARDIN:
Please read the president's comment when he signed the law because it's very interesting, his comments.

Let me move on to our policy in regards to nuclear proliferation in Iran and in North Korea because I'm having a hard time understanding the comparison between these two countries.

In North Korea we have a country that has a nuclear weapon. The president has met with the president -- the leader of that country and has at least given a signal to some countries that

in fact there may be relaxation of those.

We're having trouble with China today as I understand. In Iran we had a commitment for a short term ending their nuclear program. We were able to isolate Iran getting the support of China, Russia and Europe and we were able to keep the temperature down in regards to their nuclear program. Now by pulling out, we are now seeing we don't have any commitments on the short term if Iran walks away from the agreement because they're already sanctioned now under the United States.

We've been isolated, not Iran. And, of course, Iran today was not pursuing a nuclear program. I agree with you there may be long term issues. So I'm going to have a hard time understanding our strategy in regards to preventing nuclear proliferation. The last point I would make, we had a hearing in this committee as to what is necessary to move forward with North Korea on giving up nuclear weapons. And the first thing they talked about, you had to have a full declaration of it's nuclear arsenal and a timeline for dismantling.

And I'm take any (ph) my information now from the South Koreans, not from the Americans. The South Koreans have been reported to say that you asked for that information and you have not been able to get that information from Kim Jong-un or his representatives.

So what have we gotten in North Korea and why are we allowing North Korea to continue to have a nuclear weapon when the strategy is that as long as Iran is doing any types of enrichment, we're going to pose sanctions against them?

POMPEO:

Senator, let me -- let me try -- that was a long question. Let me try and unpack a little bit. So let me give you the common theme. We want neither Iran north -- nor North Korea to have the capacity to proliferate nuclear weapons, to enrich uranium or build their own weapons program. That's the mission set. It draws them together.

That sets the conditions for President Trump's understanding of how one achieves nonproliferation in the world and that's the mission state (ph) we're undertaking in each of

those two countries. They're in different places and we are working on our approach in each place that we think increases the likelihood that we're able to successfully achieve that, a mission I -- I know you share.

CORKER:

Yes. (Inaudible) Senator Rubio (ph) second interjection. I know mention was made of a waiver in the NDAA by Senator Mattis -- I mean Secretary Mattis, actually -- yes, he wouldn't want to be demoted to that level, I know. But -- but I support that. And -- and the purpose of that waiver, was it not, was to allow countries that we're dealing with, that we wish to buy American military equipment to be weaned off Russian equipment.

They still had to buy parts to do so, so that we can more fully implement strategies with them, working with them to really push back against other countries, is that correct?

POMPEO:

Senator Corker, you -- you capture it very well. It's -- it's -- Secretary Mattis and I both put forward this proposal request (ph) to the Senate for these waivers. These are countries that have historic Russian weapon systems. If we deny them the capacity of spare parts or to round out that -- that process, then we're likely to drive them into the hands of the Russians.

I don't think that was the aim of the sanctions themselves and so we're working to effectuate the intent of the statute by seeking this waiver. It's pretty narrow.

CORKER:

Senator Rubio.

CARDIN:

Will the Chairman yield so I can --

CORKER:

Rubio may yield, but -- go ahead. Go ahead.

CARDIN:

My point is that this is an issue we talked about in the development of the KATSA (ph) bill. There is absolutely no debate in this committee on the waiver request by the administration. I -- I take -- I disagree with the (ph) distinguished Chairman as to whether was handled right. The countries had over a year to resolve that.

CORKER:

Yes. Had it (ph) become an acute issues -- and it is a defense-related issue and I'm glad that we've been able to resolve it in a manner that will allow these countries to wean off Russian equipment and begin buying ours. Senator Rubio.

RUBIO:

Thank you. Just watching to see if they reset my clock. It's like an NBA game. All right, well, let me start.

CORKER:

Reset the clock.

RUBIO:

That's all right. We'll figure it out. I'll tell you when time is up, don't worry. On the -- on the - - when Vladimir Putin decided to interfere in our elections, you would agree he undertook a cost-benefit analysis. This what the price would be for doing, this is the benefit I think I would gain from it. And so where it leaves us is we have to do two things.

We have to defend against potential interference, election systems and the like. But I think the other is we have to make sure that the price is higher than the benefit. And -- and that -- that actually points to one things you've already mentioned and that is what we've already done.

If you start to line up some of the things that we've done in response to that and other things, it's a pretty extensive list of -- including we've been asking for four years that are finally happened. The Javelin antitank missiles for Ukraine and Georgia, the support of NATO's new posture in central and eastern Europe, the variety of designations under both Ukraine and cyber-related Executive Orders that were from the Obama administration, sanctions under CAATSA and I know there's more to come for cybersecurity.

Several rounds of designation of individuals for weapons proliferation, terror and transnational crime, export restrictions on entities that violated the IMF Treaty, we closed consulates in San Francisco and in Seattle, we closed an annex in D.C., we closed the trade office in New York after they -- poisoned nerve gas attack in the UK, we expelled 60 other diplomats.

All of those things happened under this administration, and these are pretty substantial, including the sanctions. But obviously even that price is not high enough because the intelligence community continues to tell us that they are postured and are actively engaged in -- in both attacking our -- our democracy and posturing to do more of that in the future.

So my question is along the lines of a piece of legislation that Senator Van Hollen and I and a group of other Senators have jumped on board on, and it -- and it aims to do three things. One is sort of define interference, OK? It's not just five Russian guys on Twitter.

I mean it's -- define it in terms of its meaning to our republic, require that the Director of National Intelligence to issue a report within 30 days of the election about whether or not interference occurred, and then put in statute a -- a menu of -- of very crippling sanctions.

And the purpose of that would be so that Vladimir Putin knows before he makes this decision going to '18 or in the future this is the price I will pay if I do this again. That's why it's called the Deter Act, to get on the front end of it.

I don't ask you to opine on the bill, cause I know you don't have it before you, but on the concept of building in deterrence on the front end, is that not a -- an approach that we can

take to hopefully deter him from doing this in the future by making -- clearly understand how high the price would be in comparison to the benefit?

POMPEO:

Senator I -- I completely agree with you that there is a cost-benefit calculation that's undertaken before the Russians act. So it follows necessarily that putting on notice with essentially a fail safe if you will about things that will follow has the likelihood of being successful in raising the cost in terms of how he calculates risk associated with a wide range of actions.

RUBIO:

Let me -- you'll be asked plenty about Russia, so I don't want to undermine that. But I think that the single biggest national security threat in the long term to the United States is China. I mean for the first time since the end of Cold War, we are in competition with a near peer adversary and it's not just military, it's economic, it's technological, it's geopolitical and the like.

Yet we've seen their impressive and massive military buildup, the quantum leaps they're making in technology. We see that the work they're undertaking to sort of destroy the U.S. world order and rebuild it to one more of their liking.

We've seen the gains they've made in just on -- in 5G alone, I mean what -- China Mobile will be the only company in the world that can build standalone 5G networks by 2020. And what's really outrageous is many of these advances are not the result of hard work and ingenuity, they're also the result of intellectual property theft, force transfers and the like.

This is part of a tactic that they've been using for a while. The Chinese -- and I think the South China Sea is a great example of it. They don't make these big sweeping changes, it's sort of a sustained, sort of slow and incremental but more assertive demands each time, creating new normals along the way.

And what they've done in the South China Sea is evidence of that. And the only ways that -- that seem to work in response to their aggression are two things. The first is committed and sustained escalation across the relationship, meaning you don't carve out pieces of it.

They do it that way, we have to do it that way. Our whole relationship's sustained and committed pressure. And the other is invoking the help of our foreign partners.

And what I'm troubled by in regards to the administration's posture on this is on the -- working with, you know -- invoking the help of our foreign partners has become complicated because we're currently engaged with trade disputes with the EU and Japan, Mexico and Canada, which we should have teamed up with to confront them.

And I -- and I understand trade is an issue that needs to be addressed, but my -- I don't know why we didn't address China first together and then dealt with our allies second. And the other is the sustained, committed escalation across the entire relationship.

And on that front, I'm puzzled by the decision the administration made on -- on ZTE, and I know that was not a State Department decision, it was a commerce one. Because I agree that if the ZTE issue was simply a sanctions violation, the penalties imposed have been devastating.

But ZTE is more than a sanctions threat to the United States, it is part of a broader telecommunication threat that the Chinese industries pose to the United States, and to threaten to shut them down and then pull back from it is not the sort of committed and sustained escalation across the entire relationship.

The carving out of one company sends them the message that they can pick away at different parts of the relationship and undermine our willingness to sustain pressure on them to get a better equilibrium. So I don't know what the State Department's role was in that decision, but moving forward, what is our broader strategic approach to the threat that China poses?

Because they don't seek parity, they seek to overtake us.

POMPEO:

Senator, you have laid out what I think is the principle challenge for the United States over -- over the coming years, maybe decade. The issue of China, they are -- you talk about the -- they've got a lot of folks and a big economy.

That puts them in the position to be a competitor to the United States in a way that a country like Russia, with an economy smaller than Italy's can't -- can't maintain over some period of time. And so we do need a broad, comprehensive response.

And I think all of the west, not just the United States, was too slow in seeing this, your point about how they turned up the heat slowly over time. I think that recognition is there, but I don't believe the structures are in place today to respond to that in a way comprehensively.

I was with -- I was with our Australian partners yesterday at a meeting of -- with Secretary Mattis, myself and our -- our Australian counterparts. They, too -- they just passed a non-interference -- set of non-interference rules on China.

They are getting up to the speed in the same way that as you all took a look at CFIUS and FERMA. We're getting up to speed. We are -- we are beginning to strike that comprehensive response versus China that I think will ultimately do what has historically happened, allow America to prevail.

CORKER:

Thank you, thank you very much. Senator Shaheen?

SHAHEEN:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you, Assistant Secretary Mitchell and our Charge in Turkey Phil Cosnett for your hard work and coordination on the efforts to release Pastor Brunson.

As you pointed out, his move from prison to house arrest is a positive development.

Obviously we have a lot more work to do in terms of getting him back to the United States,

and also pressing the Turkish government to release the other Americans that they are holding.

But it is a positive step and thank you for that. I am concerned, Mr. Secretary, because it's been one week since -- little over a week since the Helsinki meeting between President Trump and Vladimir Putin, and yet other than the brief description you just gave us, we don't really know what was discussed in that meeting.

We've heard DNI Coats, General Votel and a number of State Department officials including those who were present in last week's committee meeting on Iran indicate that they still don't have a full understanding of what was discussed in that meeting.

And we're seeing almost daily attempts by the Kremlin to take advantage of this opportunity as they release their own readouts of the conversation and broadcast news of various agreements that they say were reached in that meeting.

So for me, that's why I'm so concerned and why I want to know exactly what was agreed to in that meeting. On Syria, President Trump said at his joint news conference that the two leaders discussed Syria at length. The Russian Ministry of Defense has indicated that the two leaders agreed to military cooperation in Syria. Did they do that?

POMPEO:

Senator, the United States policy with respect to deconfliction with Russia has not changed. I -- I will defer to the Department of Defense for details around that, but that -- but I can tell you that the policy that was in place with respect to their efforts to keep American pilots safe and keep American forces safe in Syria, that policy has not changed.

SHAHEEN:

Do you know if they discussed that policy?

POMPEO:

(inaudible)

SHAHEEN:

If they discussed...

POMPEO:

Senator, I -- I do know that they discussed Syria. They absolutely discussed Syria. They -- the focus of that discussion, and I think President Trump has shared this, was an effort to find a political resolution there, and to get the displaced persons the opportunity to return to Syria.

And they -- I think the president's talked about one more -- one more item, so I -- as the president's shared it, I feel like I can, as well. I think he also talked about America's continued commitment to ensure that Israel was secure from threats in Syria, as well. And that topic was discussed by them, as well. I think the president has previously shared that.

SHAHEEN:

Do you know if there is any sort of downgrading of our U.S. presence in Israel -- I mean, in Syria that was discussed?

POMPEO:

Senator, there's been no change in U.S. policy, with respect to our activities in Syria. I -- I...

SHAHEEN:

I -- I understand, but...

POMPEO:

(inaudible)

SHAHEEN:

... but that's not exactly the question I'm asking.

POMPEO:

Senator, it's what -- it's what -- it's what matters. It's what -- it's what matters. What -- what matters is what President Trump has directed us to do, following his meeting with Vladimir Putin. It's what he has told his senior leadership team to do, and how he wants us to deploy his foreign policy strategy.

SHAHEEN:

And do you know if the frozen stabilization funds for Syria, the \$200 million, was that ever discussed?

POMPEO:

Senator, there's been -- we -- we are -- we are still working to review that policy. That's a State Department policy. We are still working to review it. The policy was the same the day before as it was the day after the president's meeting with Vladimir Putin.

SHAHEEN:

And do you know if Iran was referenced in the context of Syria in their discussions?

POMPEO:

Senator, again, I -- I -- it's not -- it's not for me to disclose the contents of those conversations. I -- I can tell you that each time I've spoken with President Trump, both before Helsinki Summit and after, Iran has been at the -- a central point that we have focused on, with respect to U.S. policy in Syria. It -- I'm confident will remain so.

SHAHEEN:

So in an interview, General Votel was asked about whether a deal had been made on Syria between President Trump and Vladimir Putin. And he said, as you indicated, that he had received no instructions to change what he's doing, and he went further on to say, and I quote, "I would want to make sure that this isn't something that we stepped into lightly. I'm

not recommending that, and that would be a pretty big step at this point." In response to his comments, the Russian Ministry of Defense put out a statement, and also posted on -- on social media, and again, I'm quoting the Russian media. They say -- Ministry, I mean. "With his statements, General Votel not only discredited the official position of his supreme commander in chief, but also exacerbated the illegality under international law and U.S. law of the military presence of American servicemen in Syria." Can you tell me what our response has been to the Russian Ministry of Defense, with respect to this statement?

