

TRANSCRIPT

Defense Writers Group

A Project of the Center for Media & Security
New York and Washington, D.C.

Under Secretary Rose Gottemoeller Arms Control and International Security

May 9, 2014

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT AND MAY CONTAIN ERRORS. USERS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT THEIR OWN TAPES OR NOTES OF THE SESSION IF ABSOLUTE VERIFICATION OF WORDING IS NEEDED.

DWG: Good morning everybody, thank you for coming in. And thank you as well to our guest. She is the Honorable Rose Gottemoeller, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. We appreciate you making the time this morning to come and speak with us. As usual, we have 60 minutes, we are on the record, and we have much to talk about so I'll just jump right into it.

You want to begin with some comments and observations about the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, so why don't we lead off with that.

Ms. Gottemoeller: Great. Thank you everybody for coming this morning. It's great to see many old friends and colleagues and to meet some new ones.

I will just hold this up, this is going to strike fear into the hearts of my staff since I essentially rewrote my opening remarks, but anyway, I wanted to underscore a few points from the NPT Prep Com which is concluding today in New York.

Just to remind those of you who aren't really aware of the cycles that goes on with the Non-Proliferation Treaty, there are five year cycles. The first year after the review conference is an off year, then there are three preparatory committee meetings. So this is the third preparatory committee meeting in this cycle with the review conference taking place next year in 2015. So it's the culmination of efforts to prepare over the last couple of years for the review conference.

I wanted to just as an opener commend the Chairman, Ambassador Enrique Roman-Morey. He's done a good job in guiding this prep com in a very positive spirit. I was up in New York last week. I can say that I thought the environment was overall very

productive, very positive, and it hasn't always been that way. Sometimes it's been quite rancorous. So that was good news as far as I was concerned.

The highlights from our perspective is first and foremost that the United States was able at the prep com to underscore our commitment to nuclear disarmament, our strong intention to work hard to make it happen, to -- as I put it to the prep com last week -- to work hard to implement the President's Prague Initiative to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.

So I went about talking about that commitment in several ways. One of the I would say sharpest visual images we were able to put out there, and Alex will hand this around, is a fact sheet on the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile where we declassified a number, it's already been out in the press, that we are down to 4,804 warheads now from a Cold War high of 31,255. All this information is in the fact sheet.

But as you look at it I just wanted to point out something that we've been talking about quite a bit is the number here in 1957 was just below 5,000 and then went steadily up until 1967. That 1967 high was over 31,000 warheads. Then after the end of the Cold War it dropped off precipitously so that now these numbers are as of September 2013. We're back to where we were in 1957.

I like to use this graphic a lot, because there's a lot of arm waving that goes on oftentimes in New York during the prep com, among certain parts of the community saying oh, nothing's been done, nothing's been accomplished, and I think this is a great graphic to show how in fact we have come down.

Is it enough? No. And the President said we want to get to zero. It's going to take time, it's going to take hard work, but we're ready to work, and that was my core message at the prep com last week.

The second I would say highlight was the way that the P5, the nuclear weapon states under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, are starting to work together much more efficiently and effectively than we have historically. We've had a process that has strengthened and developed since 2009 and we are meeting regularly under that process. Not only at big annual conferences. I was in Beijing last month for the conference that the Chinese chaired. But also in intercessional work. That was expressed in this prep com by agreement on a joint format to report to the prep com.

It's interesting, you say what does that mean? Why is this such a big deal? People have always said we need more transparency from the P5, all the P5 -- Russia, U.S., China, UK, France. All the P5. We need more transparency about what's going on in your nuclear forces. So the big breakthrough here is that the P5 have all agreed that we need to be reporting to the Non-Proliferation Treaty process. So we put out a report and all five put out a report to the prep com.

Afterwards I've asked Alex to get you the link to the U.S. report so you can see what we're talking about, but we go into great detail about how we are fulfilling our disarmament commitments.

The U.S. does report anyway. We're used to being transparent. With the Soviets we've been transparent for decades. But in the case of some of the other members of the P5 and the Chinese particularly, this was a big step forward. So the strengthening of P5 team work on our commitments to the NPT -- disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful nuclear uses -- I think that's another important headline.

