

Daily Press Briefing: Discussion on Turkey

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August 11, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Yesterday there were elections, and today kind of – they declared the results, and it looks like Prime Minister Erdogan is going to be the president. Do you have any reaction?

MS. HARF: We do. We congratulate the people of Turkey and President-elect Erdogan on this first direct popular election of a president. Also congratulate the two other candidates who fought a hard-fought race. Look forward to working with Prime Minister Erdogan in his new role as president and with whoever succeeds him as prime minister. Obviously, we are a friend and ally of Turkey and look forward to continuing our close relationship.

QUESTION: How did you find the conditions of the elections?

MS. HARF: Well, the OSCE monitoring mission put out a report – preliminary conclusions reached today noted the candidates were generally able to freely campaign, that freedoms of association and assembly were respected. Also noted that the use of official position by the prime minister as well as biased media coverage gave him a distinct advantage over the other candidates. I think the OSCE is going to release its full – or final report in the coming weeks.

QUESTION: So under circumstances, is – in light of this initial report, would you be able to characterize the elections as free, fair, and transparent at this point?

MS. HARF: I don't think I have any more analysis to do of it for you at this point.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

QUESTION: Can I just pursue that? Do you --

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: Does the United States agree with that characterization that --

MS. HARF: Again, it's just a preliminary report. We're still looking at it.

QUESTION: -- that he had an advantage as the incumbent as it relates to --

MS. HARF: I don't have further analysis to do. We're still looking at it.

QUESTION: Has the U.S. been in touch with him since the election?

MS. HARF: I don't know. I can check. Actually, let me see. I might have one thing on this. Expect the President to speak with him in the coming days.

QUESTION: Now, there is a lot of charges that the Erdogan election, on and of itself, is really a manifestation of creeping dictatorship. Are you concerned about that?

MS. HART: I don't have any more analysis to do of the Turkish elections for you.

July 28, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: From the podium, you pretty consistently objected to the Kurds exporting their own oil through Turkey. It would appear that, however, that that first shipment of oil has now been unloaded in Houston. So --

MS. PSAKI: My understanding of where things stand, Scott, is that it's -- there's a tanker that's anchored 60 miles outside of Galveston, Texas and that the cargo remains on board the ship at this time. I will see if there's been any update to that information, but I spoke with our team about it right before I came down here.

Our policy, which you outlined, certainly hasn't changed. We believe that Iraq's energy resources belong to the Iraqi people and certainly have long stated that it needs to go through the central government. And as you know, there's an ongoing legal dispute in this case, which is -- which obviously is something that we're aware of and we're closely following.

QUESTION: Local Coast Guard say they asked you guys about it and everything was fine and it's already being lightened.

MS. PSAKI: That -- I would have to check. That was not the information that I had from our team, Scott. Obviously that contradicts it, which is concerning, but let me go back to them and see what the exact situation is on the ground.

July 25, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/ Cyprus
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I asked you yesterday, if you remember.

MS. HARF: My briefing number two yesterday, yes, okay.

QUESTION: Yes, and you said – I asked you about the cases of Cyprus and Ukraine, and you said there are differences between the two.

MS. HARF: Completely different, yes.

QUESTION: Okay. But many people, they only think they see as a difference is that Russia is your enemy and Turkey is your friend.

MS. HARF: That's --

QUESTION: You are speaking against Russia; you don't say anything to Turkey.

MS. HARF: That's completely ridiculous. We're not seeing passenger planes shot down over Cyprus, okay? These are completely different. The UN has in place a Good Offices Mission that has an ongoing process under the auspices of that mission to work on the Cyprus issue. We've urged both parties to seize the opportunity to make real and substantial progress towards a settlement that unifies – reunifies the island as a bizonal, bicomunal federation, and we've said we're willing to assist in any way the parties find useful. Again, these are completely different situations. There is an active conflict zone in Ukraine. Cyprus is wholly different for a number of reasons. The UN is leading this effort here and we can support that in any way we can.

QUESTION: Marie --

QUESTION: But Turkey has 40,000 troops in Cyprus right now – 40,000 troops. And I think the Russians, they have a few thousands only. This is --

MS. HARF: They're in no way comparable. I just reject the comparison.

QUESTION: Okay, but can I ask you something? Can I ask you another something?

MS. HARF: You can.

QUESTION: Do you consider --

QUESTION: Hold on a second, hold on. Do you accept the premise of his question that Russia is your enemy?

MS. HARF: Well, no. I would also disagree with that part.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: I was going through all of the various parts I disagree with.

QUESTION: But do you consider what Cyprus --

MS. HARF: We disagree over Ukraine.

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: Do you consider what Turkey did in 1974 against Cyprus invasion or something else?

MS. HARF: I'm not going to go down the historical path here with you. I said what the path forward looks like. And I would disagree with the notion that Russia is our enemy, thank you.

QUESTION: Can I ask you something else?

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: The Vice President of the United States Mr. Biden spoke two, three weeks ago about the situation in Cyprus, and he said this, and I quote: There is nothing negotiable about two elements: one, no Turkish soldiers should have set foot on the island without being invited by the government; and second, there is only one government on the island. Do the State Department share this position on Cyprus?

MS. HARF: I didn't see the Vice President's comments there. I just made clear what our position is, and I'm not in the policy of disagreeing with the Vice President. So with that, what else?

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MS. HARF: What?

QUESTION: That's it. Not to disagree with the Vice President.

MS. HARF: Yes.

July 23, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Got a couple questions. One is that today, reported in Turkish Daily that Foreign Minister Davutoglu says to reporters that Secretary Kerry expressed his uneasiness about spokesperson Jen Psaki's --

MS. HARF: Totally false.

QUESTION: Totally false?

MS. HARF: Yeah. Secretary stands behind everything Jen Psaki and hopefully I say from this podium.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: Particularly on this topic.

QUESTION: You can understand -- or puzzlement that on the one hand, you say that the Kerry -- Secretary Kerry tells Foreign Minister Davutoglu and raised his worries, concerns over some rhetoric used in Turkey. And then on the other hand, we hear from Turkish foreign minister that actually Secretary Kerry expressed his -- over uneasiness --

MS. HARF: Again, I just said it was false, and I am the one who speaks for Secretary Kerry and conveys his thoughts, and I can assure you that is not something he said.

QUESTION: Okay. For the last two days, there are about hundred and four or five police chiefs in Turkey arrested. How do you view this development?

MS. HARF: Well, we are closely following these developments, and I understand they're related to the ongoing corruption investigations in Turkey, including the recent arrest of some 100 police officials. We have repeatedly said that any investigation should be conducted in a fair, transparent, and democratic manner. We have, in the past, made clear concerns about Turkey's due process and effective access to justice, and we'll continue talking to the Turks about it.

QUESTION: So these arrests, those police chiefs -- actually, some of them or most of them who launched those corruption investigations, so this is kind of a --

MS. HARF: I don't have any more to --

QUESTION: -- 180 percent.

MS. HARF: Right. I don't have any more details beyond what I just shared.

QUESTION: So what do you think about those corruption investigations started about eight months ago?

MS. HARF: As we just said – as I just said, any investigations like these should be conducted in a fair, transparent and democratic manner. We continue to support the Turkish people's desire for a judicial system that meets the highest standards of fairness, timeliness, and transparency. Obviously that's something we care very deeply about.

...

QUESTION: Yes. (Laughter.) Yesterday, Prime Minister Erdogan expressed his disappointment that he cannot reach or he doesn't talk to President Obama anymore. Would you able to confirm that this --

MS. HARF: I didn't actually see those comments. Obviously, for the President's conversations, the White House can speak mostly – or best to that. In terms of the Secretary's conversations, obviously he speaks all the time with Foreign Minister Davutoglu. He spoke with him twice yesterday, spoke with him a number of times over the last few days as well. So we have an ongoing dialogue.

July 22, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: There has been an operation going on today since last night. About 100 police chiefs been arrested. What's your reaction? How do you view --

MS. HARF: I hadn't seen that. I'm happy to check on that.

I think you also asked maybe yesterday at the end about the U.S.-Turkey working group. They are meeting here today. Deputy Secretary Burns met with the Turkish Foreign Ministry under secretary; chaired a meeting today of the working group, whose discussions focused on how the U.S. and Turkey can further strengthen our coordination on security, counterterrorism, and refugee issues, particularly with respect to the crises in Syria and Iraq.

QUESTION: Okay.

July 21, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Ukraine
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Actually, two. According to Israeli press, during the phone conversation between the Prime Minister Netanyahu and Secretary Kerry, Prime Minister Netanyahu complained about Turkish prime minister rhetoric over Gaza.

MS. HARF: I'm happy to check. I don't know the answer to that for you, and I probably wouldn't discuss it even if I did, given we don't discuss private conversations. But I'm happy to check.

...

QUESTION: Do you still think the U.S. and Turkey relations are a model partnership?

MS. HARF: You ask this once a week, and I think I always have the same answer for you. Turkey's a NATO ally. They're a close partner on a number of issues. We also make very clear when there are things we do not agree with.

QUESTION: So my question is --

MS. HARF: You said that with the last one.

QUESTION: But you didn't answer. President Obama --

MS. HARF: I think I just answered it.

QUESTION: President Obama described this relationship as model partnership. My question is: Would you still describe the same partnership --

MS. HARF: Turkey is a very close NATO ally. We work together on a number of issues. When we have disagreements, we make those clear as well.

July 17, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: QUESTION: Yes, thank you. Today, Turkish foreign minister stated that U.S. is attempting to dismantle the legitimacy of AKP's success story and wear out the party. Are you trying to dismantle the AKP?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything to add beyond what I said yesterday, but the question you asked me yesterday was about the comments of Ambassador-designate John Bass made before the Senate. And my points – my comments certainly stand, that these were consistent with the concerns we've expressed before, including in our Human Rights Report. The United States supports democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms around the world, and anything suggesting that we were doing other – anything other than restating our support is false.