POMPEO:

Senator, my guess, the response would be most appropriately from the Department of Defense, and not from the Department of State. But I -- I will humbly suggest to you that you ought to have more confidence in statements from General Votel than the Russian Ministry of Defense.

SHAHEEN:

I do have more confidence in General Votel's statement. That's why I'm raising this question, because it seems to me that our response to the Russian Ministry of Defense ought to be very strong, to say, "They have nothing to say about what our generals are doing in Syria. That's not their business. That's our business." And I would hope that that's a point that we make very strongly.

I had the opportunity to visit Syria a little over two weeks ago, and I was very impressed with the work that our military has been doing in Northern -- Northeast Syria, along the Turkish border. I was very impressed with the work of the Syrian defense -- Democratic Forces. And what I heard over and over again, both from the men and women who were serving, and from the civilians, Syrian civilians on the ground, was, "Please don't leave us here to the fate of either Assad or the Russians, or other forces that may come into that part of Syria. And please, just a little bit in help for reconstruction efforts would go a very long way."

That part of Syria has stabilized. They are in the reconstruction. They are sending back people who have been displaced to their homes, and it would be, I believe, a real terrible

reversal of policy for us to leave those folks after what we've done, and to turn them over to the Russians, or to Assad's forces.

POMPEO:

Senator, if I might, just -- just so the facts are clear, the previous administration is the one that enabled Russia to have the capacity that they have in Syria today. It is this...

SHAHEEN:

I'm not defending the previous administration, Mr. Secretary.

POMPEO:

It is this administration...

SHAHEEN:

I want this administration to continue doing what's working.

POMPEO:

Its policy, this administration's policy. You're advocating for the continuation of this administration's policy. I think that's important for everyone to understand.

CORKER:

Senator Flake.

FLAKE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary, for...

POMPEO:

(inaudible)

FLAKE:

... your testimony. I -- I wanted to commend the State Department, you, in particular, for quick statements with regard to the nature of the conversation, as it was, between President Putin and President Trump regarding certain individuals like Mr. McFaul -- McFaul and others traveling to Russia to be interrogated by the Russians. The State Department came out and said that was inappropriate, despite the -- the president's statement that there was an incredible offer. It took the White House a full two days, or three days to -- to, you know, to contradict that statement that President Putin had made. But the State Department quickly said that that was inappropriate, and so thank you for doing that.

POMPEO:

Thanks, but Senator Flake, you gave me a little bit too much credit. I'm -- I'm doing my level best every day to implement the president's policies.

FLAKE:

Well...

POMPEO:

Though that statement was from United States president's State Department.

FLAKE:

OK, but the United States president said that it was an incredible offer, and so that's why I'm pointing out the difference, and commending you. Please take it.

With regard to what else was said during that meeting, I know you've -- you've given some indication of -- of what was discussed. Let me just give a sense of how Russia is characterizing that meeting, and this is the -- the problem with a private meeting like this. Many of us voiced strong concerns about having a private meeting like this with no readout officially for what happened.

And -- and here's what happens when a private meeting like that is held. Vladimir Putin's meeting with Donald Trump was, quote, "better than super," Russia's top diplomat has said. "The leader's summit in Helsinki was fabulous." I think that was Lavrov who also said that. The remarks reported by Russian news agency summed up the mood that "Mr. Trump sided with the Kremlin over his own intelligence agencies" so they're reporting that as well.

Here's how one paper in Russia characterized it, "Trump has failed to dominate Putin." Another tabloid said, "A quiet, modest Trump has paled in comparison with Vladimir Putin. It's clear that Putin has outmaneuvered the U.S. president." That's the Russian media characterizing the meeting and we have no read out to dispute any of it.

All we have are the statements made by the president that they made an incredible offer, for example, to have former U.S. diplomats shipped off to Russia to be interrogated. I'm -- I'm glad to hear that -- at one their -- a little more time will be had before a new meeting takes place between the two principals. By the way, I think that it's good that our president and the Russian president speak and meet together.

That's a good thing. I don't think it's a good thing to meet in private with only an interpreter present with no read out, so that whatever is characterized is only characterized by the Russian side. So do you have any response or thoughts on that?

POMPEO:

So I have a personal experience. I had a private conversation with North Koreans. We didn't issue a read out on the conversations quite intentionally and the North Korean press chose to characterize it. We chose -- we thought it was in America's best interest not to respond tit for tat about the nature of that conversation.

We -- we knew the truth. We knew what had taken place there. And, you know, it's the North Korean press and so I assume that most reasonable people will discount it fairly significant in the same way that one might the Russian press. These are important decisions about how much to disclose about private conversations were had because everyone knows that you may have an expectation that you'll have another private conversation one day.

And the absence of their belief that that private conversation has the capacity to remain in that space reduces the freedom to have those conversations. I know you've had this in your life too, Senator. I know you've had private conversations and you value them. It was just you and someone else in that room and it was important.

And you didn't give anyone a read out from it because you wanted to have the chance to do that again because you thought you could make real progress with that person.

FLAKE:

Let's talk about North Korea, you brought it up. You mentioned you traveled to North Korea to continue on, as you put it, I guess to follow up on commitments made in Singapore. Let's talk about those commitments for a minute. You mentioned that they have committed to de-nuclearization.

They may have a different read out than we do on what that entails, but -- but so far they seem to be walking back any commitment -- real commitment that was made there. What commitment, firm commitment other than discussion of returning remains -- I'm not discounting that but -- but in terms of de-nuclearization what real commitments were made?

POMPEO:

Yes, I'm not going to get into that private commitments that have been shared. I -- I don't think its fair to characterize them walking back from commitments. Remember where we were, right? So it all depends what you draw as the projected line to say, "Are we in a better place or a worse place than we would have been absent the Singapore Summit?"

One can draw a counter-factual (inaudible) that we'll never know where we might have been, but I will concede there is an awful long way to go. I'm not trying to oversell the accomplishments that we've had towards the path of de-nuclearization. To date there remains a great deal of work to do.

It will be highly contested, that is, the modalities, the means, the timing of this will be things that I'm confident we'll be discussing for a period of time. There -- there have been public reports and I know the United States is tracking the dis-assembly of a missile test site, something that Chairman Kim committed orally.

It wasn't in the written agreement itself but Chairman Kim committed in his conversation with President Trump to do. They're beginning to dismantle that. It has to do with their missile program. It's a good thing, steps forward.

FLAKE:

Thank you. Quickly before the time is out, something completely different. The country of Rwanda right now -- and you may be familiar with this because of this week's focus on religious freedom.

POMPEO:

Yes.

FLAKE:

As indicated, a move toward severe restrictions on religious freedom, particularly from outside groups. What are the plans for the State Department to let them know that that is not -- that is not in their own interests nor ours.

POMPEO:

Senator, I share your concerns. I'll -- I'll need to get back to you in terms of what actions we think we'll take -- I know we'll call it out. I know we'll -- we'll label it for what it is. We do need to see what we -- it is tragic and anyway, I share your concerns, Senator. It's -- it's a huge challenge for us.

FLAKE:

Thank you.

CORKER:
Senator Kaine.

KAINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Mr. Secretary, just a couple of thoughts. I was very discouraged at the Helsinki Summit when the president basically was offered a choice in some of the questions that he believed U.S. intel or did he believe Vladimir Putin's protestations that he had engaged in hacking of the election.

And he basically said my own people have made a great case to me. Vladimir Putin has made a great case to me. I don't see why Russia would have done this. He came back and corrected it the next day in the United States, but at the end he said, I believe my intel community but there's a lot of people out there. It could have been someone else.

And then this dragged on for a couple of days. You know where I live. You know I have a lot of constituents who used to be your employees at the CIA. People come up to me all the time in Virginia and say I'm with the IC (ph) and they are very demoralized by this.

They're very demoralized that when standing next to Vladimir Putin, the president's words were to suggest that he trusted Vladimir Putin over them. There was the suggestion that when President Trump said it was an incredible offer about (inaudible) that he was also potentially willing to throw not just intel folks under the bus but the State Department diplomats under the bus.

They live in Virginia too. They feel the demoralization of that. Your comments today that we're going to go to bat for a current performer, that's very, very helpful. But what I want to ask you about is our military and our military leadership. There was an article yesterday in the Washington Post.

General Joseph F. Dunford, Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, as of Monday, Dunford still hadn't been briefed on Helsinki even though it directly affects more than one million

troops Dunford oversees. Do you know why there would have been no briefing of General Dunford about the discussions that took place in Helsinki?

POMPEO:

Senator, you have to ask the Department of Defense or Chairman Dunford.

KAINE:

But you don't dispute that -- that was -- that you have no knowledge that there was a briefing of General Dunford today about the Helsinki discussion, do you?

POMPEO:

Senator, you just read me a piece from the Washington Post.

KAINE:

Yes, but I'm asking your knowledge. Do you have any knowledge that the administration has shared discussions about U.S.-Russia military issues with the head of the United States Joints Chiefs of Staff.

POMPEO:

I've actually spoken with Chairman Dunford about it. I was with him yesterday in a series of meetings and we had a chance to have a conversation about it, yes.

KAINE:

OK, so -

POMPEO:

About our plan -- absolutely.

KAINE:

OK, so yesterday may have been the first time he was briefed about it. I want to ask -

POMPEO:

By (inaudible), yes.

KAINE:

I was going to ask about General Votel, the information that Jeanne Shaheen, Senator Shaheen mentioned earlier. He expressed wariness about working with Russia and the Russian Defense Ministry. I -- this is an interesting statement. They went after General Votel, the head of CENTCOM who oversees, as you know, U.S. military operations in the Middle East, including Syria. Quote, "With his statements, General Votel not only discredited the official position of his supreme commander in chief." Are you aware of what the official position is that is being referenced in that statement?

POMPEO:

You'd have to speak with the Russian Ministry of Defense to know what it was he was referring to.

KAINE:

But you can understand why we're concerned, if it's being reported in Russian press, as Secretary Flake and -- Senator Flake and Senator Shaheen said that they're talking about official positions that the President has outlined? As far as you know, General Votel's statements did not violate any official position of the United States did they?

POMPEO:

You seem to be giving a great deal of credit to the Russian Ministry of Defense...

KAINE:

Well, let me.

POMPEO:

... for truthfulness.

KAINE:

Let me ask you about General Votel.

POMPEO:

I -- I might not share that same (inaudible).

(CROSSTALK)

KAINE:

Let me ask you about General Votel. As far as you know.

POMPEO:

I have great credit -- I have great belief in his truthfulness.

KAINE:

So, you do not believe that any of the statements that he's made, including those that I read, violate any official position of the United States do you?

POMPEO:

Senator, if you would, that's best to approach to General Votel or (ph) the Department of Defense. I mean, I'm not -- we're not three (ph) orders removed (ph), I'm sorry.

KAINE:

If I could introduce for the record, there's an interesting article in BuzzFeed news just recently, today, that just lists a whole series of headlines and I think these are instructive, Mr. Chair.

Trump's announcement that he will end U.S.-Korea drills catches Pentagon off guard. Pentagon and Seoul surprised by Trump pledge to halt military exercises. Pentagon caught off guard by space force announcement.

Trump signals withdrawal, very soon, of U.S. troops from Syria surprising Pentagon and State Department. Pentagon caught by surprise by Trump's travel ban, pushes for summer (ph) rockies (ph) to get special consideration. U.S. Joint Chiefs blindsided by Trump's transgender ban. NORTHCOM caught off guard as Trump orders troops to U.S.-Mexico border, if I could introduce this for the record, Mr. Chair?

CORKER:

Without objection.

KAINE:

I worry about an administration that would take the Putin position over our intel community. I worry about the administration that would suggest it might be a great deal to consider handing over a former diplomat for questioning.

I worry about an administration that is catching the Pentagon off guard, that is not consulting with General Dunford or briefing him for a week after a summit of this importance to our military. Mr. Secretary, you're aware of the NDAA prohibition, the current prohibition, on Russian and military -- Russian and U.S. joint military operations are you not?

POMPEO:

I'm aware of the existence of that provision, yes.

KAINE:

The provision prohibits any use of funds, it's in the NDAA, any use of funds to support joint Russia and U.S. military operations and it also gives the Secretary of Defense the ability to

undertake a national security waiver if he thinks that that's the right idea. Does the administration accept the legality and binding nature of that provision of law?

POMPEO:

Senator, I -- I think the DOD General Counsel would be the right person to ask about the intricacies of an NDAA provision that had to do with complex issues that span the gap between, I think, what you're getting, between de-confliction and coordination. It's a -- it's a complex undertaking.

(CROSSTALK)

KAINE:

But you (inaudible).

POMPEO:

Not -- not a waiver that the State Department has the authority, but...

KAINE:

Right (ph).

POMPEO:

...more broadly, yes, the -- this administration follows the law...

KAINE:

OK.

POMPEO:

...if that's the question.

KAINE:

So, sitting here today, you're not aware of a legal concern that the administration has about this NDAA provision, are you?

POMPEO:

I'm not aware of one (ph).

KAINE:

And you're not aware that the -- that the Secretary of Defense has issued any kind of a waiver to allow U.S.-Russia military joint operations, are you?

POMPEO:

No, Senator.

KAINE:

With respect to North Korea, we were told by our expert witnesses, and I echo a little bit of what Senator Cardin said, that a first test of their seriousness is will they disclose what they have? In your discussions with North Korea, have they reached a point, yet, where there has been any agreement made about them disclosing the extent of their nuclear infrastructure?

POMPEO:

I'd prefer not to answer questions about the nature of our negotiations other than to say that your -- your proposition that a good first step is the disclosure of the -- the range of their nuclear infrastructure capabilities, a -- an initial declaration, so to speak, is something that's at the very forefront of what it is, we think makes sense to get them to a point where we can verify their full denuclearization.