The third is, I wanted to talk about the conclusion of the HEU purchase agreement which was briefed to the NPT prep com on Monday of this week. This purchase agreement between the United States and Russian Federation actually concluded at the end of the year with the last shipment of down blended highly enriched uranium to the United States in the form of low enriched uranium. Again, if you're interested we can get you a lot of information about this, but this program has resulted in the elimination of the equivalent of 20,000 Soviet Russian warheads. The highly enriched uranium was taken out of the warheads, down blended to low enriched uranium, and shipped to the United States to be fabricated into power plant fuel.

So today ten percent of the electricity generated in this country comes from former Soviet Russian warheads. One in ten light bulbs in the United States is today lit by former Soviet nuclear warheads. So it's quite a great accomplishment, again, and reporting it to the prep com was one of those experiences where people said really? You mean you're really done all of this to get rid of Soviet warheads? It's the kind of thing where you need to bring the story out because essentially, again, we get a lot of complaints that the P5 is doing nothing on disarmament, so we've really underscored that.

The fourth highlight was the signing of the protocol to the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. And this is a treaty that was signed by the Central Asian states -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan -- that they will be nuclear weapons free. And the protocol that the P5 signed on Tuesday this week in New York was signaling our ongoing support for this P5 committed to providing legally binding negative security assurances to the Central Asian states under this [CANTIS] Treaty, so called [CANTIS] Treaty.

So as a next step we're turning to the ASEAN states. We would really like to, before too long, sign the protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, so I hope to be able to work on that over the next year.

The last point I'll make about the prep com before throwing the floor open to your questions, there's obviously a less positive note here, and that is Russia's occupation of Crimea and its ongoing efforts to undermine the territorial integrity of Ukraine and its legitimate government are inconsistent with a number of its international obligations. In fact egregiously inconsistent. And one of those is the so-called Budapest Memorandum. I worked on the Budapest Memorandum in 1994. I was part of the

negotiating team, so I'm very familiar with the terms of that commitment and the Russians, among other major international commitments, have behaved in an inconsistent manner, I'll put it that way.

One comment I'll make though is that at the prep com the issue was present but not disruptive. We condemned Russia's actions and commended Ukraine for its reaffirmation of its commitment to fulfilling its non-proliferation commitments under the NPT and I will underscore that Ukraine has been a strong partner on the non-proliferation regime since entering into the NPT in 1994 as a non-nuclear weapon state. It's been a true leader in the non-proliferation regime and will continue I think to be so.

We will continue, of course, to work with them across a wide range of issues but in this area I am sure that they will continue to be a very good partner.

With that I will throw the floor open to your questions and comments, and thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today. Thank you.

DWG: Thank you. On the subject of the Budapest Memorandum, I wonder now what more can nuclear states do to persuade others to join the NPT, given what's transpired.

Ms. Gottemoeller: One of the great things about the Non-Proliferation Treaty is that it is nearly a universal treaty. So we are doing a lot of work with those states who have not joined the treaty, for example the South Asian states. We continue to work with them to really underscore that it is important for them to step up to their responsibilities to the non-proliferation regime, even if they're not ready to sign the NPT per se, that it is in the interest of the international community and it's in their interest overall to ensure that proliferation of nuclear weapons is cut to zero ultimately, but minimized in any event. So we work with them in a wide range of areas.

For example, on the export control regimes, getting their national export control lists up to a very high international standard; their national procedures and regulations, getting them into line with the key international export control regimes such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group or the Australia group where chemical weapons are concerned. So we're doing a lot of work. I think there's been, again, a lot of quiet progress in terms of the way that the South Asian states, Pakistan and India, are working with the international non-proliferation regime even though they're not ready to sign the NPT.

So we continue to push towards universalization of the NPT, but the way we work it practically on a day in, day out basis is to get countries to step up to their responsibilities to minimize and in the end erase any possibility of nuclear proliferation.

DWG: What more can nuclear armed states do in terms of security? The Budapest Memorandum is a perfect example of how things can go wrong. What more can the United States, Russia, others who have nuclear weapons do?

Ms. Gottemoeller: Let me say one thing about the Budapest Memorandum. The Budapest Memorandum essentially is a document that is not at fault here. At fault is the

Russian Federation blowing past its responsibilities to the international rule of law. And as I said, stepping away from its responsibilities in a number of realms to key principles of international law such as territorial integrity and sovereignty.