QUESTION: Also, foreign minister said that about discussions on the Hill two days ago between the senator and the Ambassador John Bass that the discussions about drifting in the direction of authoritarianism is part of the campaign against the ruling party, his own party. And this is foreign minister of Turkey. There was someone else --

MS. PSAKI: A good friend of Secretary Kerry's. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. PSAKI: Yes.

QUESTION: And he accuses U.S. that – undertaking a campaign against his own party.

MS. PSAKI: Well again, any suggestion that Ambassador-designate Bass was doing other – anything other than repeating – expressing concerns we've expressed before about anything from freedom to democracy to human rights issues is untrue, and hopefully that can be recognized.

QUESTION: And the final one: Foreign minister also says that, actually, there is authoritarianism in the U.S., that it's increasing. This is quote by the foreign minister just today.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I'm not sure what that would be a reference to, so perhaps you can ask for more clarity and we can talk more about it.

QUESTION: He said that if he gives – this is also quote – if he gives samples about this increasing authoritarianism in the U.S., that would be shameful for the U.S. counterparts.

MS. PSAKI: Well, it's hard to see what that's a reference to, so --

July 9, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

**Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Iraq
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: It has been about a month now there are 49 Turkish consulate staff and diplomats still being held hostage by the ISIS. Do you have any update on any of those?

MS. PSAKI: I do not have an update. We remain in regular touch through our team on the ground with Turkish officials, and of course, we remain concerned about those who are being held, as we do about Americans who have been held, as we do about any international citizens who are being held by ISIL.

QUESTION: Have Turkish officials asked you any kind of help to --

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any update to offer for you on this case.

QUESTION: Last time you said that a door is -- door remains open if there is any need by Ankara. The door is still open?

MS. PSAKI: Certainly. And we are engaged in continued discussions.

QUESTION: I just wanted to follow up on Lucas' question. Do you know whether there is any Rewards for Justice program for al-Baghdadi or anyone else in --

MS. PSAKI: I don't have that information in front of me. I'm sure we can check. I believe there are some for some of these officials, but we can get that around to all of you and it's available on our website as well, of course.

QUESTION: Right, okay. And if it hasn't been done, can you let us know whether it's being considered?

MS. PSAKI: We certainly don't get into what's being considered or isn't being considered. But if there's publicly available information on our website, we will pull that together and send that to all of you about anyone who has a Rewards for Justice -- is linked to the program.

June 27, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Iraq
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Just follow-up on hostages. There are still eight hostages – Turkish hostages in Mosul as well. Do you have any update on that?

MS. HARF: I don't have any update on those as well.

June 20, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Iraq
Washington, DC

QUESTION: On Turkish hostage crisis, do you have any kind of update on those hostages?

MS. PSAKI: I do not have any update for you. Obviously, our – we remain concerned about these hostages as we have been. We’ve been in touch, of course, consistently with the Government of Turkey, but I don’t have any specific update for you.

QUESTION: Has the Turkish Government asked any kind of help? Last time you said you would check for it.

MS. PSAKI: I just don’t have any update for you on it.

QUESTION: It looks like the first Kurdish oil, I think, is waiting at Israel via Turkey, is about to be delivered as far as we see from the reports. Do you have any --

QUESTION: It already has.

MS. PSAKI: Yeah. I think I addressed this one. Said asked the –

...

QUESTION: You have been encouraging Turkish Government and Iraqi Government – Maliki government to cooperate on regional issues, as well as this crisis in Mosul. Do you know of any kind of cooperation or any kind of phone talk between these two allies?

MS. PSAKI: I don’t have any updates for you. I’d point you to the Turkish Government. Do we have any more on Iraq? Iraq? Go ahead.

QUESTION: One last question. The – have you heard the reports that Iraqi television channels that have – reportedly critical to Maliki – being taken off the air in Egypt or Jordan?

MS. PSAKI: I have not actually seen that report. I spoke a couple of days ago just to some concerns we’d seen about social media being pulled back, but I’m happy to check and see – you said Jordan and where was the other country? I’m sorry.

June 11, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Iraq/Syria

Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: I just have one item for all of you at the top. Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Davutoglu spoke by phone this morning. They discussed their mutual concern about the deteriorating security situation in Mosul and ISIL's despicable attack on the Turkish consulate, which we condemn in the strongest terms. We join Turkey and the international community in calling for the immediate release of Turkey's kidnapped diplomatic personnel. The security reiterated the United States commitment to working with the Iraqi Government and leaders across Iraq to support a unified approach against ISIL's continued aggression. We are in touch with the governments of Turkey and Iraq, and stand ready to provide any appropriate assistance.

...

QUESTION: Just on, I guess – well, on that, the deteriorating – they seem to – I mean, can they deteriorate much more? I mean, it seems to be – it's totally in control of ISIL, is it not?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think we're referring to deteriorating over the last several days, which, to your point, there's no question that has been the case.

QUESTION: Okay. And have there been any discussions in the past – since you last briefed between people here and the Iraqi authorities on the situation?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I do have an update. As you may know, Deputy Assistant Secretary Brett McGurk is on the ground. The Secretary spoke with him this morning, and naturally he – the Secretary and other senior officials here are in close touch with him on the ground.

Since he has been there – I should say just over the last 48 hours – he has met or spoken with Prime Minister Maliki, Speaker Nujaifi, KRG Prime Minister Barzani, KRG Deputy Prime Minister Talabani, Vice President Khuzai, Governor Karim of Kirkuk, Governor – I mentioned, I think I mentioned Governor – sorry, Governor Nujaifi. I had already mentioned Speaker Nujaifi – Governor Dulaimi of Anbar, National Security Advisor Fayyad, Deputy Prime Minister Mutlaq, Iraqi Prime Minister's Advisor Tarik Najm, Chief of Staff to President Barzani Fuad Hussein, former Deputy Secretary General of the PUK Barham Salih, tribal sheikhs, members of parliament, and many others, including members – including the UN Secretary General's special representative for Iraq. And the point – the reason I – somebody asked that yesterday, so I wanted to give an extensive overview.

QUESTION: Well, that's pretty extensive. Has he had any time to sleep or eat? That seems like a lot of people to see in 24 – in 48 hours.

MS. PSAKI: I can – in 48 hours. I can assure you – I was on an email with him at something like 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. his time last night, so I don't know that he's sleeping very much. But the Secretary, when he spoke with him this morning, received an update on all of those conversations.

QUESTION: Okay. But all those conversations were between McGurk and the Iraqis, correct?

MS. PSAKI: That is right.

QUESTION: Okay. But the Secretary himself or Deputy Secretary Burns or anyone else? No one?

MS. PSAKI: As you know, Deputy Secretary Burns is returning from Vienna.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: The Secretary has received updates from Deputy Assistant Secretary McGurk.

QUESTION: There are reports coming just now that militants are heading towards Baghdad. Do you know anything about that?

MS. PSAKI: I – again, it's a very fluid situation on the ground, as we all have been talking about. We are of course very concerned about the deteriorating security situation. I don't have any confirmation of those reports.

QUESTION: How about – can we go to Tikrit? Tikrit, as I understand it, has been overrun already, and the largest oil refinery in Iraq is also apparently under threat by ISIL forces. Are you concerned about the threat to oil flows that may result if oil installations are taken over, one, and two – well, I'll just leave it at that, and then I've got another one.

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Well, on the oil refinery, there have been conflicting reports. Our understanding at this point is that the refinery remains in control of the Government of Iraq. Certainly, we would be concerned, as we have been, about a range of incidents over the last several days if that were to change. In terms of Tikrit, we've also seen reports as you mentioned, and that – of course, we're continuing to look into the situation on the ground, but we do not have confirmation of that at this point.

QUESTION: And do you think – well, two questions. One is: Other than DAS McGurk talking to a great many people there, is the U.S. Government considering any type of concrete action to help the current Iraqi Government regain control of its territory?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we've expedited, as you know, shipments of military equipment since the beginning of the year. We've ramped up training of Iraqi security forces and worked intensively to help Iraq implement a holistic approach. As you noted, Arshad, the situation is certainly very grave on the ground. We are working with Iraqi leaders from across the country to support a coordinated response. You can expect that we will provide additional assistance to the Iraqi

Government to combat the threat from ISIL, but I'm not in a position to outline that further at this point.

QUESTION: You had about a decade, though, to train the Iraqi security forces between the U.S. invasion and – it's more than a decade now. What makes you think ramping up the training since the start of the year is going to do much in this circumstance?

MS. PSAKI: Well, there are a number of components. So one of the pieces that we've been very focused on in our diplomatic conversations is the need for a more unified approach from a range of parties in Iraq. We are encouraged to see the calls for national unity from Iraqi leaders from across the political spectrum. We think that presents a strong, unified front. We also support the steps taken between the federal government and the KRG to cooperate on a security plan that will enhance the Iraqi army's ability to hold positions and confront this ISIL aggression.

And again this is – obviously, as we've stated in here many times and as our statement yesterday indicated, we're clearly very concerned about the deteriorating security situation. Iraq and the Government of Iraq remains a crucial partner in our fight against terrorism, and we will continue to work with them in a range of capacities moving forward.

QUESTION: Was it – I'm well aware that the Iraqi Government and the United States could not come to agreement on a SOFA for continued – the continued presence of U.S. forces in Iraq. And I realize that absent such an agreement, you couldn't keep your forces there. Was it, however, a mistake not to have tried harder to maintain a residual force that might have helped the various Iraqi parties, political parties, work more cohesively with one another? Do you think it was the right – simply stated, was it the right thing to pull everybody out, as happened?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as you noted, Arshad, there was a mutual decision between the Government of Iraq and the United States that it was time to pull our troops home. I'm not going to look back and speculate on what would have been different had things been different at the time. They obviously were not.