KAINE:

Thank you, and Mr. Chair, I'd like to put one other additional item in for the record, which is an article just recently written by the Saudi ambassador to the United States, Prince Khaled bin Salman, why Iran's malign behavior must be confronted, not appeased.

And the thing that I think is interesting for us is he basically makes this argument and says that Saudi Arabia stands very willing to help the United States undertake all the actions that he suggests should be taken.

I'm very concerned about this too, but my time would not allow further questions --

(CROSS TALK)

CORKER:

-- will be entered. Senator Barrasso.

BARRASSO:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, good to see you again. Seems every time we have a chance to visit, I bring up the issue of energy security and I was very happy to see President Trump talk with our NATO allies and specifically with Germany about their ongoing dependence with -- on -- on Russia for energy and specifically the upcoming concern with the Nord Stream II and increasing that dependence by Germany of Russian energy.

I know the president met today with the European Commission president to talk about energy security issues. I just ask your assessment of our NATO allies and if they understand the security threat and the leverage that they're giving Russia by this overreliance on Russian energy resources, because it doesn't seem to be acting in their own security best interest.

POMPEO:

Senator, that's a fair question, I think their willingness to acknowledge that risk varies, I think some European countries accept that risk or prepare to -- to -- to act in a way that

might cost them a little bit more money to prevent that risk.

I think there -- there's probably a continuum of European countries. We've -- we've -- this issue has been raised by this administration consistently in every forum directly with the Germans as well.

The -- the -- the Germans just don't see it that way.

BARRASSO:

Are our NATO allies in the European Union doing anything in their discussions with the -- with Germany in terms of ending this Nord Stream II pipeline project?

POMPEO:

Again, mixed within the European Union, there are some countries that -- that share our position. There are some that do so publicly, there are others that do so privately.

That is there -- they have concerns about speaking out against other European Union countries, so their conversations have been -- or they're sharing of their view on Nord Stream II with us has been private, I suspect private with the other parties that they're opposing as well.

BARRASSO:

Well I appreciate everything that you continue to do and grateful for what the president's doing in terms of trying to lessen this influence of the Russian energy on -- on the -- on the European Union and on -- certainly on Germany.

You know, Russian officials, after the meeting with President Trump, and I know you made the point about not -- the president not making additional statements on -- on specific agreements.

The -- the -- I guess the Russian ambassador has talked about important verbal agreements on New START and INF at the Helsinki summit. So I just wanted to ask a little bit about that.

If any were -- were -- are -- have specific agreements been made between President Putin and President Trump on arms control treaties?

POMPEO:

No we're still -- we're still working our way through. These issues were raised, I think the president said that. We are trying to get the Russians back inside the INF, trying to use every tool possible to get them to acknowledge that they are in non-compliance and get them moved back in the -- back inside the box.

And then we are -- the administration -- President Trump's administration is considering how best to respond to that, both on the INF treaty and the New START. And what -- what are -- what are the -- what are the best modalities to achieve what we're looking for is to decrease the risk of proliferation or a potential nuclear conflict between our two countries.

BARRASSO:

Yes, it did seem -- while I -- I appreciate your -- your efforts there, I think it did seem (ph) that President Trump striking the right decisions in terms of -- with these intermediate nuclear weapons in terms of providing for Poland the missile capacity there to defend.

(Inaudible) previous administration pulled out of that capacity and so I'm happy to see that. With New START, I always felt that that was a treaty that had significant concessions on our side and very little if anything from Russia in terms of the number of the missiles, because they didn't have to give up much, if anything, and we had to give up quite a bit.

So I'd be very concerned about what that next treaty may look like.

POMPEO:

The -- the INF similarly, right, restricts just a couple countries.

BARRASSO:

Yes.

POMPEO:

And the world has changed dramatically since that treaty began. So we are -- we're conducting a full on review so that we can respond and then work with Russia to get an outcome that's in America's interest with respect to the full scope of the proliferation agreements between the countries -- the nuclear proliferation agreements between the two countries.

BARRASSO:

The president yesterday what at the VFW convention, the National Convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars. I wanted to talk a little bit about after the discussion in Singapore with the North Korean leader and the signing of a declaration committing to the return of remains of American soldiers to the United States.

I know there were many U.S. troops lost in North Korea. I understand that we have our military has moved coffins to the demilitarized zone to prepare for North Korea's return of the remains.

This is an issue that comes up when I talk to veterans in Wyoming and I wouldn't be surprised if it came up when the president was there with the VFW. Could you give us any update on North Korea's compliance or (ph) what they had agreed to do relating with the remains of our veterans?

POMPEO:

So they reaffirmed their commitment to return remains that they have in their possession, as well as to begin to work on -- there's an agreement that had been in place previously about how we would conduct recovery operations inside of North Korea.

And we will in relatively short order, if -- if the North fulfills those (ph) commitment, begin to put things back in place such that we can begin not only the return, the repatriation of existing remains, but the recovery of remains that have not yet been recovered.

It's -- I understand that it's not directly on point with denuclearization, I -- I get that. But boy, for the families that are -- are missing loved, there is a -- it's a big deal. And I'm very hopeful that the North Koreans will continue to move towards honoring the commitment that Chairman Kim made.

BARRASSO:

Well thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, I'm very grateful for your continued commitment to all these efforts. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CORKER:

Thank you, sir. Senator Markey.

MARKEY:

Thank -- thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Secretary, President Trump is claiming that North Korea is, quote, "no longer a nuclear threat", and we do know that is absolutely not true.

We have yet to see any tangible progress towards denuclearization, and I know that it's clear to everyone that North Korea's dismantling of an outdated missile test facility as well as a previously dismantled ICBM assembly building, which can be rebuilt within three days, are empty gestures and not indicative that North Korea has changed its tune.

They are continuing to use the Kim family playbook of going back to his grandfather where they front lobed (ph) rewards to themselves while exploiting ambiguity and delaying real concessions to the United States and to the West.

We do not have nuclear inspectors yet on the ground in North Korea. Is that correct, Mr. Secretary?

POMPEO:

That is correct.

MARKEY:

North Korea continues to produce fissile material, nuclear bomb material, is that correct?

POMPEO:

Senator, I'm trying to make sure I -- I stay on the correct -- yes, that's correct. Just trying to make sure I don't cross into classified information, I'm not trying to hesitate -- yes, they continue to produce vessel material, yes.

MARKEY:

So North Korea is continuing on both of those upfronts. Is North Korea continuing to pursue submarine-launched ballistic missiles?

POMPEO:

I cannot answer that for you here in this --

MARKEY:

You can not answer that?

POMPEO:

No, Senator.

MARKEY:

While I look forward to you providing that in a classified setting so that the members of this committee and ultimately the American people can know what is happening. I think it's pretty clear they are, but we'll move on. Has North Korea committed to you that it will destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles?

POMPEO:

The North Koreans understand precisely what our definition of denuclearization and have agreed to denuclearize.

MARKEY:

Have they committed to destroying chemical weapons stockpiles?

POMPEO:

We have talked about CBW. Their CBW programs as being part of that denuclearization and as I said, they have indicated that they fully understand the scope of what denuclearization entails.

MARKEY:

But have they committed to destroying their biological -- biological weapons?

POMPEO:

In the same way I just described, Senator.

MARKEY:

They have committed?

POMPEO:

Senator, what I said is as follows. We have made very clear that the entirety of the North Korean CBW program is contained in the U.S. understanding of denuclearization and I am confident that the North Koreans understand clearly America's definition and they have agreed to denuclearize.

MARKEY:

Does the United States have an inventory of North Korea's warheads, materials, facilities and other programs

POMPEO:

Senator, I can't answer that here.

MARKEY:

Has North Korea committed to halting its human rights abuses?

POMPEO:

Senator, human rights abuses continue today. If I may -- If I may say with respect to each of these questions, each of the activities that you have described was taking place on January 19, 2017. And we are working to stop them in ways that were not being undertaken prior to the time the Trump administration took office -- there were full on trade with North Korea --

(CROSSTALK)

MARKEY:

I guess what I am saying --

POMPEO:

I think it's important to understand the progress that we have made and the efforts and the modalities were using to stop the activity going on for decades.

MARKEY:

I am just going back to the statement made by President Trump that North Korea is no longer a nuclear threat. I'm just trying to determine what that means and --

POMPEO:

I'm happy to help you -- I'm trying to articulate what is there --

MARKEY:

-- is there -- is there any verifiable evidence of progress towards denuclearization.

POMPEO:

Oh yes, absolutely.

MARKEY:

What is verifiable?

POMPEO:

we are sitting at the table having conversations. We have had lots of discussions that I am not gonna getting into today. I will tell you that -- you discounted the destruction of the missile engine test facility. That missile engine test facility was functional -- viable and operational and in use in January 2017 before this administration took office. I just -- just facts.

MARKEY:

Well that I guess you and I interpret that gesture a differently.

POMPEO:

Senator, I have made no interpretation --

MARKEY:

-- in terms of -- in terms of verifiable progress, I'm talking about not trusting Kim Jung-un without verifying, verifying North Korea's actions. So that's really what the discussions about. What has been verified?

I understand that you are talking but --

POMPEO:

Yeah.

MARKEY:

-- here's what I also understand. That the United States has unexpectedly suspended military exercises with South Korea, that North Korea has not started returning American war dead despite the president's announcement that the returns had already taken place. China and Russia continued to export oil to North Korea in violation of the U.N.'s resolutions and U.S. --

POMPEO:

-- sanctions that didn't exist before this regime took office --

MARKEY:

-- and North Korea still has chemical and biological weapons and brutalizes its own people. And again, there's no verifiable evidence that North Korea is denuclearization (ph).

POMPEO:

Senator --

(CROSSTALK)

MARKEY:

-- so I'm afraid that at this point, the United States, the Trump administration is being taken for a ride.

POMPEO:

Fear not, Senator. Fear not.

MARKEY:

There's no evidence to the contrary (ph).

POMPEO:

Fear not, Senator.

MARKEY:

There's no evidence.

POMPEO:

Senator, fear not. May I -- may --

MARKEY:

Please.

POMPEO:

I guess you didn't ask a question, so I'll --

MARKEY:

No, that's all right. Yes, you can -- please (ph) --

POMPEO:

Fear -- fear not. This administration has taken enormously constructive actions that have put us in a place that is far better than in either of the two previous administrations -- one Republican, one Democrat. We have put sanctions regime employees that is unequaled. We are continuing to enforce that sanctions regime. We've made incredibly clear that we will continue to enforce that sanctions regime until such time as denuclearization as we've defined it is complete.

Pressure on the regime is clearly being felt. We have lots of work to do. But unlike previous administrations, Senator, we have no intention of allowing the U.N.'s sanctions -- the

world's sanctions that we led the charge to have put in place to allowing (ph) those sanctions to either be lifted or not enforced.

And until such time as Chairman Kim fulfills the commitment he made, which I am incredibly hopeful that he will, those sanctions will remain.

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

We have not been taken for a ride, Senator. I --

MARKEY:

We're going to --

POMPEO:

I hope you can sleep a little bit better tonight.

MARKEY:

One quick issue, which it's something I know you're familiar with is the State Department export controls that are designed to help ensure that weapons don't get into the wrong hands abroad. So I want to bring to your attention a special exemption from those export control rules that the States Department plans to use. To issue this Friday, it will allow blueprints for downloadable guns to be published online and acceptable worldwide.

I don't think that we really want to be in a world where Hamas in the Gaza has an ability to download a capacity for an AR15 that could endanger security in that region and the same thing could happen around the world. I asked the State Department to please reconsider this decision. I think it has long-term national security and domestic security considerations for our country.

POMPEO:

You have my commitment I'll -- I'll take a look at it.

CORKER:

OK. Senator Paul.

PAUL:

Thank you for your testimony. There's been a great deal of gnashing of teeth and wringing of hands and, you know, dozens and dozens of senators saying that the president shouldn't have met with President Putin. And I -- I guess I wonder because if -- if somehow we've become a little bit sidetracked by partisanship because in the past, President Obama met with President Putin, President George Bush met with Putin.

And I guess the -- the question I have is whether or not we're entering into sort of a naive time where we think unless someone is a -- a perfect Jeffersonian Democrat, we're not going to meet with them. We also have people say well he should have shook his fist at him and he should have called him a murderer and a thug.

Do you think that there's a possibility that we can have a relationship where we criticize the human rights records of other countries but still also sit down and attempt to have diplomacy and at least channels (ph) so we don't escalate things? Do you think that it was a right idea for President Trump to meet with President Putin?

POMPEO:

I think you asked two questions and it's yes to each of them. I think we can accomplish that. I think we can meet with less-than-perfect citizens of the world and hopefully move the ball in the right direction. Second, I think it was more than appropriate that President Trump meet with Vladimir Putin.

PAUL:

And my own personal opinion is I think we need to deescalate some of the partisan tensions in our country and try to look towards ways that we can have discussions with foreign leaders and not be so simplistic that somehow they have to have a perfect record or that we have to shout and scream. I mean, I think back to Reagan talking to Gorbachev. He said tear down that wall.

He called him an evil empire. But I just don't imagine Reagan sitting down with Gorbachev and yelling and screaming and shaking his fist and saying murderer, thug and reciting the Stalin's human rights abuses.

So I think there is a difference for anybody who's ever thought about this between sitting down and how diplomacy would occur between individuals and reciting a litany of human rights abuses. In that vein, I think there is -- there seems to be sort of a limitless appetite for more sanctions but may be insufficient interest in describing what actions are needed to remove sanctions.

And so Senator Rubio mentioned this Deter Act. I guess my concern with some of this is -- is that the definition of who might be meddling in an -- in an election in our country is not limited just to Russia, it could include even allies who spend money on social media somehow in our country. It doesn't seem to differentiate between social media and actually hacking into our electoral system and changing thousands of votes.