So I like to underscore, and indeed, nuclear deterrence is not at play in this current crisis. It's not nuclear weapons that have anything to do with what is happening in the crisis in Ukraine. Deterrence is stable at the moment. The crisis is taking place at a different level. So I think it's important to remember what's relevant here, and what's relevant here is the necessity of strong adherence to the international rule of law.

DWG: There were reports yesterday that President Putin participated in a fairly substantial command and control exercise that also involved Russian nuclear forces, and that is part of this exercise, Go Bold, a land-based missile was launched, an SLBM was launched, cruise missiles from a bomber were launched, and according to one report I saw, the interceptor from the Moscow ABM system was tested.

What can you tell us about the exercise? What was the scenario for the exercise? Was it a launch and warning scenario as some reports suggest? Was NATO the presumed target? Did Ukraine figure in it? How unusual an exercise was this? And were all the elements of it notified under the various arms control procedures that have been established?

Ms. Gottemoeller: First of all I will say that it was notified and the Russians have a requirement to notify missile launches 24 hours in advance. It was properly notified. Even if I wanted to, I couldn't comment on secret details in relationship to what the scenario was, so that's important to underscore, that I cannot comment on intelligence matters in any regard.

But I will say that it is Victory Day in the Russian Federation today. May 9th is Victory Day. We often see demonstrative activities around this time, whether or not exercise activities, but from Soviet times people are aware of the so-called Victory Day Parades where ICBMs are trundled through Red Square and so forth. Frankly, I don't know, I haven't seen -- Have you seen whether they took ICBMs through Red Square today? I know there was --

DWG: I haven't had a chance to look --

Ms. Gottemoeller: So I don't know what they did today. I know when I was living in Moscow they even had to reinforce, many of you have been to Moscow, the metro stop that's under Red Square, they had to reinforce it with big pillars because they were bringing the ICBMs there on Victory Day and running them through Red Square.

In any event, all I'm trying to say is that this kind of demonstrative activity is not unusual around this time.

DWG: Without getting into the elements of the exercise, was the size and complexity of it, was it larger or more unusual than let's say what had happened last year? Or is it the same thing as last Victory Day and the time before that?

Ms. Gottemoeller: They have done different things on different Victory Days. As far as I was concerned, I didn't find it unusual.

DWG: A quick point of clarification on your answer to the other question, you said nuclear deterrence is not at play in Ukraine, but had they had nuclear weapons wouldn't it be a much higher likelihood that they would still have Crimea?

Ms. Gottemoeller: It would be a much worse crisis, in my view, if they had nuclear weapons.

DWG: Because things could have escalated?

Ms. Gottemoeller: It's difficult to speculate, but yes. I think it would have been a much worse crisis.

DWG: Some think tanks in town have been talking about whether the INF Treaty is still a good deal for the United States, particularly as we look to deterrence in Asia. Obviously China's not a party to that, has a range of weaponry that is to their advantage in dominating the region. What is your view of the relevance of that treaty going forward, and how should we seek to adjust it or defend it?

Ms. Gottemoeller: Again, for those of you who aren't aware, I think most of this crowd is well aware, but the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty bans intermediate range nuclear missiles between the ranges of 500 and 5,500 kilometers. It has been in place since the late 1980s and served at the time to really address a situation in Europe where we had Pershing II and GLCM ranged against SS-20 and other Russian systems, that resulted in a very short warning type of potential scenario emerging out of a crisis in Europe. So it was stabilizing. The treaty was stabilizing when it was agreed in the late 1980s and it's stabilizing now. We continue to believe that the INF Treaty is in the interest of the United States of America.

I know there's been a lot of chatter back and forth and discussion, but that is our view.

DWG: Is there any possibility of bringing other nations into it? Would that remove if China was to become a party to it would it remove some of the criticism of the treaty?

Ms. Gottemoeller: There have been proposals out there. In fact the United States and Russia joined together in 2007 to make the proposal at the Conference on Disarmament in that regard. So the proposals have been on the table. They haven't gone anywhere.

DWG: Thank you. I was wondering, in light of what's happening in Crimea and the relationship with Russia, what impact is all of that having on the cooperative threat reduction plans and actions that the U.S. is taking with Russia?