QUESTION: Jen – sorry, excuse me. Can I --

QUESTION: Well, wait. Can I follow up on that particular point --

MS. PSAKI: Sure, go ahead.

QUESTION: -- on that particular point? I mean, how can you not look back and say, well, maybe the pullout could have been organized a bit differently? Did we have enough political engagement? Were there – was there enough training of the Iraqis? I mean, there's no looking back whatsoever to say --

MS. PSAKI: Well, we've clearly, Elise, increased that over the last several months because we've seen a need for that on the ground. And we're focused right now on how we can assist the

government at this point in time during what is a very challenging security situation on the ground, and that's where we're going to exert our efforts.

QUESTION: Well, don't you think, though, that, like, you can apply this example also to Syria in terms of that the situation is much more grave now as you consider providing additional support to the rebels than had you had done it two years ago when these discussions first surmised. And in Iraq in particular, like, you've seen what was happening in Iraq for – the violence has been steadily increasing for some time, and now you're kind of a little bit late to the game, don't you think?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I would argue with that. I think in Syria, it's entirely different for a range of reasons, including the fact that we have not had troops on the ground and there's never been a consideration to do that. So we're not talking about a similar situation. They're obviously linked because of the impact of Syria on the violence in Iraq, and that is a contributing factor that we think has been – has had a major impact on what we're seeing.

QUESTION: I'm just saying, though, that isn't there a kind of recognition that you need to be more proactive instead of crisis – responding to these various crises as they're --

MS. PSAKI: Well, clearly --

QUESTION: -- after it's a little bit too little too late?

MS. PSAKI: I would disagree with that. The steps that we've taken over the last several months to expedite the support that we are providing was in advance of obviously the events that have occurred over the last couple of days. We have a strong diplomatic presence on the ground. We're constantly evaluating what – how we can best assist, how we can best help prepare to – and partner with the Iraqis to combat these threats from terrorists, and that will continue.

QUESTION: Then why not deploy something that is likely to change the situation on the ground like drones? Since we know their address, we know the address of Daeesh, the ISIL in Iraq. We know where they are. We know where they are moving – their convoys, whatever, their movement is well known. And this is something that can really change things on the ground. Why not? I mean, this is something that --

MS. PSAKI: Well, Said, as I mentioned --

QUESTION: -- you continue to do in Pakistan and in Afghanistan and in Yemen.

MS. PSAKI: Well, we don't discuss operational details along those lines, as you know. I will say, as I noted, you can expect we will increase our assistance. I have nothing I can outline further on that front at this point.

QUESTION: Okay. Because as it seems, the Iraqi army or the Iraqi security forces aren't able to hold onto what they have. For instance, yesterday there was a helicopter that was overcome by Daeesh, by the ISIL.

MS. PSAKI: I know you asked me about that yesterday. I still don't at this point have confirmation of those details you mentioned.

QUESTION: Okay. And also, we heard that the central government has requested the aid of the Peshmerga, the Kurdish army or the Kurdish militia, to going to after these bad guys. Will you assist the Peshmerga, which – they have very close relations with the U.S. military. Would you --

MS. PSAKI: I think I just noted a few minutes ago, Said, so I'd point you to this, that we support the steps taken by the Iraqi federal government and the KRG in their efforts to cooperate on a security plan. And that has, as you know, been difficult in the past, so that we see that as a positive step.

QUESTION: Are you also – I mean, the flipside of that – would that help solidify the sort of – the separation in Iraq along ethnic lines, like the KRG may become an independent country?

MS. PSAKI: Again, we – you know where we stand on that. We are encouraged by calls for national unity. The threat from ISIL and the terrorists in Iraq is a challenge for all of the people as well as the region.

QUESTION: And my final question on national unity: Do you have faith – I mean, this question was asked to you yesterday. Do you have faith that Mr. Maliki can lead a national unity effort that can be crowned with success?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I noted yesterday – and our position hasn't changed – there's more that Prime Minister Maliki can do. There's more that many leaders can do. We're encouraged by calls for national unity and we think that is the right step forward.

QUESTION: In the additional steps – and I understand you couldn't --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- further detail them. But can you rule out, can you tell us whether or not the United States is giving any consideration whatsoever to the deployment of any ground troops in Iraq or the Iraqi Government to ask for such?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not aware of that consideration. Otherwise, I'm not going to speculate on any other details of assistance.

QUESTION: Do you have a handle, Jen, on how much of the stuff that was promised earlier this year actually arrived? And if you do, or even if you don't, do you have an idea of how much materiel – how much equipment and stuff – has been seized by ISIL, aside from the helicopter which you said you didn't – you weren't aware of?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. I gave an outline yesterday about --

QUESTION: Did you?

MS. PSAKI: -- the assistance that we've been able to move forward on. In terms of your question about what has been seized, we know, obviously, there was a structural breakdown here. The Government of Iraq is conducting an investigation. We're looking into what equipment or materials they may have seized.

QUESTION: So you don't --

MS. PSAKI: I don't have that assessment at this point in time.

QUESTION: You don't yet. I mean, there are reports that they include F-16s, they include jets, fighter jets, which it's unclear whether anyone in the ISIL would be able to fly them or use them. But would you consider bombing this stuff, to destroy it so that it can't --

MS. PSAKI: Again, since we don't yet have an assessment, I just don't want to speculate on what steps we may or may not take.

QUESTION: Jen --

QUESTION: Jen, I wonder if we could have one more --

MS. PSAKI: I think, Said, we have a couple of other people. So let's just -- go ahead, Michel.

QUESTION: Were you able to confirm the news stories that I asked about yesterday about the helicopters?

MS. PSAKI: No. I just noted to Said I have not confirmed that, no.

QUESTION: Okay. Today Iraqi security officials have said that ISIL has captured hundreds of tanks and ammunitions in Salah al-Din province. Do you have any information about this?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I just noted to Matt, clearly the situation on the ground is very murky and we are trying to obtain confirmation on what assets ISIL may have obtained on the ground.

QUESTION: And the news stories have said, too, that former vice president during Saddam era, Izzat Duri, has showed up in Mosul today. Do you have any idea about this?

MS. PSAKI: I have not -- I have no confirmation of those reports.

QUESTION: And one more for me. Turkey has called the NATO today for an urgent meeting after the kidnapping of its diplomats in Mosul. Are you aware of such a meeting? And what can we expect from --

MS. PSAKI: I would point you to the Turks on that. Clearly the United States, as is evidenced by the Secretary's call to the foreign minister this morning, shares the concern about the capturing of the diplomats, and he expressed that. We condemn, of course, those actions and hope that they will be freed.

QUESTION: If there is any particular kind of action on the border, particularly by ISIL and given the location of where everybody is, is this something that NATO would take an interest in and as Turkey is a NATO ally? Would they consider this an Article 5 consideration, perhaps?

MS. PSAKI: It's a good question, Elise. I mean, I would clearly point you to NATO. I'm not sure what they would be considering at this time. They may have spoken to that. I'm not aware -- I haven't seen comments from them on that point.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: Did Secretary Kerry and the Turkish foreign minister discuss the NATO meeting or not?

MS. PSAKI: They discussed what I outlined at the top of the briefing.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: Is there any more detail on the specific meeting? What exactly Turkey is asking for from the U.S. at this moment?

MS. PSAKI: I would point you to Turkey on that question, and we'll let them speak for what their needs are. Obviously, we remain concerned about the detainment of the diplomats. We all share a concern about the security situation. This is not just a challenge for the people of Iraq but for the people of the region, and these events are clearly an example of that.

QUESTION: According to reports, Turkish prime minister called the Vice President Biden. Do you have any readout on that meeting?

MS. PSAKI: I do not. I would point you to the Vice President's office on --

QUESTION: Usually Prime Minister Erdogan talks to President Obama this kind of situation. Do you know why the President is not available today?

MS. PSAKI: I wouldn't speculate on that. I don't even know if what you stated is correct. I would point you to the White House on any calls he has planned for today.

QUESTION: On this hostages – hostage crisis, it looks like for the last number of days ISIL, I-S-I-L, forces have been mounting and closing into Mosul. Have you been contact the Turkish Government or Mosul and warning them? Did you have any kind of advance communication with the Turkish counterparts?

MS. PSAKI: About the plans to detain our diplomats?

QUESTION: That, or impending invasion of the ISIL forces of Mosul.

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I think you would expect, we remain in close touch with our NATO allies and allies around the world, including Turkey, in situations as dire as the security situation on the ground in Mosul. And this was no different. I'm not aware of any other warning we would have been able to provide.

QUESTION: And lastly, it seems today number of reports coming out that the YPG forces of the Kurds are right now moving to Mosul to clash or resist with the ISIL. Do you have any information on that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I mentioned a few minutes ago, the Kurdish Regional Government is in cooperation with the federal government in Iraq about working together to address the security situation, so I'd point you to them on details of their plans.

QUESTION: You called it a deteriorating security situation. Isn't it much more grave than that? I mean, you have a group that al-Qaida regards as more extreme than themselves taking over large chunks of Iraq. And the billions of dollars America has spent on training these forces, they seem to have simply disappeared in the sand. Is not this more a case of being a total failure of Western policy in Iraq?

MS. PSAKI: I would strongly disagree with that. We're talking about events over the last couple of days that I think we've been very clear about how strong our concerns are, about the deteriorating situation in Mosul. That has not changed. We've been as – we sent our deputy assistant secretary, one of our foremost experts on Iraq, there over the weekend to assist in every capacity possible. We're looking to increase our support for – to the Iraqi Government. So I think all of those are clear signals about how concerned we are and how committed we are to our partners in Iraq.

QUESTION: But it's a phrase you could have used at any point in previous years. This is much more serious than previous deteriorating security situations, surely.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think I've spoken to how concerned we are, so I don't think there should be a question about that.