It also takes the power away from the president and gives it to the director of national intelligence. This is Deter Act we were talking about. And I know you indicated that, well, sanctions are probably a good idea to deter them but do you think it's a good idea to take the sanction power, give it to the DNI and then the sanctions have to remain in place for eight hours with the president not having any ability to decide whether there's been some kind of change in behavior by the malefactors?

POMPEO:

Senator, without having seen the legislation, I do not think that's a good idea.

PAUL:

OK. The -- I liked in your statement where I -- where you said that President Trump 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.

And I think that gets at the heart of why we have these discussions. So if you heap sanctions on and Congress puts them on and they have to stay on for eight years and they can never come off, if there is no offramp, if there is no discussion, that's sort of what diplomacy's supposed to be about. So I do commend you for talking to Kim.

Are we hear to extol Kim's record on human rights? Obviously not. But at the same time, for sanctions to have an effect, you have to have a negotiation. So what I would say to my colleagues who've been all over TV saying there should not have been a meeting, think again. Just keep heaping these sanctions on and you don't want any ability to talk to the adversary about how we would actually remove the sanctions if behavior changed.

You got have communications. Not to mention the fact that we have planes flying within a mile or within 100 yards of each other in Syria. We have to have open lines of communication. So what I would ask is that we try to de-escalate the partisanship in our country so we can once again be open to some kind of diplomacy. I have one question with regard to Iran.

And you and I differ on -- on the Iranian -- the possibility of Iranian -- a further Iranian agreement. I think it's actually much more difficult. And I had my own criticisms of the nuclear agreement. I didn't think was perfect and yet I would have tried to built upon it rather than destroy it. We had a lot of money at the time that was a carrot to try to bring Iran to the table.

But now we have instead of one issue, we have -- instead of a smaller group of issues, we have a bigger group of issues. The nuclear issues are back on the table, if we have to renegotiate the nuclear agreement and the ballistic missile issue. And the point that I think that we need to think through in discussions with Iran is that I think Iran, from their

perspective, would see getting rid of their ballistic missile program as basically unilateral surrender.

It's not my viewpoint. I think it's what I believe to be their viewpoint. I think they also see Saudi Arabia as a great adversary and I think they see Israel as a potential adversary. And so I don't think unless -- you know, it'd be great if you got all three to come together and have a multilateral agreement on not developing nuclear weapons and not having ballistic missiles. I don't see the other two coming to the table, frankly, to do that.

And so I think in moving forward, I think it's just important that you -- that you -- you understand this isn't going to be easy. The first Iran agreement also was a multilateral agreement. You had multilateral sanctions. You now have more unilateral sanctions and you're going to have a unilateral agreement that's sort of your own agreement so I just I think we shouldn't be so optimistic and I guess I'd like to hear from you how do you - what makes you believe that Iran will come to the table to discuss ballistic missiles?

POMPEO:

Senator, I'm under no illusions about how important Iran abused its ballistic missile program, I - I - I agree with you there. The question for president - that President Trump faced was the JCPOA good enough? He concluded it wasn't remotely good enough. I think he said it was one of the worst deals in history.

I don't want to get the language wrong. So he concluded we would find ourselves in a better place with an opportunity to revisit all of these issues. The broad spectrum of issues not just the nuclear portfolio but the missile program, their malign activity around the world, all of them in a package. It did except the understanding that there would be those that wouldn't come along side of us but you should know there is a coalition.

It's not - it's not America and America alone. We have others who believe that this was the right decision too: the Israelis, the Saudis, the Emeratis(ph), the Bahrainis, other smaller European governments, not the E3 themselves, but there are a number of folks who are beginning to coalesce around an understanding of how we can appropriately respond to Iran

to take down the nuclear risk to the United States as well as the risk from these other malign activities.

CORKER:

Thank you. Senator Udall.

UDALL:

Thank you Mr. Chairman and - and thank you Secretary Pompeo for your service. Secretary Pompeo, we have quite the record of President Trump's business relations with Russia, extensive reporting and public records show a large amount of money from former Soviet states and Russia in the Trump projects. Trump International Tower and Hotel in Toronto, the Trump Hotel in Panama, the Trump Project in SoHo in New York City are a few of the big examples here. And here's another one, a Russian oligarch bought a property from President Trump for 95 - candidate Trump at the time, or maybe a little before for \$95 million in 2008, less than four years after President Trump paid \$41 million; so he more than doubled this money.

Donald Trump, Jr. in 2008 stated at a real estate conference in New York and I quote here, "Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross section of a lot of our assets," end quote.

Donald Trump tried to build a Trump Tower in Moscow for 30 years. He even tweeted in 2013, Trump Tower, Moscow is next. That's in quotes. In 2015, answering a question from indicted Russian operative and alleged spy, Maria Butina, candidate Trump made clear his desires with Russia stating I would get along well with Putin and that I don't think we need the sanctions. Now the Russian ambassador to the United States has said the President made, and this is his quote, "important verbal agreements with President Putin" and he seems to know more about - more about Helsinki and what happened there than the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As we saw in Helsinki and throughout his presidency and the campaign, this president is extremely sympathetic to the very Russian government that attacked and continues to

attack our democracy and those of our allies. It's a fact of political life today that many Americans are concerned about the unthinkable that a U.S. president could have compromised -- a compromising relationship with a foreign power.

President could clear this all up in three simple ways: releasing his tax returns and those of the Trump organization and the taxes from the various family businesses, some of which we don't even know about. After Helsinki do you think that the American people deserve to know what's in President Trump's tax returns and business interests that - that are intertwined with Russia?

POMPEO:

Senator, I'm going to try to stay out of the same political circus that you and I ended up in the last time I was sitting here and simply respond by saying the same president with which you seem to express such deep concern is engaged in a massive defense buildup which threatens Vladimir Putin's regime. He instructed us to put together a nuclear post(ph) review that has set Vladimir Putin on his ear because of its robustness and the recapitalization of our nuclear program.

He's kicked out 60 spies, we've banned Kaspersky, we put \$11 billion in the defense...

UDALL:

Mr. Secretary, you've already said that.

POMPEO:

Senator, I haven't even begun to scratch the surface.

UDALL:

No, no, no but you've already - you haven't answered my question so let me try it a little different way. Wouldn't you want to know as Secretary of State, I mean I - I'm taking you in your sincerity here as Secretary of State whether all these Russian financial interests oligarchs and others are part of the decision-making of the president. I mean wouldn't you

want that out in the open and to understand what went on at Helsinki, it's an easy kind of yes or no question.

POMPEO:

Senator, I don't need second hand understandings of what President Trump is instructing his administration to do to push back against Russia, I have first-hand understandings.

UDALL:

Yes, well...

POMPEO:

And directives that...

UDALL:

Well let me ask the question a little bit differently here.

POMPEO:

We've opposed the Nord Stream II, we've got a 4 x 30 out of NATO that also is a big setback for Russia. I mean I'm - I'm happy to continue the list. I'm happy to desist there but I will - I will submit the entirety of this administration's actions against Russia for the record if I might.

UDALL:

Please do.

POMPEO:

We'll back a truck up and get it on in here.

UDALL:

Candidate Trump has failed to keep his promise to disclose his tax returns. Every presidential candidate since Richard Nixon has disclosed. Jimmy Carter even sold his peanut farm to avoid a conflict of interest. The situation with President Trump's potential foreign policy conflicts of interest is unprecedented and unacceptable and under the Emoluments Clause, I think it's unconstitutional as well.

But let me just ask a couple of questions about Helsinki. You talked about what you were tasked with. The Director of National Intelligence Coates stated that the Aspen Security Forum that he did not know what happened during the one-on-one meeting in Helsinki. Did the president personally debrief you on this conversation? Are you 100 percent confident that you know everything that President Trump discussed with President Putin. That's a very easy yes or no. If you don't want to answer it, I'll move on to the next one. It's a yes or a no.

POMPEO:

I'm very confident that I received a comprehensive debriefing from President Trump.

UDALL:

Good, OK. Now do you know for a fact whether President Trump or President Putin discussed any investments in Trump properties or any Trump projects such as the previous attempt to build a Trump real estate project in Moscow?

POMPEO:

Senator again, I'm going to try to stay out of the political circus.

UDALL:

No, but were you, sir were you...

POMPEO:

Look that question - that question gets to a political circus.

UDALL:

Were you tasked with that? You gave us a list of what you were tasked...

POMPEO:

I gave - I came here to talk about American foreign policy today. I have attempted to articulate President Trump...

UDALL:

All - all of these business interests are entwined Sir with our foreign policy.

POMPEO:

Yes, a foreign policy that has led to a massive defense buildup, a nuclear posture review that has frightened Vladimir Putin, all 60 spies, 219 - 213 sanctions...

UDALL:

Let me also ask you about an additional question on Helsinki.

POMPEO:

When I was a member of Congress I tried desperately to get President Obama to do one of those things and I was unsuccessful.

UDALL:

When - when President Trump hosted top Russian officials at the White House last year, he bragged about how he had fired James Comey. At his press conference with Putin, President Trump called Special Counsel Mueller's investigation a disaster for the country. Can you tell us what President Trump discussed about the investigation during his private meeting with President Putin?

POMPEO:

I - I - I'm not going to talk about private conversations ...

UDALL:

Well were you tasked with anything in that respect?

POMPEO:

Senator, when I'm tasked about something for American foreign policy, I promise you this committee will know.

UDALL:

OK, and you weren't tasked with anything there?

POMPEO:

Senator, when I am tasked with something by the President that relates to foreign policy, I - I assure you that this committee will be made aware of it.

UDALL:

Thank you very much.

CORKER:

Thank you. Senator Gardner?

GARDNER:

Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you Mr. Secretary for your service to the country and your time with us today. When you were last here, I asked you a question about whether or not you agreed with Secretary Mattis that North Korea is the most urgent security threat that the United States faces.

In light of recent developments, do you still agree with that? At the time you said that you did.

POMPEO:

Yeah, it's still - it's still a - a real priority.

GARDNER:

We also talked about what - do you believe it's the most urgent national security threat?

POMPEO:

I do. But - but - but having said that, I don't recall the precise timing when I was here.

GARDNER:

I think it was in April, perhaps.

POMPEO:

Yeah, so - so it - it - it is, the fact that we're having conversations and we haven't had additional missile tests and nuclear testing. Maybe it's still the priority, I don't know how to think about it, but I - I'm optimistic that we're - we're headed in a path that's the right direction, and we just got to get the rate of change right.

GARDNER:

The testimony, you used the term final, fully, verified denuclearization. In previous testimony, you've used the word permanent, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. U.S. law says complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization.

UN Resolutions call for complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. Are these the same terms, do they mean the same thing?

POMPEO:

Precisely the same thing.

GARDNER:

Exactly, full, complete, total denuclearization according to U.S. law and UN Security Resolutions.

POMPEO:

Yes, yes Senator.

GARDNER:

Why the different words?

POMPEO:

Sometimes one needs to just break away. I'm happy to use the term complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization - yeah, they - they mean the same thing.

GARDNER:

OK. The - the - the CVID declaration or determination, was that directly addressed at the Singapore summit with President Trump and Chairman Kim?

POMPEO:

It was.

GARDNER:

And it was brought up those - the complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization, why was it not in the communique following the Singapore summit?

POMPEO:

Yeah, I'd rather not talk about the - the course of the negotiations and how we arrived at the language that we did.

GARDNER:

OK. Is North Korea still moving or making advancements, undertaking a nuclear program?

POMPEO:

May I - may I answer that question in a different setting?

GARDNER:

You can't answer that question here?

POMPEO:

Yeah, I'd prefer not to.

CORKER:

We'd - we'd love to provide that setting for you soon.

POMPEO:

Happy to - happy to do it if we - if we need to. I'm - I'm - I'm happy to do that. Here - Senator, here - I'm - I'm not trying to be cute. We're engaged in a complex negotiation with a difficult adversary, and each of the activities that we undertake is not going to be fully apparent to the world at the moment it is undertaken.

And there will be processes and discussions that'll be had that are important that they not be real time disclosed, and as I answer one question and then choose not to answer another, it becomes patently obvious why I chose not to answer one or the other.

And therefore it seems to me that a blanket prohibition on heading down that path is the only way to ensure that I have the opportunity to - to negotiate this thing in a way that isn't

being done in the Washington Post and the New York Times.

GARDNER:

I understand, I - I think it's very important point of information that we get though, to know whether or not North Korea is either overtly, covertly, however they are doing it, making advancements in their nuclear program or still continuing a measure of their nuclear program.

I think it's very important for us to ...

POMPEO:

So I did answer one question that - that touches on that at least. I answered a question, I think it was from Senator Markey, about whether they're continuing to create fissile material, and I answered that indeed - that they are.

GARDNER:

The goal originally I think was complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization by the end of the President's first term, is that correct?

POMPEO:

Yes.

GARDNER:

Does that remain the goal?

POMPEO:

Yes. More quickly, if possible.

GARDNER:

When will we know if North Korea is moving toward denuclearization, concrete, verifiable steps?

POMPEO:

I don't know. I don't know the answer to that, I couldn't tell you what day. And by the way, I'm guessing this group would disagree about when that moment took place. That is a process for sure, and some will find the first step along the way, demonstration of I think you said substantial progress.

Others may want to wait until we're almost done to declare substantial progress. So I can't answer that, it's - it's - it's definitely a process and - and will definitely take time.

GARDNER:

We've had a lot of discussions in this committee on strategic patience. The statement you used uses patient diplomacy. Is the U.S. doctrine toward North Korea still one of maximum pressure?

POMPEO:

It is. I'll tell you there - that difference is a little bit subtle and - and perhaps I don't want to overstate the difference in the language. Here's what's different, a strategic (inaudible) was - and our judgment's stand the ground, hoping that something worked right.

Here we have a strategic objective backed up with diplomatic and economic pressure, which we believe gives us a pathway to achieve the objective and also an off-ramp in the event that we conclude that it doesn't work, to head another direction to achieve the denuclearization of North Korea.