Ms. Gottemoeller: Good question. Actually there are a few activities that have to do with weapons of mass destruction, elimination, control, non-proliferation accounting that continue. They have been essentially fenced off in this current crisis. For example, we are continuing to implement the New START Treaty, and that is going forward in a very practical way without difficulties.

We have a series of projects between the Russian Atomic Energy Agency and the Department of, sorry, the Department of Energy, yes, that have been related to removal of fissile materials from third countries. This has been very much a good news story in the context of the Nuclear Security Summit. Three thousand kilograms of highly enriched uranium and plutonium have been removed from third countries under this cooperative program between the Russian Atomic Energy Agency and our Department of Energy. So in that context cooperative threat reduction has continued and will continue despite tensions in other areas.

As far as the traditional Department of Defense programs called cooperative threat reduction, they have been wrapping up because we have completed the work to eliminate Soviet era ICBMs, SLBMs, and launch delivery platforms. So that work is finishing up in any event.

DWG: What about the whole dialogue on strategic stability? You're working with Sergei [Ribkov]. Are you still talking? Are you still working within this group? And the other point, the broader point, is the dialogue, is the talk about concluding this transatlantic security treaty is completely dead at that point? The idea that the Russians tabled several years ago. I think it was even before the [Georgia War].

Ms. Gottemoeller: I'm familiar with it.

DWG: I'm asking you about this now because the [Georgia War] and the current crisis in Ukraine in my mind at least partially are explained because the Russians perceived their interests were disregarded by the West from time to time. Completely disregarded. That was the whole point, to create a unified space for security. Not the bloc system where you have NATO and Russia. But the unified space.

Ms. Gottemoeller: Let me make a comment on the strategic stability talks. Those talks, it's the Arms Control and International Security Committee that I chair along with my counterpart, greatly respected counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei [Ribkov]. That is a committee that is underneath the Presidential Commission, the Bilateral Presidential Commission. And the Presidential Commission has been suspended, therefore the committee has been suspended as well.

I will also say, though, Dmitri, that we had been trying to engage in talks for a good long time before this current crisis and we had not been able to convene strategic stability

talks. So as far as we are concerned, we were, before the crisis we were pushing hard to get back to these talks and had not been able to do so.

On your other question, again, the proposal that was made before the Georgia War for a European treaty is not in play. That's not in play. But we have been quite interested in modernizing conventional arms control in Europe and engaging the Russian Federation on that process. We continue to work with our NATO allies to prepare some ideas in that regard, and believe me, my view is that conventional arms control has proved its merit in the current crisis despite the difficulties that have ensued for the Vienna document inspectors, for example, last week who were seized in eastern Ukraine, completely again against the fundamental principles of international law. But nevertheless, I think that conventional arms control has proved its utility in this current crisis. So I would welcome the opportunity to get back to modernizing conventional arms control in the future, but we'll see what's possible.

DWG: I have a question and more of a clarification point. The question is a follow-on to Julian's question about the INF Treaty. Have the Russians violated either the spirit or the letter of the treaty? And when you mentioned the Budapest Agreement, are you saying they have violated that?

Ms. Gottemoeller: I am saying that in a large kind of realm of international law they have obviously, as I say, blown past their commitments to an international system and flaw that involves -- and here we're talking about some basic principles that have been enshrined in the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, has a basic statement of principles that was agreed to at the end of the Cold War. But these principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity have been enshrined in many places including in the UN Charter and places like that. It's a general statement.

DWG: You're not saying they've violated it then, per se.

Ms. Gottemoeller: I'm saying that as a general matter we are very concerned about their current attitude towards some of these basic international principles.

On your latter point with regard to the INF Treaty, again, we have serious compliance concerns with the Russians with regard to the INF Treaty. I've raised them repeatedly. We will continue to do so until we're satisfied. The concern has to do with a ground-launched cruise missile that has been tested.

DWG: You talked about the arm waving of NPT, of people saying the U.S. hasn't done enough. There seems to be [inaudible] fairly strong feelings that this is the case, and particularly in the context of the action plan that was agreed at the 2010 Review Conference. Under the kind of circumstances between the U.S. and Russia that, even before that there was dissatisfaction about the pace of reduction and disarmament. So how do you address that? Are there steps that the U.S. can take either unilaterally or in conjunction with other weapon states? And in particular I think you reiterated the [inaudible] interest in reducing another one-third. How do you go ahead with that with the current conditions with Russia?