QUESTION: Okay, just to kind of bring Syria back in, okay?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So you're helping the Iraqi Government. You see what a grave concern this is as far as Iraq is concerned, and you're giving the Iraqi Government the support it needs to go after these guys.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: But you're not making a distinction, are you, between the group's activities in Iraq and the group's activities in Syria? I mean, they're just as deadly to the Syrian people as the Iraqi people, and they're going back and forth across the border. So how do you reconcile what you're doing with Iraq with the kind of cautious, understandably but recognizably cautious approach that you're taking towards helping the rebels go after – or yourself going after ISIL in Syria?

MS. PSAKI: Well, they're entirely different situations.

QUESTION: Really?

MS. PSAKI: And what we said yesterday – and I would point you to the statement we put out – was that the situation in Syria has been an enormous contributing factor to what we're seeing in terms of --

QUESTION: No doubt.

MS. PSAKI: -- the security situation in Iraq. There's no doubt about that.

QUESTION: No doubt.

MS. PSAKI: Obviously the Government of Iraq has been a partner of ours on addressing terrorism for several years now. We know there have been ups and downs in that; there's no question about that. But we remain committed to that effort and we will continue to be.

The situation in Syria – you're talking about the Government of Syria, which has obviously been most responsible for inflicting terror on their own people. And we have worked and taken every step possible to bolster and support the rebels, whether that's strengthening them politically, increasing our assistance. You heard the Secretary of State say over the weekend in an interview with CNN about our support for legislation, language that's currently working its way through the Senate that would provide additional assistance to the vetted members of the armed opposition. They're different situations, and we deal with them differently because that is what we feel is the most responsible approach.

QUESTION: Well, they're different situations in the case of how you aid one and not the other, but it is the same situation, because as you, their activities in Syria are affecting their activities in Iraq and vice-versa. So can you say unequivocally now that you realize that you're going to need to up arming and training and equipping these rebels, not necessarily only to go after the regime – which I know you want to get rid of the regime – but specifically to go after these ISIL guys?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we've long been concerned about the impact of extremists, including from ISIL and other groups that have a presence in Syria. When the President gave his speech at West Point last week, I think – the week before, one of the pieces he talked quite a bit about is the changing threat of terrorism, and that's why he talked about a \$5 billion counterterrorism fund that would assist countries and threats in places like Iraq and places like neighboring countries around Syria, because we've known that this threat was one that we would – that we have been long concerned about.

QUESTION: But if you're going to go after ISIL in Iraq through your support for the Iraqi Government, that can't be in a vacuum, right? I mean, you need to go after these guys in Iraq and in Syria, correct?

MS. PSAKI: Certainly. But I think we've been consistently – we've consistently said that the threat of terrorism is a concern for us in Syria. It has been as – but we also need to do – address that at the same time while addressing a path forward for a transitional governing body because of the threats posed by the government.

QUESTION: But you agree that the same ISIL that is fighting the Syrian Government is the same one that is fighting the Iraqi Government, correct?

MS. PSAKI: Well, there are different coalitions and different factions, as you know, Said.

QUESTION: They claim to be one and the same. They claim to be one and the same.

MS. PSAKI: Well, there have been many different conflicting reports about that over the course of months, as you know. But regardless, any threat – any terrorist threat – there are many that, unfortunately, exist in that particular region – are of concern to us, and that's why we are upping our focus on the changing threat – changing threats that we're facing today.

QUESTION: And today, Bashar al-Assad said that he's willing to go after them to aid the Iraqi Government. Would you welcome that?

MS. PSAKI: I think we've been pretty clear over time, Said, that Assad and the horrific acts that he's taken against his own people is a concern we have – we continue to have.

QUESTION: So – yes. When do you expect the Senate to vote on the new legislation to aid the Syrian opposition?

MS. PSAKI: Well, it's passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as part of the NDAA, so beyond that there are obviously additional legislative steps that would need to be taken.

QUESTION: Why is that? It wasn't a Senate – Armed Services?

MS. PSAKI: Oh, sorry. I'm – you're right. Senate Armed Services.

QUESTION: What – right. But is that what this all is dependent on? I mean, that could take months. And in fact, unless something happened while we were away last week, you don't even have congressional – even a signal that they're going to sign off on this \$5 billion counterterrorism program. Is that what you're waiting for to give the Iraqis new assistance?

MS. PSAKI: No. I wasn't stating that at all.

QUESTION: Oh. Okay.

MS. PSAKI: Elise was asking me about Syria, and that's a separate question.

...

QUESTION: So maybe you mentioned on that part that the Turkish Government requested a meeting with NATO on this?

QUESTION: No, we haven't talked about that at all. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: No, NATO meeting, it was – I mean, just --

MS. PSAKI: I addressed that and I pointed everyone to Turkey and the NATO – and to NATO.

QUESTION: Jen, one last question for me: Are you concerned about the sophisticated arms that you have delivered to the Iraqi military?

MS. PSAKI: In terms of what could be in the hands of others?

QUESTION: Exactly.

QUESTION: Do you think U.S. arms are in their hands?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I stated I think a little bit earlier in the briefing that that is a situation we're looking closely into to assess what they might have their hands on. Of course we would be concerned if they did – they do.

June 10, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Yes. This Kurdish – Iraq-Kurdish oil tankers – today, second one left Turkish port, and the other one is, I think – I don't know whether it already sold. Do you have any comment on those tankers?

MS. PSAKI: Well, our position, obviously, here has been clear and longstanding in that we don't support the export or sale of oil, absent the appropriate approval of the Federal Iraqi Government. And as you know, this exposes those who are undergoing this effort to potentially serious legal risks. I've seen those reports. Again, we have the same concerns we've had with previous reports of another – of the other ship.

QUESTION: So these two tankers right now in the international seas, as far as we know, are you coordinating with other countries not to buy this oil tankers, or are you doing anything to prevent this?

MS. PSAKI: Well, our position – as we've stated our position many, many times, I think it's pretty clear to the international community and the private sector, and obviously they'll make their own decisions.

June 3, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Thank you. I got quick couple questions. One is that there were protests over the weekend for the anniversary of Gezi protests and the security forces respond to them. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. HARF: Let me see what I have on that. I think probably not anything else than Jen said yesterday. Closely monitored events over the weekend. We are concerned in some instances authorities detained peaceful protesters and prevented others from participating in peaceful demonstrations as well.

QUESTION: Today, Prime Minister Erdogan, referencing CNN International's Chief Turkey Correspondent Ivan Watson, he said that those don't have anything to do with independent and impartial media. They have been given tasks. They are agents. Do you have undercover agents in Turkey?

MS. HARF: I can let CNN – Elise defend CNN if she wants to. I would say that they're nothing except for independent and non-biased media. Look, we strongly support freedom of the press in Turkey, including Ivan Watson from CNN being able to report, and have continued to raise our concerns.

QUESTION: So apparently Prime Minister Erdogan, leader of country accusing that he's an undercover agent.

MS. HARF: It's a ridiculous accusation.

May 23, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Iraq
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Turkey? Just one question following up from yesterday. I ask about Kurdistan Regional Government's oil to Turkey and (inaudible) to world market.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Today, the Baghdad government – Maliki government reacted this shipment. And Jen said yesterday that the U.S. will talk to officials in Turkey.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: Do you have any follow-up on this?

MS. HARF: Well, as I think she said yesterday – but look, what needs to happen here is that the parties need to come back to the table and talk about getting an agreement in place and that no one should take any steps until there's an agreement in place. So obviously we've seen some steps being taken separate from that, and we would not support that. We've been very clear about that for a long time.

I don't have specifics in terms of who we've talked to about this issue, but I know we've raised it.

QUESTION: Okay. On Turkey, again, yesterday – first of all, since yesterday, there have been protests and two people already died in this protests. And they are going on tonight, as well. Do you have any comment on this? Have you seen?

MS. HARF: Well, yeah, we're closely following the reports of what's happening. Obviously, very saddened by the loss of life that we've seen and urge all sides to exercise restraint and avoid violence as they participate in these protests or in terms of the response.

QUESTION: So today, Amnesty International released a statement regarding these two killings, and according to reports – according to Amnesty International, one of them died with teargas canister in his right eye and the other one was with live ammunition. Yesterday, I asked this question whether U.S. is reassessing its policy selling riot control equipment, such as teargas, to Turkey. And Jen stated that there are certain standards that should be held.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. And that they're a NATO ally as well, obviously, which plays into some of this. And to my knowledge, I don't know if people are reassessing this. I am happy to check with our folks and see.

QUESTION: Okay. Another question: Just yesterday, an Istanbul prosecutor is now seeking 52 years prison for a journalist who published classified documents of the government. Do you think it's enough, or --

MS. HART: I don't think I have any comment on those reports.

QUESTION: You have not seen these reports?

MS. HART: I don't have any comment on those reports. I've seen them; I just don't have any comment for you.

QUESTION: Okay.

May 22, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Iraq

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Thank you. Today Turkish energy minister stated that Turkey began shipping Kurdistan Regional Government's oil to the world market. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. PSAKI: We've seen these reports and we'll discuss their implications with our partners in Turkey and in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. Our most immediate concern is for Iraq's stability. We've had a longstanding position on this issue, as you know, that has not changed. And Iraq is facing a difficult situation. We've been clear that it's important for all sides to take actions to help the country pull together and avoid actions that might further exacerbate divisions and tensions. So we'll be in touch with both sides.

QUESTION: Have you talked to Baghdad over this recent decision?

MS. PSAKI: Have we talked --

QUESTION: -- talked to the Maliki government on this particular issue?

MS. PSAKI: We will be in touch, I'm certain, with them as well. We're in touch with them on a regular basis. But again, I don't have any specific updates on contacts. But go ahead.