GARDNER:

Maximum pressure utilizes Section 102 of the North Korea Sanctions Policy Enhancement Act, which requires the President to initiate investigations into possible designations -

investigations into possible designations of persons upon evidence that they're violating, you know, proliferating activities, et cetera so that we can apply additional sanctions.

How many investigations into new designations are taking place right now?

POMPEO:

I don't know how many Senator, but - but - let me try and answer your question in another way and see if this is - if this meets the bill. It is the case that this administration is continuing to work on enforcement actions for existing sanctions - for the existing sanctions regime.

That is we're not going to let it wander off, we're not going to let it weaken, you can't rename a ship and get out from underneath the - the sanctions regime. There are active enforcement work being done at the State Department and at the Department of Treasury related to North Korea.

GARDNER:

So it's your view that there are additional North Korean or Chinese entities that could be identified under - for additional sanctions, is that correct?

POMPEO:

Oh, yes sir.

GARDNER:

And those designations are not being upheld or laid off, they will continue?

POMPEO:

We're going to use them in a way that we think increases the likelihood that Chairman Kim fulfills the commitment that he made to President Trump.

GARDNER:

And - and why haven't we seen any designations recently?

POMPEO:

I - I can't answer that question.

GARDNER:

I'd like to get an answer for that if we could. Has - has - has South Korea made additional requests to the United States for sanctions relief as it relates to additional activities with North Korea?

POMPEO:

So I think the requests that South Korea has made are public and have occurred through the committee up at the United Nations. So I think - I think the list of things that the South Koreans are requesting in terms of either making sure that their activity is consistent with the sanctions regime - there are exceptions, there's humanitarian exceptions and so there are ...

GARDNER:

And is the U.S. considering any of those sanctions, granting any of those sanctions?

POMPEO:

We're reviewing each of the requests that the North Koreans made. We approved one ...

GARDNER:

To the South - South Koreans?

POMPEO:

I'm sorry, to the South Koreans - yes I'm sorry, thank you for the correction. We - we approved one that had to do with a military - military to military communications channel. The others are currently under review.

GARDNER:

If we could perhaps get an understanding of what some of those measures are, that would be great. You gave a speech, a very, very good speech Sunday, July 22nd on Iran policy of the Reagan Library, as you've mentioned.

If you were to substitute the word out - Iran out and substitute in the word North Korea, would your speech still accurately describe the state of affairs in North Korea?

POMPEO:

Boy, it was a long speech, Senator.

GARDNER:

And basically...

POMPEO:

I think -- I think in large part, it would be consistent. There -- there is a difference in terms of their operational capacity for their nuclear program, but the nature of the two regimes is similar.

GARDNER:

I'm out of time, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

POMPEO:

Thank you, (inaudible).

CORKER:

Before turning to Senator Merkley, I'm going to use a little bit of my time.

You obviously acquit yourself very well. And those of us who know you and work with you have mostly, I know many of us including me -- and I'll say most of us, actually...

(UNKNOWN)

(OFF-MIKE)

CORKER:

We have tremendous faith in your ability to -- to make things happen. And we thank you for all the issues you're taking on. You're building a great culture in the State Department, bringing on people that are truly exemplary.

We feel the same way about Secretary Mattis, the way he conducts himself and what he does. I think there's tremendous faith on both sides of aisle, in his abilities and what he does.

Much of what you are hearing today has nothing whatsoever to do with you. And I would agree with you, that the policies that were put in place, in many cases, are stronger than have ever been put in place. I agree with you.

It's the president that causes people to have concerns. And I'd just -- I'd love to have some insights into you as the -- for instance, at the Helsinki conference, to credit (ph) equivalence between our intelligence agency, and what Putin is saying, that shocks people. I mean, you can imagine, you saw Dan Coats' response afterwards. And here (ph) today, I think candidly was related to what he said at Helsinki.

And then the notion of even thinking about exchanging diplomats, sending diplomats over to be interrogated by Putin, to even think about that, to let that be said as an official statement coming out White House, to -- this is my opinion, and I believe it's right, to purposely cause the American people to misunderstand about the NATO contributions, and

to cause them to doubt NATO, and to really drive public opinion against NATO, that to me was purposeful, not unlike what happened right after Charlottesville.

And then Article V, to -- to go on television and say you know, why would we honor -- I'm paraphrasing, but why would we honor Article V in Montenegro? You know, we passed a law, I think only two people dissented to send them into NATO. He signed it. I mean, it would be a dereliction of duty if we -- if he did cause that to be the case.

So why does he do those things? I mean, is there some strategy behind creating doubt in U.S. Senator's minds on both sides of the aisle, doubt in the American people as to what his motivations are, when we in fact have tremendous faith in you. I think you're a patriot, tremendous faith in Mattis.

But it's the president's actions that create tremendous distrust in our nation among our allies. It's palpable. We meet and talk with them.

Is there a strategy of this or is it -- what -- what is it that causes the president to purposely, purposely create distrust in these institutions and what we're doing?

POMPEO:

Senator, I just -- I disagree with most of what you just said there. You somehow disconnect the administration's activities from the president's actions. They're -- they're -- they're one in the same.

The --every sanction that was put in place was signed off by the president of the United States. Every spy that was removed...

CORKER:

Go to -- go to the points I just made. Go to the points I just made. Talk to them, talk to them. I know what we're doing. Talk to the points I just made.

POMPEO:

Here's what the -- here's what the world needs to know. With respect to Russia, this administration has been tougher than previous administrations, and I fully expect it will. The president's own words were, he's happy to get it figured out, if we can make -- make improvements with respect to the relationship between he and Vladimir Putin and change the course, but if not he'll be their -- I'll get the words wrong -- he'll be their toughest enemy, most difficult enemy.

I think -- I think I can prove that that's the case today. I think I have.

CORKER:

Yes.

POMPEO:

And so somehow there's this idea that this administration is free-floating. This is President Trump's Administration. Make no mistake who's fully in charge of this. And it was directing each of these activities that has caused Vladimir Putin to be in a very difficult place today.

CORKER:

Well look, I -- I -- you handle yourself in exactly the way you should, in my opinion, as it relates to comments. I noticed that you are not responding to what I'm saying.

POMPEO:

I think -- I think I responded to everything that you said, Senator.

CORKER:

Why -- no, no you didn't. And the fact is that you just didn't, OK?

POMPEO:

We just simply disagree, sir.

CORKER:

No we don't disagree. Hell, let's run the transcript again if you want to talk about it. But the fact is...

POMPEO:

We'll let the world decide.

CORKER:

...it's the -- it's the president's public statements that create concern amongst Senators on both sides of the aisle.

And I -- I was asking you if, in fact, there was some, you know, some rhyme or reason that this type of distrust or discord will be created. And -- and -- and I know you're not going to answer the question.

POMPEO:

Well, I guess I ...

CORKER:

I'm trying to make a point as to why...

POMPEO:

I know you are.

CORKER:

...why the opening comments and the -- and the questions and just the energy behind this hearing are what they are. It's not about you. And it's not about Mattis. And it's not what we're doing on the ground.

POMPEO:

Senator, you know, you went through a long litany of statements, but -- but let me give you -- first of all, I will tell you -- I talk to the same allies you do. I speak to the foreign ministers directly. It is the case that they are behaving differently today. There is no doubt about that. They are now scrambling to figure out how to make sure that they are fully part of NATO.

Some of that is a result of the statements that you referred to, Senator. Some of that -- some of that is identifying...

CORKER:

I -- I -- I actually agree with that.

POMPEO:

Right? So these -- well, there you go. I'll let the record reflect that the court (ph) agrees.

CORKER:

I'll say some of -- some of the actions...

POMPEO:

Some of these statements actually achieve important policy outcomes for the United States of America.

CORKER:

Some of them do.

POMPEO:

Yep.

CORKER:

And some of them are very damaging. Senator Merkley.

MERKLEY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Mr. Secretary.

So in response to Senator Barrasso's question on -- on New START, I wanted to follow up a little bit. Both the United States and Russia came into compliance in February, 2018, met the deadline on -- on deployed nuclear warheads.

And -- but my impression from your -- your dialogue was the U.S. does not yet have a position on whether to work to extend the New START agreement past 2021.

POMPEO:

That -- that -- that's correct.

MERKLEY:

But...

POMPEO:

We -- we -- we're very hopeful that we can achieve -- we view them -- these aren't -- they are individual agreements, as a legal matter. And -- and they can be worked on independently. But the -- the deterrence model, the underpinnings the framework of these nuclear agreements, they are -- they are connected, whether they be things covered by New START, things covered by the INF Treaty, other provisions. They are of a part. And it is the case that we are -- as we begin to evaluate how to approach that, we're trying to do it in a holistic way.

MERKLEY:

Thank you. I think I can anticipate that this will be something that you and your team will be working on in the -- in the year ahead; setting the groundwork for understanding the options there, thank you.

So Russia oil tankers reportedly supplied fuel to North Korea via sea transfer for several times in 2017. President Trump made a reference in which he talked about saying that what China is helping us with Russia is denting. And then he also specifically also Russia is not helping us at all with North Korea.

Did this issue of a Russia bypassing the U.N. sanctions come up in the conversation between President Putin and -- and President Trump?

POMPEO:

I think I can answer that question because I believe President Trump has talked about this. In fact Russia's commitment to help us achieve denuclearization of North Korea did come up, the two of them did discuss it, and that the centrality of continuing to enforce the U.N. Security Council resolutions -- resolutions that the Russians voted for, were raised between the two of them.

I heard in a subsequent meeting, at which I was present, I heard Vladimir Putin reiterated his commitment to doing each of those two things.

MERKLEY:

And to follow-up on your conversation with Tim Kaine about the communique from the Singapore Summit and the details that need to be worked out in regard to having a survey to just the starting point of view -- if you will -- of a detailed nuclear agreement.

When you have an agreement regarding the details of how such a survey of North Korean missiles, nuclear materials and so forth. When you have that agreement, will you brief this committee on that?

POMPEO:

Senator, I am sure will be able to share some elements of that with you. I am hearkening back to the -- Iran agreement, the JCPOA, in which they provided a declaration which was

knowingly false. That is, the administration knew did not reflect accurately the history of the Iranian weapons program.

I promise you I won't do that. I promise you I won't lie about the contents of the declaration. If we disagree, we think the wrong, we will we will knowledge that. I will have to think through, precisely how in the appropriate way we would share that information with you, but you have my commitment not to allow a false declaration to form a fundamental pillar of a nuclear agreement, in the way that it did in --

MERKLEY:

Well, certainly -- I'll tell you we all have privy (ph) not just to a briefing on it, but to the actual document and details and so we have that -- that standard; in fact, those were made public as well. Would you expect to meet those two standards eventually if the agreements complete?

POMPEO:

Yes, I was thinking you were talking about sort of during the process. I believe those documents were made public at the time that the legislation was being considered and it's when the agreement was final. We hope to bring this agreement to the Congress, and it is of course the case that you would need to see the underpinnings of that agreement and part of that would be that will -- there will probably be a series of declarations associated with that.

MERKLEY:

Well I'll tell you, it did bother me some, because those details haven't been worked out yet that, the president already conceded to setting aside the joint exercises with South Korea. Were South Korean leaders briefed in advance of that announcement?

POMPEO:

Senator, I'm going to leave that the Department of Defense to answer what would've been conducted between -- in military channels.

MERKLEY:

President Trump blamed poor relations with Russia on U.S. foolishness, and I am surprised he blamed U.S. foolishness rather than Russian annexation of Crimea, of their occupation of eastern Ukraine, of their attacks on individuals in Britain, of their support of the Syrian government, when the Syrian government using barrel bombs and gas on its own people, and given that Russia's significant cyber-attack elections.

Do you believe that the poor relations with Russia as a result of U.S. foolishness?

POMPEO:

Senator, I think there are countless reasons you identified. You identified several, I could go on about the reason that we find ourselves in this place with Vladimir Putin and his regime today, not a good place to be sure. A place the president is working to develop a relationship to try to and reconfigure at least at the level of making sure these two leaders understand each other and know how each other are thinking about the problem set. I think that's important and appropriate. And --

PAUL:

OK, I.

POMPEO:

Hopeful he can successful in this.

PAUL:

It's a nice essay. It didn't answer my question, but I'll go on.

The president has also said there's no longer a nuclear threat from North Korea, and that we can all sleep well. Given that we don't yet have an agreement on even surveying the stockpile of what North Korea has, or an agreement on eliminating their weapons or

missiles or an agreement on verification strategies, shouldn't we more accurately approach this from the viewpoint that there is still a nuclear threat from North Korea? The president's team's working to eliminate it, but it's a nuclear threat as of today?

POMPEO:

Yes. I think the president would agree that the primary systems that threaten America exist. I think what his comment was that the tension has been greatly reduced. We're at a point where...

PAUL:

I'll take that...

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

... a miscalculation.

PAUL:

I've got 20 seconds, so I wanted to ask you one last question on a completely different topic. Fortify Rights, a human rights group that traveled to Burma to document what happened in Rohingya came out with a report detailing devastating atrocities, which we've also seen from elsewhere.

And we also have the report that Senator Brownback, our ambassador on religious freedom, is making. Is it time for the Senate to act on the sanctions against the Burmese military that we passed out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee?

POMPEO:

I'll leave to senators to decide if it's time for the Senate to act. I can only say that the underpinnings that you describe, the atrocities you describe, are very real.

PAUL:

Well, I would say this is the type of thing where executive leadership makes a difference in giving direction to this body, and so that's why I was seeking your and the president's opinion whether it's time to really send a strong message against such ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Can we expect such a leadership from the president or yourself?

POMPEO:

I remember what Secretary Tillerson did before me on this issue. You can be sure that we will be serious and lean on this important issue.

PAUL:

Thank you.

CORKER:

Thank you.

Senator Young.