Ms. Gottemoeller: One thing I will say is that, I want to reiterate that the Berlin offer is still on the table. The President made an offer for up to one-third reductions below the central limits of the New START Treaty with the focus on operationally deployed strategic warheads, but along with that would go further reductions in delivery vehicles and launchers. So it's a good offer, it's one that we see as being in our national security interest, and we believe that it's in Russia's national security interest as well. So we will continue to make that point.

People say it's a difficult crisis at the moment. Indeed, it is a difficult crisis at the moment, no question about it. But even during very negative periods of the Cold War we continued to press ahead with our nuclear arms reduction commitments. And certainly we are doing so now and continuing to implement the New START Treaty. It's manifestly in our interest, but we feel it's in our mutual interest with the Russian Federation as well. I think that bearing in mind that longstanding tradition, we should think about continued nuclear arms reduction as something that is in our interest to pursue even in the depths of a difficult period.

DWG: Have you gotten any response from Russia? Any kind of ongoing dialogue? Where do you think it stands in terms of Russia's response to the offer that's still on the table?

Ms. Gottemoeller: I would refer you to the statement of the Russian representative at the NPT prep com. I think it's better for you to read how they answer it rather than for me to talk about it. But have a look.

One thing I will say is that we continue, as I mentioned, to have certain areas of good cooperation because, again, they are in the interest of international security and in our own security interest. For example, the P5+1 negotiations on Iran that my colleague Wendy Sherman is responsible for. They continue to move forward.

I have been responsible for Syria chemical weapons elimination and that project continues to move forward with some fits and starts. But we now have 92.5 percent of the chemicals out of Syria and we'll continue to press forward on that.

I already mentioned our threat reduction activities that also continue. So there are certain areas where we have kind of fenced them off for continued cooperation.

DWG: Chemical weapons, can you talk a bit about that, about the Russian role in that? And also what do you think, these last hundred metric tons that Assad apparently is withholding, do you think this is something he is withholding as a bargaining chip? Or do you think it's something to reconstitute a chemical weapons program? Certainly with a chemical weapons [destruction] facility.

Ms. Gottemoeller: I wouldn't say he's withholding them. Clearly, and everybody's focus now is on so-called site two near Damascus where this remaining amount of essentially 7.2 percent of what we heard they were going to give up under their

commitment to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. So we are continuing to press them to get the stuff out of the country.

And I would say in that the role of the Russian Federation and the Joint Mission, the UN's Joint Mission, has been very important. Obviously Moscow and the UN Joint Mission have had the ability to keep the pressure directly on the Syrian regime, and they have been playing that role. So I would not conclude that the Syrian regime is hanging on to that stuff, withholding it as an insurance policy or anything else. We're pressing them to get it out and we will continue to do so. It's been a very complex but I would say very good international partnership. Again, it's too early to tell the story, but it has involved a large number of international actors including the Danes and the Norwegians playing a very important role in terms of taking the chemicals out of the country. So it's been a good international partnership.

DWG: I wanted to ask you about one of the statements that came out of the prep com in New York, specifically the one addressing NPT withdrawal. I read over it a couple of times the other day and it's very detailed, but it seems like it's missing [inaudible]. But I just want to go to the last part of it where it says, "We are encouraged by the growing number of state parties including the members of the NPT that have expressed interest in addressing abuses of withdrawal from the NPT."

Who is talking about these issues? Is this directed at any particular country? Who are the other countries that are bringing this up? This --

Ms. Gottemoeller: This goes back really since PPRK, the North Koreans, announced they were going to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This is something that the United States and a number of other states, parties to the NPT, have not accepted. So there is a longstanding, among the NPT community, and that's why you see so many countries that have signed up to that statement, it's been a very wide-ranging discussion inside the NPT community as to procedures, process, and legal issues associated with withdrawal from the NPT. So it's an unfinished story, I would say, and it is one that will continue to be a very important, in fact one of the core issues that is addressed in the NPT community.

I also would like to say that we continue to urge the North Koreans to come back fully into compliance with their NPT commitments, and we are working in the context of our partnership with the six countries that make up the six party talks to try to get them back to the table, but they've got some heavy lifting to do themselves. But in any event it is important that we continue to push forward on that front to try to get the PPRK back into compliance with the PT.