QUESTION: Do you see this shipping to the world market of Kurdistan Regional Government's oil – is this a factor for division, contribute to division of Iraq? Is this your assessment?

MS. PSAKI: Well, our position has long been that we don't support exports without the appropriate approval of the federal Iraqi government, and certainly we do have concerns about the impact of those continuing.

...

QUESTION: Going back to Turkey, more than a week ago you called on Turkish government to do investigation and you called also accountability. Over the week – what's your assessment? Do you think that 301 people – miners' killing are being investigated as you called?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any new assessment today. Obviously, it's natural that they would be in the lead. As we've noted many times, our heartfelt condolences go out to the families. To our knowledge, the Government of Turkey has – while they've expressed gratitude for our offers of assistance, they have not – they have said that if they need it, they will ask for it. They have not asked for it at this point. But again, we're following it closely and in close touch on the ground.

QUESTION: One last point – question: As you know, protests have been going on, and you commented on this a couple days ago. A few months ago, Amnesty International called on U.S.

not to sell tear gas and other armored vehicles. Do you have any reassessment of that policy right now? Selling to Turkey.

MS. PSAKI: Well, Turkey is a NATO ally. We have approved export licenses to allow the Turkish government to purchase U.S. products, including tear gas. These products are intended for law enforcement to use to save lives, maintain order, and protect property, and they're held to a certain standard as well.

QUESTION: A couple days ago you were asked about these comments allegedly made – comments and behavior, allegedly, by Prime Minister Erdogan. Has that – have you pursued that at all with the Turks? Has anyone reached out to him or to the foreign minister?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not aware of any further clarification of them. We're clearly in close touch with them, but I don't have any – nothing new to provide on that particular topic.

May 19, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: It has been six days that the mining blast happened, you issued statement. You also stated that United States is ready to assist if there is a need. Have you been asked for any help?

MS. PSAKI: We have not. To our knowledge, the Government of Turkey has not requested international assistance at this point. We stand ready to provide assistance to Turkey should it be requested. As we noted in our statement, we of course – and let me reiterate our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of those who lost their lives in the tragic mining accident last week.

QUESTION: There have been protests going on in various cities in Turkey, including Soma, where this mining accident happened. And they all were confronted by the police force. Do you have any comment on these events are going on for few days now?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we are following, of course, the reports of protests in the wake of this terrible tragedy. We support, as you know, freedom of expression and assembly, including the right to peaceful protest, as fundamental to any democracy. So we will continue to watch that, but those are our views.

QUESTION: I have one more.

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead.

QUESTION: The prime minister went to visit Soma a few days ago, and there were a couple of videos surfaced that went viral. One of them apparently – or I'd like to get your take on that. He was – he appeared to be slapping a citizen in Soma. Did you see that? If you saw that, what is your take on that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we saw the range of videos that have been out there. Of course, we reject the apparent use of unprovoked violence against demonstrators and urge accountability according to Turkey's rule of law.

...

QUESTION: There was another video. It was very much clear that our Prime Minister Erdogan heard saying if you boo or protest a leader of a country, you deserve a slap. This was pretty clear. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. PSAKI: We've seen the reports of them. I don't have the specific language. Obviously, if there were offensive comments made, we'd of course condemn those. But I think there's some confusion on that front.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: This goes to the allegedly anti-Semitic comments that he made?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: That's what you're talking about?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: You don't know that he actually said them? Is that what you're saying?

MS. PSAKI: No. We've seen them. If that is the actual language that was used, we'd of course condemn that language, but I believe there's some confusion over the --

QUESTION: All right. And I just wanted to -- do you have a -- broader thoughts on the Turkish response? Is it -- the Turkish response, particularly to the protests?

MS. PSAKI: Well, it's --

QUESTION: Is it --

MS. PSAKI: To the protests, I think I made clear that we reject the apparent use of unprovoked violence against demonstrators and protesters and urged accountability according to Turkey's rule of law.

QUESTION: Okay. So you think that they overreacted? Is that --

MS. PSAKI: There were some incidents, certainly, we are concerned about.

QUESTION: When you say unprovoked force, you also -- I know you talk about the police force respond, but you also mention or signal about the prime minister's apparent slap to the citizen or --

MS. PSAKI: The -- I'm sorry. I couldn't -- say that one more time?

QUESTION: The question was: When you say unprovoked force, you also talk about prime minister apparent slap to the citizen?

MS. PSAKI: To the citizen?

QUESTION: Yeah. One of the citizens in Soma.

QUESTION: He's asking if, when you say -- you don't like unprovoked violence, if that includes what the prime minister did to this protester. I think that's what he's asking.

MS. PSAKI: I think we're referring to a range of videos that have been out.

QUESTION: And --

MS. PSAKI: I don't think I have to get more specific. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Did you ask Ankara about these anti-Semitic slurs?

MS. PSAKI: Reports?

QUESTION: Yeah, reports. Or --

MS. PSAKI: Again, we're in close touch. I'm not aware of a conversation about that

May 12, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan yesterday openly declared that he has launched a witch hunt against Gulen movement. And what's your reaction about this statement?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any particular comment for you on it.

QUESTION: On Turkey, one more?

MS. PSAKI: One more on Turkey. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Over the weekend, OSCE spokesman made a comment regarding press freedom in Turkey, and he said that for the new intel law that just passed the parliament, signed by the president, now it's at the constitutional court, and he said that this bill would send any journalist to 10 years in prison just for doing their job. Do you have any comment on this new bill?

MS. PSAKI: Oh, well, we continue to urge the Turkish Government to uphold freedom of the press and permit unfettered public access to information. An independent and unfettered media is an essential element of democratic, open societies, so any effort to hinder that would certainly be of concern to us.

May 5, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

MS. HARF: Yes, and then I'm going to you, and then I'm going around.

QUESTION: Last Thursday there was a Freedom House report released. Is there any way, first of all, can you tell us how do you view Freedom House reports in general?

MS. HARF: In general? Let me see, I have something on that. Obviously, you saw me last week stand up here and talk a lot about freedom of the press during our Free the Press Week.

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. HARF: The Freedom House 2014 report concluded that media freedom hit a decade-long low last year. We've talked about this a lot in this room, whether it's in Russia, whether it's in Venezuela, whether it's in Turkey with YouTube and Twitter. So we've talked about this a lot in this room. Obviously, we believe it's an important issue.

QUESTION: So do you find it credible and something that you referenced to it --

MS. HARF: The Freedom House report?

QUESTION: Mm-hmm.

MS. HARF: Well, it -- I mean, I don't how I would describe it, other than obviously it's an issue we take very seriously and agree with some of the recommendations in it, or some of the analysis. I just haven't seen the whole thing.

QUESTION: So to Turkey --

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: -- the Turkish media is this year for the first time after about 15 or 20 years now unfree, defined as unfree from partly free. As the ally of Turkey, how do you view the situation in media freedom in Turkey?

MS. HARF: Well, I've spoken up here quite a bit about, like I just said, Twitter and YouTube and freedom of expression space in Turkey. We have conveyed our concerns about media freedoms to Turkish authorities and will continue to urge the government to open social media sites and to do better across the board.

QUESTION: So after this report released there has been a big discussion in Turkey going on, but also the Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu came out over the weekend and stated that this

report is “little more than an operation aimed at changing the perception towards Turkey.” This is quote-unquote. Do you think there’s an operation in Turkey – in the U.S. and Washington?

MS. HARF: Absolutely not at all. Not at all, period. And what I think would change the way people look at Turkey is if they unblocked YouTube, if they didn’t block Twitter. I think that’s what drives people other places to say, “Hey, maybe freedom of expression isn’t that great in Turkey right now.”

QUESTION: So just to follow up: When the Turkish foreign minister comes out in Turkey and says such a thing, that there is an intentional operation against Turkey’s image, and you are saying that this is very much a impartial report --

MS. HARF: Absolutely.

QUESTION: -- how do you think Turkish people – what to believe, whether --

MS. HARF: I don’t think I speak for the Turkish people writ large up here.

QUESTION: And the final question --

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: Also, Foreign Minister Davutoglu asked Turkish journalists to reject these report findings. Do you have any comment to that?

MS. HARF: I don’t. Michael.

QUESTION: There was a report actually in our paper that the Jewish community in Odesa, in Ukraine – I know I never ask about Ukraine, but --

MS. HARF: Making news here today.

QUESTION: -- there you go – is looking to – are considering an evacuation.

MS. HARF: Oh, okay. Let me check on that.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: I mean, I had seen the report, but I don’t have any confirmation or specifics on that.

QUESTION: Okay. Thanks.

May 1, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Can we go back to Turkey, since it was just raised? I wondered if you'd seen the reports today about the riot police using water cannon and tear gas against protesters in Turkey on a May Day, who were trying to defy a ban on May Day demonstrations.

MS. HARF: We have seen those, obviously are closely following the reports, trying to get more information. As you know, not just in Turkey but everywhere, we support people's rights to freely express themselves and the right to peaceful protest – also would urge everyone to show restraint in these kind of situations.

QUESTION: So given that you support the right to protest, did you see the similar protests that were happening in the Red Square as well in Russia?

MS. HARF: I --

QUESTION: They – a sort of patriotic fervor breaking out.

MS. HARF: I'm sure it was.

QUESTION: It's the first time – well, apparently since the break-up of the Soviet Union that they've had such large May Day protests in Moscow.

MS. HARF: Well, we – I actually haven't seen those reports, but we do support the rights of people to peacefully protest.

QUESTION: So – but they were shouting out things like Putin is right, proud of their country, let's support Putin's decisions.

MS. HARF: Well, just because I disagree with what they're saying doesn't mean I don't think they should be able to say it.

QUESTION: But, I mean, obviously, we've talked a lot in here about the propaganda that the United States feels that the Russian people are being fed through such things as RT. Do you – are these – are the hundred thousand people who turned out in Moscow, are they deluded?