YOUNG:

Mr. Secretary, thank you. I appreciate your stamina. You have been here for quite a while. I want to let you know how much I appreciate your leadership as you've filled this role during this tumultuous period in international relations. I have to say since you've taken this position, the interaction our office has with members of the Department of State and with you individually has really markedly improved, and so I'm appreciative of that.

One of the axioms of diplomatic or military strategy is that you want to unite your allies and divide your enemies. And as I see it, this is one of the things that Vladimir Putin has been

succeeding in doing. He seeks to divide and weaken NATO, for example. He wants to divide the American people.

And the more we make Russia's meddling in our own elections a partisan issue, I think the more we play into Putin's hands.

The intelligence community has been clear and consistent, Russia did indeed meddle in our elections. So I think we need to stand together as Americans, not as Republicans or Democrats, with respect to this issue. What are your thoughts on this matter, Mr. Secretary?

POMPEO:

Senator, I think it is the case that the Soviet Union, and now Russia's efforts to undermine Western democracy are long and continuous. I think they occurred in 2016. I am confident that the Russians are endeavoring to divide, to separate us from our allies, to create space to find partners for themselves around the world. In the same way that we go out and work diligently with our allies.

They always think that having a -- a united United States, folks who come at these problems with seriousness and thoughtfulness towards a shared goal increases the likelihood of America prevailing in these challenges -- against these challenges.

YOUNG:

Well, I happen to agree with you and -- and I just -- I hope that my colleagues and I will adopt a tone and approach to this very serious issue which impacts all Americans in recognition of everything you just said. So Mr. Secretary, just about an hour ago, President Trump convened a joint press conference with the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker.

And in the press conference, the president and -- both the presidents announced they were going to launch a bilateral U.S./E.U. set of negotiations with a goal of reducing tariffs, increasing economic cooperation between the E.U. and the United States and working

together to counter the predatory economic practices that we've seen from countries like China.

I can't tell you how encouraged I am by this. I think with our collective leverage brought to bear, perhaps even ultimately pulling in other G7 countries like the Japanese, we have a real possibility of reducing the intellectual property theft, reducing the incidence of joint technology -- forced technology transfer of state-owned enterprises dumping things into our own economy.

Precisely the sorts of objectives I know the administration has so, do you agree that the United States going forward has to prioritize and trade dialogue with the E.U. in order to eliminate current retaliatory tariffs on farmers and manufacturers in places like Indiana as well as to effectively combat China's nefarious activities?

POMPEO:

Yes, don't forget Kansas farmers too. So I -- I don't have the benefit of having seen the press conference. I was sitting here. I didn't see the announcement or what they said. I know that this was one of the things that President Trump was trying to accomplish in his conversations with Mr. Juncker.

Sounds like they made at least some progress in that regard. Look, the president has been clear with respect to trade policy. Europeans won't accept our agriculture products. Our other markets that are close to us he is endeavoring to get them opened. He is trying to drive towards 0-0-0. Right? Zero tariffs. Zero non-tariff barriers. Zero subsidies.

That's the place he's trying to get the whole world and he is confident that when we get there, Americans will out-compete the rest of the world and whether its manufacturers or innovators or farmers or all of the above, they'll ultimately be very successful and they'll be enormous wealth creation, not only in the states but elsewhere as well.

YOUNG:

Well, I'll just add that I find this effort of working cooperatively with the E.U. and other major economies is coherence and workable if we're trying to really address the greatest challenges which is those seen by the state capitalist countries. China being the worst offender. I don't have as much clarity with respect to our trade strategy.

Because I'd like to -- its one of the reasons that I keep emphasizing, I think we need to actually have a written one just as we do a national security strategy. But very appreciative of President Trump's announcement today. Lastly, Mr. Secretary, I'd like to call to your attention that my home state of Indiana is home to 23,000 Burmese-Americans.

And as I travel the state and listen to so many of my constituents that are Burmese-Americans, they -- they reiterate to me three things. Number one, they express grave concern regarding the Burmese military's atrocities against the Rohingya and they want to see those perpetrators brought to justice.

Number two, they reiterate a desire to expand people-to-people ties between Burma and the United States. And thirdly, they express concern regarding the treatment of Chin Christians in Burma. I note that you're hosting this week the ministerial to advance religious freedom focused on combating religious persecution, discrimination.

And as we appropriately address within that forum the Rohingya crisis, I'd just ask the department to continue to also make clear to the Burmese government that all religious minorities, including Christians, should be respected. So Mr. Secretary, will the Department of State work with my office to not only continue our joint efforts related to the Rohingya which I support but also to encourage the Burmese government to end any policies whatsoever that treat Christians as second-class citizens?

POMPEO:

Yes, Senator, I will.

YOUNG:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN:

Senator Murphy?

MURPHY:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary, for being here. I certainly associate myself with many of the comments by the Chairman. I think we got administration -- the president is making up foreign policy on a day by day basis. I think you've got a tiger by the tail.

You have a difficult and enviable job, and I appreciate you spending so much time with us here this morning. We focus on words from the president because our allies and our adversaries listen to those words and they calibrate their actions based upon those words. And while you're right that the president about 20 to 30 hours did correct himself after the Helsinki summit to say that he did, indeed, agree with U.S. intelligence services and not with Putin.

Five days later he went back on Twitter and said this, "So President Obama knew about Russia before the election. Why didn't he do something about it? Why didn't he tell our campaign? Because it is all a big hoax. That's why." That's the most recent statement from the president saying that Russia's interference in the election is all a big hoax.

So I guess my question is why shouldn't we accept this most recent statement from the president as U.S. policy rather than the statement that you referenced on July 17th?

POMPEO:

Well, Senator, I can't go through the litany of all the statements you just gave. I have a list from January 17, June 17, July 17, July -- again July in 17 -- November 17, March of 17. I'm happy to go through them, each of which the president confirmed that he understood that Russia had meddled in the election.

And then I could give you, although I couldn't recount them, I could tell you numbers of times when I was personally with him where he told me directly he understood that. And indeed, provided guidance to -- at this time, it was the intelligence community but I think he gave similar guidance throughout the government that we needed to do all we could to push back on election interference.

And I have a catalog of activities that this administration has undertaken to do just that.

MURPHY:

So then what do you make of his most recent statement?

POMPEO:

Then I'll -- I'll leave you. You can speculate, you can draw whatever inferences you want for whatever purposes you so should. Here's what I could tell you. I can tell our allies -

MURPHY:

There's no inference. I mean it's a statement from the president in which he says that the Russian interference in the U.S. election is a hoax from July 22nd. And that's -- there's no inference that I need to draw from that. That's the president's statement.

POMPEO:

Senator, you are -- you are -- you are certainly trying to draw inferences about the American policy, and I am laying out for you American policy. And I'm -- I'm happy -- let me talk to you about what we've done on election interference, if I might.

MURPHY:

I understand -- I understand that you draw a distinction between the president's comments and U.S. policy. What I'm trying to suggest to you and -- is that what the president says is U.S. policy because our allies and our adversaries make decisions based upon those comments.

And so let me try to drill down on a specific issue that Senator Corker raised. And that -- the comments the president made regarding our potential defense or non-defensive Montenegro.

Tucker Carlson asked him a question suggesting that Montenegro is too small to be defended and the president responded by saying I understand what you're saying, I've asked the same question.

Montenegro is a tiny country with very strong people. Now I know you are going to tell me today that the official policy of the United States is to defend Montenegro and to defend our NATO allies.

But can you understand why we would be concerned that the president would draw a question as to whether we would defend Montenegro, because in the end, that is a communication of Vladimir Putin about whether the president is going to come to NATO's defense.

As you know, an attack on NATO won't be a Russian army moving across the border, it'll be a hybrid attack, a disguised attack, there will be some question as to whether the United States should respond or not.

So can you at least understand why we are concerned about the president raising questions about the utility of the United States defending Montenegro?

POMPEO:

So I think the president's been unambiguously clear, and I can go read you his policies, and if I were --

(CROSSTALK)

MURPHY:

(Inaudible) going to refer to his policies or the separate statements, I'm asking you about this statement.

(CROSSTALK)

Explain it to us.

(CROSSTALK)

What did he mean?

POMPEO:

Senator, the policies are themselves statements as well. Indeed, they're the most important statements that the administration makes.

MURPHY:

Well policies are statements and statements are policies, it goes both ways.

POMPEO:

No, that's not true, that's -- that's absolutely not true. People make -- I make lots of statements, they're not -- they're not U.S. policy. The president says things, right, the -- the president makes comments in certain places.

We have -- we have National Security Council, we meet -- we -- we lay out strategies, we develop policies, right. The president --

(CROSSTALK)

-- the president then sets the course --

MURPHY:

How do I know the difference between a presidential statement that is not a policy and a statement that is?

POMPEO:

Senator, here's what you should look. Compare -- compare the following, Barack Obama speaking tough on Russia and doing nothing. Those were --

(CROSSTALK)

MURPHY:

That's not true.

POMPEO:

It is.

MURPHY:

I understand you want to rewrite the Obama policy on Russia, but that's simply not true. He organized all of Europe and all of the world --

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

-- let's go -- let's go, Senator. Let's go --

(CROSSTALK)

MURPHY:

-- to -- to -- to put a comprehensive, unprecedented set of sanctions on -- on Russia. So --

POMPEO:

The man said he would have more flexibility after --

(CROSSTALK)

MURPHY:

I'm not listening. My question isn't about -- isn't about -- I know you want to turn constantly back to --

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

-- no I just want to look at facts and policy, Senator. I'm trying to get to U.S. policy, it's what I do. I'm America's chief diplomat, implementing U.S. policy.

MURPHY:

I think you -- I think -- I think you -- I think you -- you have been dealt a tough hand and you do a -- a credible job with it. Let me -- let me turn -- I just -- let me ask a less adversarial to -- to -- to end with.

I think -- I think one of the -- you said (ph) two very important things on North Korea. You said that they have agreed to denuclearize and that they understand our definition of denuclearization.

POMPEO:

That's correct.

MURPHY:

What is most important is that those two statements link, is that they have agreed to denuclearize according to our definition of denuclearization. Is that your testimony today?

POMPEO:

The definition was set forward and denuclearization was agreed to. I don't know what else to --

(CROSSTALK)

MURPHY:

I'm not trying to give you a hard time, I'm just trying to understand.

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

And I'm trying to -- I'm trying to -- I'm trying to articulate what -- what's been agreed to. We -- we made clear what we viewed as the scope of denuclearization. It's not dissimilar with what the U.N. -- how the U.N. has characterized it and how the South Koreans have characterized it.

And when we did that, the South -- or excuse me, the North Koreans said yes, we agree to denuclearize.

MURPHY:

So your understanding is their commitment is upon our definition?

POMPEO:

Yes, it is, Senator, yes.

MURPHY:

OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CORKER:

(Inaudible) Isakson, the -- so -- so in essence, the communique that we saw coming out of the Singapore meeting that -- that is the sum total of the agreement we have with them?

POMPEO:

Yes. We've also had conversations after that. It is also the case that that agreement incorporated the Panmunjom Declaration, which in turn incorporated previous inter-

Korean agreements as well.

So the Singapore summit is stacked on a series of agreements, each of which is encompassed within the agreement between President Trump and Chairman Kim. So you can look to the -- the full breadth and scope of those agreements about things the North Koreans have committed to.

CORKER:

Yes, you know, look, I -- I don't think any of us would expect that there would be a meeting in Singapore and all the issues would be worked out. I think we all understand it's going to take a long -- a long time to get this all worked out.

Senator Isakson.

ISAKSON:

I spent all week trying to come up with intuitive, brilliant, incisive questions to ask you, recognizing how intelligent and articulate you are, and I ran out of everything except one thing.

I had it written down here, it'd be the first question I'd ask you, and then by golly, the president of the E.U. had an agreement while we're sitting in here listening to this that answered my question.

But I want to repeat it anyway. Are you seeing consequences of the trade proposals of the president's, particularly the 323 and the tariffs being applied having any impact diplomatically on the United States of America?

POMPEO:

Yes.

ISAKSON:

The -- I do too, and the reason I brought it up is this. Actions have consequences, and I hope the administration will look to the State Department for insight and advice on the effects of the tariffs on the diplomacy of the United States of America, vis a vis the rest of the world, because it has a significant impact because ag is the number one thing upon which we're going to get levied the punitive tariffs by the people we're trying to raise tariffs on now.

It's -- we feed the world, we -- we -- we are the food -- world's bread basket. This committee has passed the Feed the Future legislation a few years -- some time ago. But we're going to be in deep trouble if we don't have a policy that recognizes both our responsibility and the world's need and food's importance in peace and security.

So not to the likes of (ph) you, because I wouldn't do that in a million -- you know more than I -- you've forgotten more than I know. But I do know that the president's proposals and the tariffs are serious business and he needs to consider the consequences on the diplomacy in the (ph) United States and hunger in the world.

So I'll let you respond to that.

POMPEO:

Sir, I think -- I think the president appreciates that. I -- I think he understands that the -- the tariffs that have been imposed create -- have a diplomatic effect. They're part of -- of my broader effort to be sure.

Some of those create difficulties. Some of those things create real opportunities. We -- we've seen each from the sanctions that have been levied to date, and I know President Trump -- sounds like he made some progress today with the E.U.

I've watched Secretary Mnuchin, Bob Lighthizer and the team try to use the effect of those tariffs to achieve good outcomes so that farmers can have access to markets so that we get energy sold to countries that refuse to take our energy.

Each of those things are important parts of the president's agenda to try and create wealth for ordinary Americans.

ISAKSON:

And I commend the administration's commitment to zero, zero, zero being the goal as far as the trade policy is concerned. But getting to that goal is going to require good communication between all facets of our government, including yourself and the State Department...

POMPEO:

Yes, sir.

ISAKSON:

... on the impacts. And that was the point I was trying to make.