DWG: Are the discussions with Iran in any way affecting the discussions --

Ms. Gottemoeller: I think it's too early to tell. Frankly, we're all hopeful, although it's a tough negotiation ahead on Iran. A very tough negotiation ahead. But we are all hopeful that it will come to a successful conclusion in which case perhaps there could be a beneficial influence, but it's way too early to say.

DWG: To follow up on some of Dan's questions about Syria, chemical weapons destruction. You mention it's been going in fits and starts. Do you think they'll make the June 30th deadline that's been laid out? Beyond that, do you think that this national sort of, international coalition that's come together to destroy the weapons, should be disbanded once the declared stockpile is done? Or do you think it should stay in place just in case there's some new [inaudible] that they can't get to right now. Should that coalition stay in place?

Ms. Gottemoeller: Those are some very good questions. I don't see any reason why we should not be able to complete this project on a timely basis and certainly I would say let's drive to get all the chemicals out in May. We shouldn't be hanging around waiting for June, and that's our message to Damascus. They've got one fight left and we could see what they did in April. They very speedily removed chemicals from a number of sites, so we know they're capable of moving chemicals even in a difficult security environment. That's why we've been pressing them to get site two emptied out. Yes, it's a difficult security situation but get the chemicals out. You've been moving them anyway during this civil war, so let's get it done.

I would say let's not look to June 30th, the date, let's focus on a nearer term effort to get the work completed.

One of the things I did want to underscore in line with your other question is that once all the chemicals are out, we are not finished with this project. Under their commitments to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Syrians have to destroy all of their chemical weapons facilities which are a number of hangars and tunnels that will have to be destroyed under CWC requirements. So that work will have to be done. We're also concerned about a mission set we believe are in the Syrians' declaration. So those will have to be pursued and in fact the OPCW has already begun to pursue them.

So I've been urging people not to declare victory when the last chemicals leave the country. We cannot do that. There is still more work to be done in terms of destroying the facilities and dealing with the omissions in the Syrians' declaration.

DWG: Can you just elaborate on that a little bit, just so I'm clear?

Ms. Gottemoeller: That is confidential information that is being handled in the OPCW confidentiality arena.

DWG: [Inaudible], kind of a post-summit wrap up discussion going on. Can you speak at all to what if any plan there is, now that [inaudible] have made this commitment, to enforce the [inaudible] guidelines [inaudible]? How [inaudible] actually execute that? And also perhaps [inaudible] additional countries [inaudible] notable ones like China and Pakistan who are not currently part of that agreement?

Ms. Gottemoeller: One of the good things, again, about the Nuclear Security Summit process, like the P5 process, it's created a kind of effective team work among a number of countries to press forward on these nuclear security goals.

I mentioned a moment ago the 3,000kgs of highly enriched uranium and plutonium that have been removed from far-flung places around the world, from research reactor sites, from universities, from places where sometimes they weren't secured as well as they could be, and this is material that could be directly used in nuclear weapons. So it's been very effective. It's kind of built up again this normative I would say commitment among a number of countries.

All I can say in terms of next steps towards the 2016 summit which will be here in Washington is that we will continue to press forward across a broad front on a number of tasks. We have these so-called gift baskets where countries are able to sign up. So we'll continue pressing countries to sign up, rally express their commitments and begin the policy process. In many cases we and other countries are able to help to do capacity building and that kind of thing. A lot of countries, sometimes they need to be aware of what their own national relations should look like and that type of thing. So all I can say is that we'll continue to press forward in this regard.

I am not aware of the details of this particular activity, so if you want more information about it we can put you in touch with some of the experts who have been working on it. I'm simply not aware of the details.

DWG: I just wanted to follow up on Bob's question very quickly. On your compliance concerns on the Intermediate Range Nuclear Treaty with Russia, how much more can you tell us about the nature of those concerns? How long have they been an issue? And can you go into any more detail about how you're discussing this with them or what kind of communications you need to have about this issue?

Ms. Gottemoeller: Not much. I can say that, as I mentioned a moment ago, we continue to raise it with the Russians at a high level and we'll continue to do so until our concerns are satisfied.