MS. HARF: Again, I haven't seen all those reports. But we don't agree with the notion that what President Putin and Russia has done is right, that there's any legal basis for it, certainly, and that's why we've been very clear that there will be continued consequences.

April 30, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I know that you were asked – or Jen Psaki was asked about prime minister’s – Turkish prime minister interview with Charlie Rose. I just want to again repeat, is there any way you can share? The prime minister said that he expects from U.S., as his strategic partner, to either expel Fethullah Gulen, who lives in Pennsylvania, or extradite him back to Turkey. What is your response to this?

MS. HARF: Well, I’m going to say probably exactly what Jen said. As a matter of longstanding policy, the Department of State does not comment on pending or potential extradition requests.

QUESTION: Don’t you think prime minister has a point when he says that as a strategic partner that he returned tons of people in the past and U.S. should do the same?

MS. HARF: I’m just not – you can ask the question any way you want. I’m not going to comment on it.

QUESTION: Okay. One more question. In that interview, which was widely publicized in Turkey, Prime Minister Erdogan talks about these groups within U.S. that were behind the protests and upheavals in Egypt, Ukraine, and Istanbul. Do you know anything about these groups?

MS. HARF: Well, let’s be clear that this is not about the United States in any of those places you just said. And we’re not behind any of the legitimate, democratic protests we’ve seen in any of those countries. So let’s be very clear that this is not about what the U.S. is doing, because we’re not doing anything. This is an internal Turkish matter. That’s where they need to focus.

QUESTION: But the prime minister says that there is a scenario. It’s the same scenario as being conducted in Ukraine, in Egypt, in Istanbul, in Turkey.

MS. HARF: Well, we certainly believe that people all over the world should be able to legitimately express their points of view. What I’m saying is the United States has nothing to do with that. We say that they should be able to do, but this isn’t about us. This is about what’s happening in each of those countries.

QUESTION: What do you think about the notion that there are groups either in U.S. or in the West that trigger this kind of upheaval in these --

MS. HARF: I think it’s ridiculous and not borne out by the facts on the ground.

April 29, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: I had a couple questions on Turkey. The first one is that Prime Minister Erdogan today said that he's going to ask the U.S. to extradite Fethullah Gulen, who's the head of a large network. He currently lives in Pennsylvania and has done for a couple of decades. Are you aware of this request? Has it been formally made?

MS. PSAKI: I've seen the report. I can't speak, as a matter of policy, to any pending or potential extradition requests. And so unfortunately, there is very little I can say here.

QUESTION: Is that because of privacy concerns, or --

MS. PSAKI: It's longstanding policy.

QUESTION: And can you -- are you able to sort of say whether -- what status Mr. Gulen is living under in the United States?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not. I don't believe we can speak to that for privacy purposes.

...

QUESTION: Is there a official request made by Ankara regarding this, or you cannot even talk about that?

MS. PSAKI: I can't speak on pending or potential extradition requests.

QUESTION: Well, he is not an American citizen, is he?

MS. PSAKI: I can't speak to that either.

QUESTION: Why not?

MS. PSAKI: But I don't believe -- or maybe he -- I don't believe he is, Matt.

QUESTION: He's not -- he is not an American citizen?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And yet he is covered by -- forget about visas, forget about -- he is covered -- so even though he's not an American citizen, just because he's in the U.S., he gets accorded the same rights?

MS. PSAKI: It's our longstanding policy.

QUESTION: Wait, wait.

QUESTION: What is the --

QUESTION: To treat people who are in the United States as citizens?

MS. PSAKI: To not speak – no, to not speak to potential or pending extradition requests.

QUESTION: Gotcha.

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) with any American official, this guy – I mean, this gentlemen, Gulen?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any further update.

QUESTION: But can you check for us?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not going to have any update.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: I have one more on Turkey, actually (inaudible). I just wondered if you --

QUESTION: -- also seen the statement from Prime Minister Erdogan that he thinks that – that he's prepared to normalize ties with Israel within the next few days after Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu apologized for the raid in 2010. Is that your understanding of the situation?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any independent confirmation of it. I'd certainly refer you to the Turkish and Israeli officials on that front. We certainly attach great importance to the restoration of positive relations between them. You are all familiar with the role the President and the Secretary played in this effort just over a year ago. We believe – we continue engaging with both countries, and we believe reconciliation would advance regional peace and security between them.

QUESTION: But you don't actually know if it's going to happen?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any further confirmation of it.

April 23, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Today, Turkish prime ministry, for the first time in history, issued statement regarding 1915 World War I events. Do you have any assessment or reaction to that?

MS. PSAKI: I do. We welcome Prime Minister Erdogan's historic public acknowledgement of the suffering that Armenians experienced in 1915. We believe this is a positive indication that there can be a full, frank, and just acknowledgement of the facts, which we hope will advance the cause of reconciliation between Turks and Armenians.

QUESTION: Do you have any other further comment regarding content of the statement which encourages different perspectives in terms of discussing these past events?

MS. PSAKI: I don't. We welcome the event. We think it – we welcome the statement. We think it was a positive step.

...

QUESTION: Ismail Besikci, he's a renowned Turkish author who has written about the plight of the Kurds for 17 years, and he got a valid 10-year U.S. visa, like more than a week ago. But he was denied from leaving Turkey to the United States at the airport, and the Turkish authorities told him that the order had come from the United States. Did you deny Ismail Besikci entry to the U.S.?

MS. PSAKI: Well, section 22F of the INA prohibits us from disclosing details from individual cases. So questions regarding his denial of boarding should be directed to the Department of Homeland Security.

QUESTION: But this is not detail; it's a yes or no question. Did you deny him or not? I don't need details.

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any more information I can provide to you.

April 14, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Yes. Over the weekend, State Department Turkey official Amanda Sloat made a speech for a Turkish convention, and she talk about it – she said that U.S. deeply concerned over the allegations that the politics interfering into the judicial system in Turkey. Is there any way you can elaborate on this?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as we have made clear in the past, including in our annual Human Rights Report, we remain deeply concerned about due process and effective access to justice in Turkey. Independent investigations and independent judicial processes are essential for the rule of law. We look to Turkey to uphold the essential elements of a healthy democracy such as the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and the system of checks and balances between branches of government. And as I mentioned, this is an issue we've raised in the past when warranted, and it's also included in our annual Human Rights Report. So I'd point you to that as well as the text of the speech for more details.

QUESTION: While Ms. Sloat was making that speech, she talk about that over the last recent months that there were disturbing events. So apparently this is not the last year's annual report, but something happened over the last two months. There were several incidents over the months --

MS. PSAKI: And oftentimes over those months we raised concerns as those instances occurred.

QUESTION: But you – also many times, you stated that these were the internal affairs, for example, when I ask about the judges and prosecutors, counsels, legislation. So if you are now deeply concerned, that means that you change your --

MS. PSAKI: I don't think so. I'm still not weighing into internal political matters in Turkey. But certainly, as we've expressed in the past, over – around a variety of events, when there are concerns to express about the independence of the judiciary, we'll express those.

QUESTION: So they – can I just follow up? Is this about the prime minister or the leaders in the government talking about the Constitution Court, or is this something about legislations? I'm just trying to get a sense of what exactly are --

MS. PSAKI: I'm just not going to detail it further. Our deputy assistant secretary did an entire speech just a few days ago.

April 10, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: About an hour, there will be a resolution at the Senate regarding Armenian genocide resolution. Do you have any position on that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, our position has long been that we acknowledge – clearly acknowledge as historical fact and mourn the loss of 1.5 million Armenians who were massacred or marched to their deaths in the final days of the Ottoman Empire. These horrific events resulted in one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century, and the United States recognizes that they remain a great source of pain for the people of Armenia and of Armenian descent, as they do for all of us who share basic universal values. Beyond that, I don't have any other comment for you.

QUESTION: Okay. So this resolution wants Administration to recognize or the President to recognize 24th of April as the commemoration for the 1915 events, genocide events. Would you – do you have any position regarding this?

MS. PSAKI: I just provided what our United States position is.

QUESTION: Jen, you can't address --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) or when you were working for candidate Obama what his position was on this issue?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Matt, I know that candidate Obama has his own personal views about this issue, which he – was actually in his statement that the White House sent out last year. I'm sure there'll be more statements to come at the end of this month.

QUESTION: But you cannot specifically address the question of whether the U.S. Government regards the events that you just described near the end of the Ottoman Empire as genocide?

MS. PSAKI: I just stated what our position is.

...

QUESTION: Jen, one single question more. There is a protocols between the Armenia and Turkey that your Administration helped in 2011 or '10, I believe. Do you have any update on that, how those normalization process is going on?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we continue to urge both countries to work together to achieve a full, frank and just acknowledgement of the facts. We believe that by working together to address their shared history, Armenia and Turkey can promote stability and prosperity in the entire Caucasus region, so we continue to work with them on that.

While the protocols may not be moving forward at this time, we note that both sides remain committed to the process of normalizing relations and neither side has withdrawn. Our greatest interest on this issue is to see Armenia and Turkey heal the wounds of the past and move forward together in a shared future of security and prosperity in the region, and our policy is, of course, naturally guided by that goal.

QUESTION: Do you know why this process is not moving forward? It has been five years almost that --

MS. PSAKI: Sure, I understand that. I don't have any more detailed analysis for you.

April 7, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: It has been over a week that local elections conducted in Turkey. Is there any way you can tell us that – whether you find the elections done in a transparent and fair and free conditions, circumstances?

MS. PSAKI: I'm certainly aware, we are certainly aware, of the elections that have taken place. I don't have any particular analysis for you about the outcome of the elections.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: Do you have any comment on the Afghanistan election?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the Secretary provided – put out a statement over the weekend, so I'd point you to that.