POMPEO:

Yes, sir.

ISAKSON:

I also am sorry Senator Paul left because I was going to begin my remarks by saying I agreed with him on something. And I don't always do that. So I'm -- you all are going to need to tell him that I just prefaced (ph) my remark. But he is right about not being afraid of meeting with Vladimir Putin, and the Russians and the -- meetings with these people, in my judgment, are not as bad as a lot of people have pressed them to be.

I've seen some people who've said we ought to back up from meeting with them. But I think the more open we can be in meeting with the leadership of countries we're having to deal with, one way or another, the more it forces them to be open.

So, it's really -- what -- what the president has done when he went to North Korea is all of a sudden Kim Jong-Un who was sitting on the other side of the table said, I'm sitting across the table from the president of the United States. The world media's here and they're looking to me for answers. And all of a sudden after it's all over and the pomp and

circumstance is all over, North Korea's got to be accountable or it's going to have pressure to be accountable.

So, I think the president's engaging these leaders makes an awful lot of sense in terms of bringing them out to surface (ph) in the dealings that we have with them. And I just wanted to throw that in there because I think it's an important thing.

Lastly on bipartisanship, Senator Coons is here, who by the way had a significant role in your getting confirmed, as you know. And you and I have talked about that, so I'm proud of my friend Chris Coons, and I'm proud of you and you're a great choice for Secretary of State.

But he and I have worked together on State Department issues, and trade issues and tariff issues on behalf of poultry in the United States of America, and particularly with the South Africans who we cracked down the door here two years ago. And now we're getting 19 million metric tons of chickens from Delaware and Georgia sold to the South Americans (sic), who love them and are eating them. And had pointed out to me, once again, to reinforce what I did in my first statement about ag.

We have such a powerful force with our agricultural productivity and -- and the -- just the level to which we've taken it in our technology in agriculture. We need to use that as a tool for our relationships around the world. And I know you want to do that and want to be a part of that. And you can help us in doing that because every time we make a trade deal that sells Georgia chickens to -- or Delaware Americans -- Africans is good for Georgia and Delaware; but, it's good for America too.

POMPEO:

Amen. I agree, senator.

ISAKSON:

Thank you for your service to the country.

POMPEO:

Thank you.

CORKER:

Thank you. I'm not sure if Senator Coons wanted you to advertise that again. I'm sure his (ph) social media account will be -- have a lot of incoming and explaining. But with that, Senator Coons, I'm thankful for the role you play.

COONS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I -- I was grateful for an opportunity to just show a little courtesy to a dear friend, Senator Isakson, in that previous incident you're referring. And I will, at the risk of not being as gracious as I should be, just share that when Senator Isakson and I met with the South African minister, that meeting was to hear their concerns about the impact of the steel tariffs on a very important alliance.

Chairman Corker and I recently were in Sweden and had a chance to hear from them about their concerns about the steel tariffs. I am encouraged by the announcement that's just come out an hour ago about the meeting with the E.U. leadership, but remain very concerned that some of our closest allies around the world are -- are getting the wrong message.

In a dinner last night with the Canadian ambassador, a large bipartisan group of us were there to try and reassure them. I do think that we should be corralling our allies and partners in confronting China's aggressive, prolonged and inappropriate trade actions, and avoiding some of the needless harm we've caused to close alliances.

The point of the South African meeting was that they are preparing countervailing tariffs that might well shut down our access to their market. But I'm not really here to talk about chickens, as much as I do love talking about chickens with my friend Senator Isakson.

Mr. Secretary, I just want to say first, thank you for this very long hearing. I want to confirm a number of Senators have asked you pointed questions about progress with North Korea, with Russia, issues around Syria and Iran and you said not in this setting. Will you return

soon to brief us in a classified setting because there's a number of important and pressing things we really haven't been able to address today. Will you come back and give us that classified briefing?

POMPEO:

Of -- of course.

COONS:

Thank you.

POMPEO:

Of course.

COONS:

An a number of Senators on both sides have recognized that you've got an important role in a very difficult time. I want to up front just say I was pleased to hear about the Crimea Declaration. I think it's important for the administration to be forceful and clear about our position with regards to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.

I remember my whole childhood there was a little box in every American map that said we refuse to recognize the illegal annexation of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union in 1940. And for decades folks thought that was just aspirational and would never happen. Today the Baltic States are free, they are NATO allies and the Chairman and I recently visited Latvia as well and heard from them about their determination to remain free and to take strong steps against Russia's interference.

Finland and Latvia, the Baltic States and other allies of ours in that region are prepared to invest more in their own defense and to strengthen their defenses against Russian interference in their upcoming elections. There are elections in Latvia, Moldova, and Sweden that are happening soon. What best practices are you seeing among our European allies? What tools do you think the State Department can and should be using and how

should we be doing as you put it everything we can to push back on likely election interference by Russia to our vital allies as well to our upcoming midterm elections?

POMPEO:

Yes, it's a -- it's a good question. We, the United States government, my previous organization in the intelligence world did a great deal of work with our European partners. We did it with the German election, French election, try to help identify threats and vectors, good solid intelligence sharing. I think that's an underpinning so these governments can understand the threat. Sometimes America is better positioned to see them and observe them than some of these other countries that are smaller with fewer resources.

And then I think it's also important and we've begun to do this, the country has begun to share the actions that they observe, that is not only the precursors the indications, but what actually took place to download so we can begin to understand how to push back. I think it was Senator Paul that said earlier there's lots of variations on the theme. Right? There are overt efforts there are, call them ...

COONS:

Covert efforts.

POMPEO:

Covert efforts, there are influence operations, there are lots of methods by which adversaries, not just Russia, can attempt to undermine elections and democracies with obligation to the Europeans and it benefits America as well if we try and help them and show that their democracies are protected as well.

POMPEO:

And I do think we would benefit from hearing more and more regularly and more clearly what we are doing with our close allies to convey that we get what is happening to them and that we are concerned about what's happening to us. Frankly, I want diplomacy to succeed. I

prefer an environment of diplomacy to one of a perception of eminent conflict with either North Korea or Russia and you've been very forceful, even aggressive today in advancing the administration's position.

As the Chairman said earlier, a lot of the tension here comes from the gaps between your forcefulness and clarity and what I perceive and many perceive to be the President's lack of forcefulness and clarity.

In your written statement you say that President Trump has stated quote, "I accept our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia's meddling in 2016 election took place." Then you go on to say, he has a complete and proper understanding of what happened.

My concern, if I could, just directly, is that our president has never made a clear and comprehensive speech outlining the threat posed by Russia, our strategy to respond to it and criticizing directly President Putin for directing the attack on our election in 2016.

Just a few days ago, now I guess more than a week ago, Robert Mueller delivered indictments against 12 Russian military intelligence officers, GRU officers. Calls them out by name, gives enormous detail of how Russia attacked our 2016 election.

And one of the ways in which our president then undermines the clarity and credibility of that action by our Department of Justice is by calling the Mueller investigation a rigged witch hunt or by standing next to President Putin in Helsinki, and suggesting he's uncertain whether our intelligence account of what happened in 2016 is the more credible or the Russian one.

Could you please clarify for me if there are clear indicators that Russia continues to interfere in our election planning up to this November? Would you advise the president to rescind an invitation to Vladimir Putin to come and meet in the White House? Do you think it is unwise to extend the credibility and the prestige of a White House meeting without being clear about Putin's threat to our upcoming elections?

Senator Paul said -- and I agree with him -- we should meet with their adversaries. But as President Reagan did, we need to be clear eyed about who they are and call them out for

being adversaries before sitting down with them. Can you commit to being clear with the president and helping us understand whether or not the president clearly understands the attack on our election?

POMPEO:

So I've tried to do that earlier today, Senator Coons. I think the president is -- is very clear about that. It is -- I -- I -- I find it surprising that statements that are made -- especially a statement like a statement for the record -- I mean, you -- you should all know the White House cleared that secret. Right? These are White House -- I -- I uttered the words these are -- these are -- these are President Trump's statements in that sense as well, right?

These are statements from the United States government, of which President Trump is very clearly in charge. And somehow there's this effort to suggest that -- that -- that they're not that. The statements that I've made today are fully consistent with you. Unless I misspoke somewhere along the way, which is possible after a couple hours.

These are -- these are indeed the administration -- President Trump's policies that we're implementing.

COONS:

My core point, Mr. Secretary, was that while your statements have been clear, our president's statements have confused our allies, encouraged our adversaries and have failed to be comparably clear. And I'm concerned that an invitation to President Putin to the White House without clarity about his threats to our election, his threats to our allies puts at risk clarity.

I welcome the Crimea declaration today. I think that is an important step forward. But I urge you if President Putin attacks our next election, advise President Trump to withdraw any invitation to President Putin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CORKER:

Senator Portman.

PORTMAN:

Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming back to testify again. You've had a -- a -- a long afternoon. I think you ought to do it more often. I mean, while you've been here, we managed to negotiate a successful preliminary agreement with the European Union, you managed to issue a declaration supporting (inaudible) with regard to Crimea (ph) and there was a third thing happened and I don't know if it's (ph) good or bad.

But my understanding is the White House has decided to postpone the visit of President Putin until after the first of the year.

POMPEO:

When I left my business, it began to succeed as well. So I'll -- I'll come down here.

PORTMAN:

I think they wait until you're gone before they make all these decisions. I want to comment briefly on what you responded to with Senator Coons on what tools did we (ph) use with regard to pushing back on some of the interference ion other countries elections. I'd hoped that you would say the global engagement center. Because it's a tool you have.

And frankly, although Senator Murphy and I wrote legislation to give you the authority to do it, you have more aggressively used that tool, both by providing funding for it and now hiring the right people, than your predecessors. And it's precisely this sort of situation -- I will give you the recent example. I think is very important. Which is what's going on with Macedonia.

You know. As they go for their referendum to be part of Europe, these European integration efforts tend to be replaced (ph) where the Russians see an opportunity. And engage in significant disinformation. Great opportunity for us to push back in the appropriate way.

Through the global engagement center. And would you confirm to me that you thought about that or you will think about that in the future?

POMPEO:

Yes, of course. May I add one thing that I think you'll find interesting. When I was with my Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov -- he's very aware of the global engagement center.

PORTMAN:

Should be --

POMPEO:

He -- he raised the issue with me --

PORTMAN:

Yes.

POMPEO:

-- when I met with him. I think it was when I met with him in person. It may have been in a conversation by phone, but in my -- my last interaction with him, he raised the issue --

PORTMAN:

As compared to the resources the Russians put into their efforts, it is minuscule, as you know, but it is significant. And I think it'll be done professionally thanks to some of the work you've done. And I -- I -- I applaud you for that. We discussed at your confirmation hearing in April a need for us to focus more on Central Eastern Europe, specifically Ukraine.

I just come back from a trip to Ukraine and I'd been out in the (ph) contact line in April where there's a hot conflict going on. I mean, where there are people dying. And it is -- when you go there, pretty moving because you see how the Ukrainians have had to defend themselves and their (inaudible) for the last four years against Russian aggression.

And I believe, as I think you do, that a successful pro-Western Ukraine is not only critical to the region but I think it's the best antidote to Russian expansion in the region. Along those lines, I want to commend you for last week releasing the \$200 million in military assistance. This goes for equipment training, other assistance. And I think we have not taken enough credit for what happened.

Which is we told the Ukrainians you need to make reforms. And when I was there in April, I talked to President Poroshenko, I also talked to Speaker Parubiy then (ph) and -- and again last month about this. In fact, I talked to him the day after they passed these reforms, saying, you know, we need to see these reforms your defense system and (ph) frankly getting away from the Russian influence system they had and to one that's more consistent with European democracies, having a civilian control of their military among other things.

They did that. You then were able to release the \$200 million. That's exactly how it should work, right? So I -- I commend you for that and I think it's going to make a huge difference. The lethal weapons they now have to defend themselves makes a huge difference. And so the action sometimes do speak louder than the words.

And in those cases, I think it's very important. On the resolution which you issued today with regard to Crimea, I was really happy to read it. I know that many in our community in Ohio who follow this closely are pleased with it. They believe this puts the United States clearly in the position where we will not relieve sanctions until this issue is resolved.

And I would ask you today can you confirm that the Russians have a clear understanding that sanctions related to Crimea will -- will not be able to be reduced or certainly eliminated so long as Crimea remains an issue?

POMPEO:

I -- I think they did before this statement and I'm confident after the statement that the president released, they'll -- that will reaffirm their understanding,.

PORTMAN:

Do you believe the Russians have clear understanding that (ph) sections related to their actions in Eastern Ukraine along the border cannot be altered without real implementation of the Minsk agreement and the end to that aggression? (Inaudible).

POMPEO:

I do (ph).

PORTMAN:

There's a lot of talk about new sanctions, as you know, with regard to Russia. And I do support us having a better bilateral relationship with Russia. I think it's important. We're two major nuclear powers. We've got a lot of weapons pointed at us. I also support discussions that are prepared. I think it is very important that our statements, both in private and public, are clearly consistent and I think that needs to happen from the president all the way down to our diplomats yourself. And again, I think you have done that. I think that was the issue with -- with Helsinki.

In addition to is going on in the eastern border of Ukraine and Crimea, I think there's a clear consensus in the national security community, not just the I.C., but the national security committee, but more broadly -- about the severity of the short and midterm threat the Russian poses. Its espionage, its cyber, its information capabilities, meddling in the 2016 elections and now in the 2018 elections, our intelligence communities seem to have a consensus around that including you in your previous role.

And we have sanctions in place, but they do not seem to be working.

POMPEO:

Yeah.

PORTMAN:

I mean that long list that I just gave, they don't seem to be working, so let me ask you a question and -- this is not an easy one to answer but one, why aren't they working? Second,

do you support new sanctions specifically related to the new information we have about 2016 and about 2018 interference in our democratic process? And if so, what kind of sanctions would be more effective?