DWG: Are we talking years or months? At what point did this come across your, become an issue for you to --

Ms. Gottemoeller: It's been out there for a while. We're continuing to work it. I don't expect it to drag on for years. It's an issue that's I would say ripe for resolution.

DWG: Has the current crisis exacerbated it?

Ms. Gottemoeller: No. It's a serious matter and it's still a serious matter. It hasn't been exacerbated by the current crisis.

DWG: I want to ask what perhaps will be an existential question, but I'd like to ask you about the presence of NATO. I've spoken to many people on the ground in Ukraine who

are under no illusions about Russia's propaganda campaign who still say that the U.S. did not help the situation that led to the crisis in Ukraine because of its continued NATO expansion, and still talking about expanding, NATO expanding to other countries in the region that's made Russia feel insecure. I'd be interested to ask you first off what your response to them would be. But secondly, looking practically at the situation, how do you get that message to the Ukrainian people now, amidst what's going on there?

Ms. Gottemoeller: First and foremost, our view is at the very highest existential level, when a country is independent it's up to that country to decide for themselves what their alliance and security arrangements should be. And so I think it's very important to bear in mind that these countries throughout the region are independent countries and it's up to them to decide for themselves without outside coercion, without outside attempts to constrain or control the activities. So that's the basic answer.

I don't apologize at all for actions that NATO has taken over the years. I think it's been very important that the goal of the NATO alliance at the highest level is international stability, peace and security. We welcome a partnership with countries across the world in the NATO alliance that have been very active over the years in trying to develop a partnership with Russia in that regard. The NATO/Russia Council has been an important phenomenon. I think we'd like to see that continue.

So whether or not a country decides to join NATO, it's up to both that country and also obviously it has to achieve certain requirements for membership in NATO. But in terms of the partners of NATO, I think it's important to remember that these can be very positive working relationships in a pragmatic way for peace and stability. That sense seems to have been lost now in the discourse between Moscow and Brussels. But I would certainly hope that it can be restored at some point.

DWG: I've heard a lot of concern that Russia might repeat or intends to repeat its actions in places like Georgia, Moldova, those countries who [inaudible] membership. Is there anything more that NATO should be doing to put Russia's concerns aside? Or is that up to the Russians to get on board?

Ms. Gottemoeller: It's always I would say a cooperative process when you have a discourse between NATO and any other country, whoever, whichever country it may be. So it's not all up to one side or the other. It has to be a cooperative effort. But there has to be a willingness to cooperate on both sides.

DWG: [Inaudible]. Could you give a snapshot of the status of the bureau's efforts on [inaudible] in the aftermath of Libya, where that stands, where the concerns are, what progress has been made, et cetera, et cetera?

Ms. Gottemoeller: In general I can say that that remains a very active program. Essentially we are doing everything we can to get manpads out of circulation. We've had a considerable effect in that regard. It's been a difficult task because there are a lot of manpads in circulation. I was stunned last year we had a very interesting exhibit at the State Department actually of different kinds of manpads that are in circulation around

the world, and it's stunning the numbers and kinds from very basic up to very high tech versions. So there are a lot of manpads out there.

I have to tell you quite honestly I didn't come prepared today with a rundown of how many we've taken out of circulation, but that's something we can easily get you. So why don't we follow up with you. I don't want to say anything when I'm not as accurate as I should be.

DWG: Is that exhibit still up?

Ms. Gottemoeller: No. It was great. They brought a big semi out, well a big trailer out. There must have been a dozen different styles of manpads, different generations shown. It was very effective.

DWG: You mentioned the need for Syria to destroy the facilities once the chemicals are out. But apparently there's an ongoing dispute as to what that involves. The Syrians have essentially wanted to close them down but not completely destroy them and the U.S. and others are saying they have to be destroyed. Can you fill us in on where things stand in the negotiations to work that out? And [inaudible] get Syria going on that destruction?

Ms. Gottemoeller: As in any negotiation I'm not going to talk about the confidential details of where we are in the negotiating process, but I can say that we have underscored to the Syrians and insisted that whatever elimination procedures are agreed to must be in accordance with their commitments under the CWC to completely eliminate the facilities. It doesn't mean that there's a particular kind of procedure that's written into treaty language as to how facilities need to be eliminated, so those are the details that are being worked out now. But they will have to be completely eliminated according to the requirements of the CWC.