QUESTION: I have just one more question on Turkey.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So the Twitter ban was lifted by the Constitutional Court, and today a deputy prime minister said that the decision was wrong by the Constitutional Court and it was supposed to respect other local Turkish courts' decisions about the privacy and individual rights. I was wondering whether you think the Constitutional Court didn't respect the privacy and --

MS. PSAKI: Well, I'm not going to engage in Turkish politics, but I will say we welcome, of course, the recent Constitutional Court decision in support of freedom of expression in Turkey. We note the Turkish Government implemented the ruling to unblock Twitter yesterday. We are also following the Ankara court's decision that the government should unblock access to YouTube, and we continue to urge the Turkish Government to ensure all open access to all social media.

April 4, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Twitter ban was lifted --

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: -- by the order of constitutional court.

MS. HARF: It was.

QUESTION: Do you have any comments on that?

MS. HARF: Yes. Well, obviously, we welcome the recent Constitutional Court decision in support of freedom of expression in Turkey. We also note that the Turkish Government implemented the ruling yesterday to unblock Twitter, also following an Ankara court's decision that the government should unblock access to YouTube. Obviously continue to urge the government to open all social media space in Turkey.

April 2, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Do you have anything about the constitutional court's decision about the Twitter ban in Turkey, Marie? Because the U.S. Embassy in Turkey just released a statement about how they are welcoming the decision of the constitutional court.

MS. HARF: Well, clearly, we said the Twitter ban needs to end, and any court decision would need to be implemented to ensure that it does end. I know this just happened, I think, very recently --

QUESTION: Today.

MS. HARF: -- today. So I'd defer to the folks on the ground, but obviously we think it needs to end. And if there has been a court decision, we think it needs to be implemented quickly, as quickly as possible.

QUESTION: Just a technical question. Just Twitter or (inaudible) on YouTube?

MS. HARF: It's my understanding the court ruling was just about Twitter.

QUESTION: About Twitter.

MS. HARF: Yeah. But we obviously don't think YouTube should be banned either.

March 31, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Like before the elections earlier this week, the way the United States has seemingly stepped up its criticism of Turkey ever since that corruption scandal started. And then last week the White House criticized the Erdogan government of – for the Twitter shutdown.

MS. HARF: As did I.

QUESTION: Yeah. As you did, right?

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Did you, like, overestimate the power of Erdogan's opponents? Because the elections showed that he won a landslide victory.

MS. HARF: Well, we're obviously following the local elections in Turkey and would also note that final results have not yet been released. Obviously, we would congratulate the people of Turkey for their participation in these elections. And I am not going to comment further on the results of local elections or do any further analysis, particularly before they haven't been officially confirmed by the higher elections council.

QUESTION: There are some reports of fraud as well. Are you aware of that and are you concerned?

MS. HARF: Well, we've seen these reports; as we do around the world, obviously urge election officials to investigate any credible allegations of irregularities. And I would refer you to the Turkish officials to speak more to that.

QUESTION: Do you think President Obama will congratulate Erdogan for winning the elections?

MS. HARF: I have no predictions about what anyone else might say. I just know what I'm saying.

...

QUESTION: Right after the elections, Erdogan's victory speech, he mentioned Pennsylvania several times. That's of course because there's this Islamic – Islamist preacher there.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So my question is, like, there has been so much talk that the United States and even the West in general are more in line with that – with Fethullah Gulen’s position on Turkey than Erdogan, and that’s why the United States has stepped up its criticism on Twitter, on like the corruption, and also regarding Erdogan’s handling of other (inaudible) issues.

MS. HARF: Well, that’s ridiculous. Regardless of whether this gentleman was living in Pennsylvania or not, it would still not be okay for the Government of Turkey to ban Twitter. It would still not be okay for the Government of Turkey to crack down like they have on dissent. Those things have nothing to do with the fact that one of their citizens is living in the Pennsylvania countryside.

QUESTION: Aren’t you more in position with, for example, Fethullah Gulen --

MS. HARF: No.

QUESTION: -- who is reportedly pro-Israel-Turkey relations --

MS. HARF: Turkey’s a NATO ally. Let’s be clear here. Turkey is a close NATO ally. We don’t always agree on everything, but we don’t agree on everything with anyone. So forget about the gentleman living in Pennsylvania. We have a bilateral alliance with the Government of Turkey. We will speak out when we disagree. We will speak out when we agree. And it’s really up to the people of Turkey to make decisions about their government. We – it’s not up to us, and any reports that we have any impact on that are just crazy.

March 28, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Syria/Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: According to reports in Turkey, the Foreign Minister Mr. Davutoglu planned a provocative act inside Syria so Turkey has the excuse to invade Syria. Do you want to comment on this?

MS. HARF: Are you referring to an alleged phone conversation?

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. HARF: As I said yesterday, I don't have anything for you on alleged calls or conversations that are out there among Turkish officials.

QUESTION: Yeah, but Mr. Davutoglu --

MS. HARF: It's not for me to comment.

QUESTION: But Mr. Davutoglu said that the tape is genuine.

MS. HARF: Again, not for me to comment on those allegations that are out there.

March 27, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Thank you. The Turkish Government has banned YouTube today. So do you have any statement on that?

MS. HARF: We obviously, as I said about Twitter, oppose any action that encroaches on the right of free speech or free expression, continue to urge the Turkish Government to unblock its citizens' access now to YouTube, but also still to Twitter. There was the court case yesterday. As we saw about Twitter, they've given them 30 days to comply, and we hope they comply very soon.

QUESTION: You held a meeting with Turkish officials two days ago regarding this legal process.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. On March 25th.

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. HARF: It was a phone call.

QUESTION: It was a phone conference. Yeah. Is there any legal assistance that you can provide to Turkey in terms of this legal dispute? In – I mean, I don't know what the Turkish authorities are expecting from Turkey in this, but --

MS. HARF: Legal assistance. I'm not sure what you're --

QUESTION: -- not legal assistance or any other thing that you can provide to Turkey in this dispute. Why – I don't know what is the aim of the meeting, for example.

MS. HARF: Well, we're having conversations to discuss the whole range of issues about freedom of expression in Turkey. As we said, our folks discussed Turkey's new internet law, the shutdown of Twitter, and they shared U.S. positions on internet freedom, privacy, and internet governance. We've been conveying in these meetings and others on the ground with the ambassador our very serious concerns about what the Turkish Government has done in the internet law, with Twitter, now with YouTube, and very strongly saying that they need to stop doing this. So it's a constant conversation. The legal issue's not ours, but we're talking government to government about how Turkey can move forward.

QUESTION: But it was the Turks who demanded this meeting.

MS. HARF: Demanded meetings – that sounds very strong. The Turkish Information and Communications Technology Authority requested a meeting with the United States, and we arranged a phone call.

QUESTION: And is there any request from Turkish authorities from you in that issue?

MS. HARF: I don't have a further readout of the meeting.

QUESTION: About the content of this last YouTube ban – it's about the religious site and the likelihood of any military intervention on Turkish side, to this religious site within Syria. I'm trying to get something from you since Thursday, and – but you keep being silent on this issue.

MS. HARF: You think today's going to be your lucky day?

QUESTION: Because yesterday you said that you were going to check with your folks. Did you have any chance to look at this issue?

MS. HARF: Well, in terms of the alleged recordings, just aren't going to have any comment on those. I haven't heard them, I don't speak Turkish, and don't have much of a comment on those -
-

QUESTION: No, no, I'm --

MS. HARF: -- (a) – wait, I'm getting to (b) – and on the religious site that you keep asking about, again, don't have any details on any of that to share with you. Again, I'm happy to keep checking, but just don't have anything for you on that.

QUESTION: No, when you were asked about whether you are concerned about any Turkish military intervention in Syria, you said that you were happy to check with your folks. I mean, are you concerned about Turkish military intervention in Syria?

MS. HARF: I just don't have anything more for you on this topic. I know this is all being based off alleged recordings that, again, I'm not going to comment on.

QUESTION: And also, this – another national security – turns into a national security issue for Turkey too, because it was very high-level – I mean, confidential meeting that they took regarding Syria, and they leaked the voice records of this meeting.

MS. HARF: Again, I have no idea if this has been tampered with. I have no idea where it came from. Again, I haven't heard it, and I don't speak Turkish, and I don't want to comment on a recording that I have no idea the origin of it, and where there's a lot of things on it I'm just not going to comment on.

QUESTION: Foreign Minister Davutoglu's talking about his conversation with Secretary Kerry too in that meeting, and according to the – Mr. Foreign Minister, Secretary Kerry asked whether Turks made a decision about this religious site or not.

MS. HARF: Again, I'm not going to comment on this alleged recording that's a third-hand rumor about something Secretary Kerry's alleged to have said. I'm just not going to.

Yes. Oh, go ahead, Elise, and then we'll go to you in the back. Sorry. I did promise Elise next.

...

QUESTION: Tolga already mentioned, but this time, the records of the national security meeting of high-level Turkish officials are leaked and broadcast on YouTube. I wonder when the subject of the conversation is about critical national security issue, such as Syria. My question is that: What will happen if a similar situation happen in this country? What will be your reaction to that?

MS. HARF: I would not even want to venture a guess in that hypothetical in any way. I appreciate the question, though.

QUESTION: Thank you.

March 25, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Would you follow up on yesterday, actually, Marie, for the Twitter ban and the situation at the Turkey-Syria border? Do you have any update on these issues?

MS. HARF: On any – you asked a lot of questions yesterday.

QUESTION: Yeah. But --

MS. HARF: Any specific follow-ups you want to ask? Okay. I'll give you a few follow-ups that I have in here, and we'll see if I answer all your questions.