POMPEO:

So your point is well-taken. There continues -- in spite of the work that has been done, by this administration, there continues to be Russian-maligned activity. We have to use sanctions as a tool, you talked about the global engagement center. I think there are many tools that we can use. In my role as a diplomat, we have a handful and we are working to do what I think it was Senator Rubio at the beginning, (inaudible) described (ph) has raised the cost sufficiently and convince Vladimir Putin that it's not in his best interest to continue this behavior.

That's going to be difficult. I know -- I know precisely who Vladimir Putin is. I know his history, but that's the task. The task (sic) -- the task is for us, the U.S. government that includes you and the executive branch to raise the cost on Russia sufficiently, that they -- they cease this maligned activity that adversely impacts the United States.

MERKLEY:

Do you believe new sanctions are appropriate to raise the cost --

POMPEO:

I do.

MERKLEY:

-- with (ph) all this new information we've received?

POMPEO:

I do, Senator. If we can find the right places and the right leverage point. The things that will actually make a difference to Russia. I think it would be constructive to head down that

path.

MERKLEY:

And can you tell us what you think might be more effective than the previous sanctions that have not been effective in accomplishing those means?

POMPEO:

It's -- I do not know that I have a great answer --

MERKLEY:

Do you think it's focusing more on individuals, on oligarchs? Do you think it's focusing more on some of the economic chokepoints what's the -- ?

POMPEO:

It is -- it would be my judgment that each of those is necessary. That the things that impact the Russia economy are the things that I hear the Russians most concerned.

MERKLEY:

Secretary, thank you. I'm glad you're there and we appreciate your testimony today.

CORKER:

Thank you. Senator Booker?

BOOKER:

Thank you very much. I guess I'm batting cleanup and I appreciate the endurance of our secretary, I know he has hard days, long days and I'm grateful for this opportunity to question him. I really want to pick up one some of the line of questioning that Senator Portman asked.

It is important what presidents say. And you and I come from that school I imagine. Where you have Ronald Reagan's clear, unwavering commitment to standing strong against then the Soviet Union, you saw in the next George Bush, you've seen it in presidents.

So here's a clear statement of -- of fact that the president tweeted out. I am concerned that Russia will be fighting very hard to have an impact on the upcoming election, which is consistent with intelligence communities that their continued attack. Of course, he said based on the fact that no president has been tougher on Russia than me. They will be pushing very hard for the Democrats. They definitely don't want Trump. They don't want Trump.

Now that obviously, was surprising to see given that we just heard from Vladimir Putin that he prefers Trump, but I'm concerned that the president doesn't understand this ongoing threat is going -- is happening. When he came out of his secret meeting with Putin that was shrouded in secrecy, he said our relationship has never been worse until it is now, because that's changed as of about four hours ago. Has anything changed in the Russian's attacks or ongoing threats to our 2008 elections?

POMPEO:

Senator, what I believe the president was referring to there, and obviously he speaks for himself in that sense, but what I -- what I understood him to say was that he had had for the first time and in his administration, he had had a chance to have an extensive candid conversation with the leader of Russia, lay out and articulate America's interest to him so that he understood unambiguously what those interests were, and to in turn hear from Vladimir Putin about the things that he thought mattered most to Russia. So when I -- when I heard him say things have changed, I think that's what he was referring to. It was the first time...

BOOKER:

Well if they had met before...

(CROSSTALK)

BOOKER:

Mr. Secretary, I've got limited time. So I agree with Senator Rubio, there's got to be a cost to people when they attack the United States. Not just attacking the United States, they've assassinated people on British soil, they're threatening our allies, they're intervening in Western democracies, annexing Crimea, ongoing hostilities in the Donbass region of Ukraine.

And we passed legislation here, the consulates (inaudible) which you have an exchange with my colleague, Senator Cardin about, and I think you said, this is the transcript that you said. You said, thank you for presenting the law, we really appreciate it. We think it makes good sense, the president signed it as well. We've passed sanctions under the law and we have passed -- but we haven't used all the sanctions.

Now, I was excited to see Nikki Haley come out and say that we were about to put on new sanctions. In fact the RNC got talking points from the White House telling their pundits to say exactly what Nikki Haley said before the United Nations that we were going to put on additional sanctions.

But we haven't used those tools in our toolbox. They said that Nikki Haley was confused. She said, I'm sorry, I wasn't confused, this was a step in the White House was going to take. and -- and so I hope you understand that there's many of us in a bipartisan manner that feels like we put tools in the toolbox, but the president has shrunk from taking them and using those tools to stand strong against people that are ongoing attacks on United States of America.

Nikki Haley said absolutely, you will see that Russian sanctions will be coming down. Secretary Mooch which will be announcing those. It has already said that they're going go directly to any sort of companies that are dealing with equipment related -- to -- to -- in this case Assad and chemical weapons use.

So I'm having trouble -- and again I think I'm one of those people who agrees with some of my Republican colleagues that the president should be allowed to meet with folks one-on-one. but this is -- as far as my staff can find, the only meeting with anybody in the G20 that's been a one-on-one meeting without staff that hasn't been -- the details which haven't been disclosed.

And it's particularly troubling given as Senator Udall said, we have a long history of this administration having ties to the Russians. He read a list, further it's the Russian oligarch close to Putin who bought property for Trump at a significant profit. Whether it was Trump tweeting about his deals, whether it was Trump Jr. talking about Russians make up a disproportionate cross-section of our assets, whether its Maria Butina whose stating -- asking a question with Trump responding, I don't think we need more sanctions, I don't think we need sanctions.

But this goes on. As Senator Coons just said, we have a president that right now sees that we have an ongoing investigation into the very attacks that the Russians did to us that resulted in over 80 charges, over 30 people being charged, people in the administration, people the campaign, and this is a president that is having private meetings with the Russians.

Now, this is actually not the first private meeting that he had. I'm sure you remember that this president pulled aside at a G20 meeting had a one-on-one discussion unbeknownst to his staff, and had a conversation that he then said when asked what they discussed, and I quote, he said, "we discussed adoptions." Now adoptions is a code word as we see for sanctions. It's the same codeword that was used to describe pre-election meetings between Kushner, Manafort, Don Junior, these ideas of adoptions.

Now you haven't asked -- I've listened very closely, I'm the last person to ask questions, but you refuse even say if relaxing sanctions directly, if relaxing sanctions was part of the meeting that the president had. And so I find it hard to believe that -- that we are a nation that is being under ongoing attack and you can't come forward and say I -- this is a president that you say you represent, that we're standing strong against the person, but we're not.

The very president who actually invited some of this here when he said, and I quote, Russia, if you're listening if you're able to find the 30,000 e-mails that are missing -- he invited the very attacks that we're talking about. And so what I want and what I think my colleagues want on both sides of the aisle is to understand and believe that we're not having private discussions about relaxing sanctions, that we're showing the same kind of strength that past presidents have shown enemies attack the United States of America.

And -- and -- and you just committed to Senator Portman that you believe more sanctions are needed. And so are we to expect in the coming days that we will be applying the sanctions that the Senate has provided this president in a bipartisan way to hold Russia accountable and show them that there will be a cost for their attacks upon this nation?

POMPEO:

Senator, I think this administration's record, over 200 sanctions, 200 sanctions senator, is reflective of this administration 's steadfastness with respect our willingness to push back against Russia. I think it's unquestioned. You just spoke for, coming on seven minutes about a whole litany of things political. Let me you America's foreign-policy.

BOOKER:

Well sir, clearly...

POMPEO:

Two hundred-plus sanctions...

BOOKER:

Clearly there has been divisions in the administration if Nikki Haley is talking about sanctions on one day and then you're not putting them along (ph) on the next day.

POMPEO:

Senator, there is vigorous debate in this administration on lots of things, there's no doubt about that. The president didn't hire a single shrinking violet (ph), not one of us, and we often disagree about things, there's no doubt about that. And sometimes we prevail and sometimes we don't. The president calls the ball, and the president called the ball over 200 times to sanction Russian entities. That's pretty strong.

BOOKER:

The president is not using the tools of the United States Senate (ph).

POMPEO:

He's used -- he's used -- we've used CATSA (ph), we've complied with CATSA (ph), we will continue to comply with CATSA (ph). I put this administration's work on sanctions against Russia, let's just rack and stack.

(CROSSTALK)

BOOKER:

Mr. Chairman, I want to with entering into the record, the president of the United States' statement on CATSA (ph), and I will read them and put the whole statement in the record. This is what he said on the day CATSA (ph) was introduced. Since the bill was first introduced, I have expressed concerns to Congress about the many ways it improperly encroaches executive power, disadvantages our company. Its hurts the interest of this nation. Still the bill is seriously flawed, particularly because it encroaches on executive branch's authority. Congress should not even negotiate a healthcare bill after 7 years. By eliminating the executive abilities (ph) authority, this bill makes it harder for the United States to strike good deals.

POMPEO:

I actually agree with each of your statements (ph)...

(CROSSTALK)

BOOKER:

And -- and -- hold on (ph), the framing for the Constitution with the foreign affair -- so, well, you didn't agree -- you didn't agree with it when you were talking to him. I could read your words back about how great this CAATSA deal is.

I put this in the record and I finish my -- my comments just simply by saying this is not A president that's using the tools, this is not a president strong against Russia, this is not a president that is standing up against people that are doing ongoing attacks on the United States of America that are continuing at this moment. Thank you Mr. -- Mr. Chairman.

CORKER:

Thank you. Senator Menendez?

MENENDEZ:

Oh Mr. Chairman, let me thank the secretary for being here, but I must say that after nearly three hours, here's my takeaways. This administration is increasingly not transparent. It's not transparent as to what takes place at the summits, it's not transparent in terms of their -- I hear that there's an effort not to have readouts when the president has conversations with foreign leaders, which has historically been the case.

There's an increasingly (ph) less number of briefings. We haven't still had a briefing on North Korea in a classified setting, nearly two months afterwards. So what I took away is that as it relates to North Korea, we have no agreements on anything. The best I can gleam (ph) is that they understand what we mean by denuclearization but they have not agreed to that definition.

I really don't believe, Mr. Secretary, you know what happened during the president's two-plus hour conversation with President Putin, and I really don't know much more about the summit after sitting here for three hours than I did before.

I -- I wanted to say to you, I want you to think about the suggestion that what the president says is not the policy of the United States -- when the president speaks, that is (inaudible)...

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

Could I -- could I -- could I clean that up, Senator? You're right, I misspoke there (ph).

MENENDEZ:

If -- if you want to clean it up, because when he speaks...

POMPEO:

I'd love to, thank you.

MENENDEZ:

...that is the policy of the United States.

POMPEO:

I'd love to. I'd love to, Senator. I'd love the chance to do that.

MENENDEZ:

Yes, go ahead. Yes.

POMPEO:

I misspoke. It is -- it is the case...

MENENDEZ:

OK.

POMPEO:

...the president calls the ball. His statements are in fact policy, but it's the case that when all of speak in informal settings in response to questions, we're not being -- we're not covering the full gamut of things that -- that impact the world. That's -- that's what I intended to say.

I saw the glee on your side walking away, trying to make a political point from that. That's silliness. This president runs this government. His statements are in fact U.S. policy...

MENENDEZ:

All right, fine, good, so now we understand that when the president speaks, it is the policy of the United States, so therefore...

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

But the United States policy is 200-plus sanctions (ph) -- you've seen them, Senator.

MENENDEZ:

...when he -- when (inaudible). I'm asking you a question, Mr. Secretary (ph)...

POMPEO:

Now Senator -- Senator -- I understand (ph)...

MENENDEZ:

...(inaudible) summarizing here (ph).

(CROSSTALK)

POMPEO:

I've now been here three hours and you're making up -- you've got a political soliloquy, and (inaudible)...

MENENDEZ:

No, you know what, I've listened to your political soliloquy as a Secretary of State sitting at that table, demeaning some members here because you said that Senator Shaheen believes more the Russian Defense Ministry? She was quoting them only because we don't know what our own government is saying! So please, don't talk to me about politics.

You want to talk about politics? If President Obama did what President Trump did in Helsinki, I'd be peeling you off the capitol ceiling. Please.

So here's the point: when the president speaks, it is the policy of the United States. And so when he says in one respect, I applaud this declaration about Crimea, but then he goes and says that Russia should join the G7, well the reason Russia's not in the G7 is because they invaded Ukraine.

So which is the policy? Because when the president speaks, it is the policy. And I must say, sir, when you speak around the world, people believe that what you say is a reflection of the policy of the United States.

So I want to close by saying I -- one thing I heard here today that I can agree with you is that we need more sanctions, and I look forward to working with the chairman, and Senator Graham and others who are interested in this regard. Hopefully we can come together in common cause to push back on Russia on sanctions that we can pursue.

And secondly, I want to reiterate, I believe that it is rightful for the members of this committee, even if its in a classified setting, to speak to the translator and to -- and or to see her notes because that's the only way we will know what truly conspired.

CORKER:

Would you like to give any response?

POMPEO:

Not a word.

CORKER:

You had earlier tried to lay out the things the administration was doing relative to the election and were cut off. Would you like to do that in a public setting?

POMPEO:

I'm just fine, Senator. I think I've had the opportunity to respond adequately. I appreciate you having been so gracious to have permitted me to do that.

CORKER:

And we had some exchange relative to a classified briefing. Let me just say this, I know you're busy.

POMPEO:

Happy to try and find the time that works for everyone to do that.

CORKER:

To (inaudible).

POMPEO:

As I think I committed to another Senator.

CORKER:

We'll keep the record open until the close of business tomorrow for written questions. I know you've got a lot to do to the extent your staff could help answer those questions as briefly as they could. That would be most helpful. I appreciate you -

POMPEO:

Will do it.

CORKER:

-- coming before us today. And with that, meeting's adjourned.

List of Panel Members and Witnesses

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SECRETARY OF STATE MIKE POMPEO TESTIFIES

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