DWG: I just wanted to ask you about the plutonium disposition agreement. The U.S. is toying with abandoning its [inaudible] plan. What is Russia saying about this? Has there been any feedback about whether they would accept anything less than [inaudible]?

Ms. Gottemoeller: The plutonium disposition agreement has been in place for some years. If you don't know about it, it's an agreement to dispose of 34 tons of weapons plutonium on each side. The Russians are committed to fabricating that plutonium into so-called mixed oxide fuel and burning it in energy reactors. We were looking at that option as well. But at the present time, because of cost issues really, we're looking at other options. But the plutonium disposition agreement, per se, does not require a particular disposition mechanism. So clearly we'll have to be completely transparent with the Russians and talk to them about the methods that we are going to pursue. But I don't see it necessarily as being a major issue.

DWG: But under the agreement they have to agree to our method.

Ms. Gottemoeller: Yes. So clearly --

DWG: -- they might agree? Or --

Ms. Gottemoeller: We're studying options at this point now, so at the moment there's no firm clear option to speak to them about. But clearly we understand that we'll have to talk in-depth with Russia and they'll have to understand that indeed the -- The point of the agreement is to dispose of the plutonium so that it cannot be reused in the future in weapons. So they will have to be satisfied on that point. But it's early days, Doug, to approach them with any particular option. We're still looking at them. It's a DOE matter.

DWG: You touched briefly earlier on [inaudible] cooperation with Russia. There's been a little bit of confusion over what [inaudible] on some language put in the Defense Authorization Bill on the House side [inaudible] suggested that that cooperation [inaudible] say there is [inaudible]. What is [inaudible] still going on, and not going on? Is there still work being done on [inaudible] within Russia? Has any of that been affected either by the Ukraine crisis or the sort of different nature of the [inaudible] now that the old umbrella agreement has expired [inaudible]?

Ms. Gottemoeller: Again, for those of you who are not familiar, the so-called Cooperative Threat Reduction umbrella agreement expired last June and it was replaced with an agreement that is built on the foundation of the so-called MNEPR agreement. I know you're going to ask me what that stands for, but it's essentially to do with environmental, nuclear environmental work in Europe. It was an agreement that was negotiated some time ago. It provides for the protections that we need in addition to which we've negotiated additional implementing procedures and protections. So as far as we're concerned we have the protections that we need for liability, for the immunity of our people who are working and so forth.

That is going forward. It did take some time to work out those detailed implementing procedures, but as far as I understand they are in place now. Again, it's DOE, they are the implementers in this case. But as far as I understand from talking to them recently everything is moving forward.

The last thing I'll say on the wisdom of continuing this kind of work despite this large and serious political crisis in Ukraine, I want to underscore that it is manifestly in the national security interest of the United States to continue to wrestle with minimizing the danger that fissile materials will fall into the hands of terrorists. Minimize the opportunities for nuclear weapons to fall into the hands of terrorists. So that is at the heart of our rationale for continuing this work. We acknowledge and are greatly concerned about the crisis in Ukraine, there's no question about it, but we shouldn't shoot ourselves in the foot in terms of stopping or halting important national security work that prevents nuclear bombs from getting into the hands of terrorists because we have other grave concerns.

I'm mixing metaphors here, but we can walk and chew gum at the same time. We must continue to address our core national security concerns while we address our grave concerns about this crisis in Ukraine.

DWG: It's your understanding that really fundamentally nothing really has changed as a result of the Ukraine crisis in terms of the work that is ongoing?

Ms. Gottemoeller: On these threat reduction related projects. That's my understanding, yes.

In addition, I want to emphasize the work that's going on pursuant to the Nuclear Security Summit to remove fissile materials from third countries. I refer you back again to that 3,000kgs of HEU plutonium that have come from multiple countries around the world. And Russia and the United States have worked together very closely and very well on that effort.

DWG: We will finish with your closing thoughts.

Ms. Gottemoeller: I don't know if I have any closing thoughts except to say this has been a very rich discussion. Much appreciated, the opportunity to talk to you about all of these issues. And we'll continue to push the rock uphill. Thank you very much.

#

Transcribed by: Professional Word Processing & Transcribing (801) 556-7255