So someone asked about the rules of engagement yesterday; I think it was Matt, so I'm looking at Lara. Turkey's parliament revised their rules of engagement in the wake of the June 2012 incident in which Syria shot down a Turkish plane. The revision of these rules was openly and widely covered by world media, and Prime Minister Erdogan referred to these revisions on several occasions. So when I said they were fully transparent, and Matt had asked if these were discussed publicly, turns out they were.

As far as I'm aware, we haven't sort of discussed further – we're not concerned about further escalation with Turkey. Obviously, if there were any indications it might, we'd be concerned. Haven't seen any indications. We have no reason to doubt Turkey's version of events in this as well. Obviously, we will continue to talk to them about the incident.

What else?

QUESTION: About the Twitter ban, your contacts with the Turkish officials.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: Ambassador Sepulveda is in contact with Turkish counterparts on this issue?

MS. HARF: Let me check and see if he is. I know a number of folks have been. I don't have details, but let me check and see if he is.

QUESTION: And also, you had said that you will look into it, the privacy dimension of this problem. Do UN secretary – UN – United Nations High Commissioners for Human Rights released a statement today regarding the Twitter ban, and they emphasized two major points: one, freedom of expression, and the other one, right to privacy. Do you have any comments on --

MS. HARF: I don't have any updates on the privacy aspect. You're right, I said I would take it. I'm sorry I don't have an answer. Let me see what I can get you.

QUESTION: Marie?

QUESTION: On Turkey, do you still consider Mr. Erdogan a loyal ally of the United States?

MS. HARF: Turkey's a NATO ally.

QUESTION: I'm asking about Mr. Erdogan.

MS. HARF: Well, Turkey is a NATO ally, and he's prime minister of Turkey.

QUESTION: I know. Thank you.

...

QUESTION: And just to clarify the situation, because – I mean at the Turkey-Syria border – have you discussed with Turkish Government this – their concern about the religious site within Syria which is belonging to Turkey?

MS. HARF: I don't have any information on that. I don't have anything on that.

QUESTION: Because if you look at the front pages of Turkish newspapers, there are some remarks of the Turkish officials regarding this site, and some deployment to the border regarding the threat coming from the radical groups regarding this specific area. But you see – you say that there is not any escalation risk at the moment, at the Syria-Turkey border. So you don't – as far as I understand, you don't take seriously those --

MS. HARF: I just don't have anything for you on that specific item that you're asking about. What I said is in reference to the plane, and to my knowledge, we haven't had conversations about escalation or not escalating because we think this was --

QUESTION: No --

MS. HARF: -- we think this was an isolated incident, and we hope it stays that way.

QUESTION: I'm not talking about only jet incident.

MS. HARF: But that's what I was talking about.

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: How about --

MS. HARF: And on the other question you ask --

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. HARF: -- I don't have anything for you on that.

QUESTION: Still? I mean --

MS. HARF: Still. Do you have any further questions?

QUESTION: No. My question is: Have you contacted --

MS. HARF: Okay. I don't have anything further on you --

QUESTION: -- with the Turkish officials? No?

MS. HARF: I don't have anything further for you on that topic.

QUESTION: That means you don't have anything on the military -- Turkish military buildup on the border with Syria, too?

MS. HARF: On the specific religious site that he's asking about, I don't have --

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. HARF: What I said is we think this hopefully, the shooting down of a plane is an isolated incident. Obviously we're concerned about all of Syria's borders and free flow of people over them and -- all of that. We're obviously concerned about that. What I have said is that we haven't talked to the Turkish Government, to my knowledge, about the plane incident and not escalating, because we think it's an incident that took place in an isolated setting and hope that it doesn't portend anything bad for the future, obviously.

QUESTION: But you don't want to talk about the religious site?

MS. HARF: I think I just said I don't have anything for you on that. You can ask five more times, and I will have the same answer. Thanks.

March 24, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey/Syria

Washington, DC

MS. HARF: I promised him Syria.

QUESTION: Do you have a comment on the downing of a Syrian jet apparently --

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: -- in the Syrian airspace yesterday by the Turkish?

MS. HARF: Well, obviously, we've been following the issue closely. We have been in close contact with our Turkish counterparts -- I would remind you, NATO allies -- regarding the incident. We are committed to Turkey's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We note that the Turkish Government has been fully transparent about the rules of engagement it is operating under since the Syrian Government shot down a Turkish aircraft in 2012. The Turkish Government in this case said its forces only fired after the Syrian military aircraft violated Turkish airspace and after repeated warnings from Turkish authorities. Obviously, the Government of Turkey is looking into the incident more, but we are talking to them and will remain in contact with them.

QUESTION: So to the best of your information, do you have any independent information that it was actually shot down over Syrian airspace or Turkish airspace?

MS. HARF: Where it was actually shot down, I don't have specific information about that, but as I said, the Turkish Government said it only fired on the aircraft after it violated Turkish aircraft -- or, excuse me, airspace, and was repeatedly warned by the Turkish Government not to do so.

QUESTION: Are you concerned that any escalation might involve all other NATO allies, considering that you have some sort of a pact with Turkey?

MS. HARF: Well, I think it's a little soon to sort of take this more broadly. I would note that I don't think Turkey has asked for anything yet in terms of NATO. Obviously, we're talking to them about how to move forward here, but again, I think it's too soon to sort of draw broader characterizations about what might happen next.

QUESTION: And finally, Brahimi said that he doesn't see Geneva II reconvening anytime soon. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. HARF: Well, we have obviously been working with the special representative quite closely. We want -- all want Geneva -- the Geneva process, I would say, to reconvene when we

can make progress. And up until this point, we've seen the Syrian regime not come to the table as a party that wants to make progress here. So I know he's working on it to see if and when we can reconvene this and how, to see if we can move this diplomatic process forward.

QUESTION: So you said that Turkey has been fully transparent about the rules of engagement? What does that mean, exactly?

MS. HARF: That it has operated under since the Syrian Government shot down a Turkish aircraft in 2012.

QUESTION: Right, but --

MS. HARF: So I think what it means, without knowing all the specifics here, is that, for example, it repeatedly warned --

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. HARF: -- the Syrian aircraft not to violate its airspace. It only then took action. That's what I think rules of engagement refers to here.

QUESTION: Right. Right. But the rules of engagement, are they public? You don't have --

MS. HARF: I can check.

QUESTION: Is that what that means in terms of --

MS. HARF: Or do we mean transparent with the United States? I don't know.

QUESTION: Well, transparent -- I mean, maybe you'd like to see --

MS. HARF: I'll check.

QUESTION: -- the Turkish Government tweet the rules of engagement or perhaps put them on Facebook or YouTube or something like that.

MS. HARF: I would note here that there have been more tweets from Turkey since the government blocked it than there were before.

QUESTION: So can we just --

MS. HARF: Which is an interesting, I think, signal to people that try to clamp down on freedom of expression that it doesn't work and isn't the right thing to do.

QUESTION: Are you helping in this?

QUESTION: So --

...

QUESTION: So do you have any additional comment on the Twitter ban? When Erdogan announced that he was going to do this, he said now every – he didn't care about international reaction and now the world would see the power of the Turkish Republic.

MS. HARF: Well, I think what the world saw was the number of people inside Turkey tweeting about what they thought about it being blocked there.

QUESTION: Well, could I ask you what you think --

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: -- about the power of the Turkish Republic since they have failed so dramatically to enforce this ban?

MS. HARF: We have conveyed our serious concerns over this action directly to Turkish authorities, both from here and on the ground. Obviously, we support freedom of expression in Turkey and everywhere else. We oppose any action to encroach on the right to free speech, and continue to urge directly the Turkish Government to unblock its citizens' access to Twitter and ensure free access to all social media platforms --

QUESTION: Right, but --

MS. HARF: -- so they can see what you and everyone else tweets.

QUESTION: Right, but what does it say to you, if anything, about the power of the Turkish Republic?

MS. HARF: In what respect?

QUESTION: The fact that they've tried to ban it and it hasn't worked. I mean, is this the kind of thing that you want to see a NATO ally doing or boasting about --

MS. HARF: No.

QUESTION: -- beforehand, and then --

MS. HARF: No.

QUESTION: -- failing miserably at it?

MS. HARF: Well, the second part – clearly, we think it's good that people inside Turkey are still able to express themselves, but that doesn't mean that it should be blocked. I wasn't trying to give that statistic --

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: -- in terms of saying that it's an acceptable action.

QUESTION: So you're --

MS. HARF: No, clearly this is not an action we think the Turkish Government should take. We've told them that directly. We will continue to tell them that directly. There's no place in a democracy for this kind of clamping down on people's right to free speech. There's just not.

QUESTION: Okay. And so you would encourage people in Turkey to defy -- to continue to defy the prime minister's ban. Is that --

MS. HARF: I'm not going to go that far, but I -- what I will say is it's important for people all over the world to hear what the Turkish people have to say.

QUESTION: Do you see any connection between the Twitter issue and the downing of the plane, the Syrian plane, perhaps that Mr. Erdogan is trying to export his --

MS. HARF: Not at all.

QUESTION: -- local issues? You don't see that?

MS. HARF: Not at all. No, not at all.

QUESTION: Are you helping the Turks in breaking the blockade?

MS. HARF: Is the United States Government?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. HARF: No, not to my knowledge. We've been in contact with Twitter and with the Government of Turkey about this, but to my knowledge, no, we are not. But we've said very clearly to the Turkish Government that this is not acceptable and that we do not think they should be able to block their citizens' access to these kind of social media platforms.

QUESTION: Mm-hmm. And --

QUESTION: Just to clarify, Marie, you -- I asked this question last week, that whether United States Government is involved with this case in the --

MS. HARF: With Twitter?

QUESTION: In this dispute between the Twitter and the Turkish Government in terms of the legal process, and you said no. Still the case? Still --

MS. HARF: Well, I don't think I said no; I think Jen said no. But we saw over the weekend, I think, some more actions being taken, right? So I'm not sure exactly how you asked the question last week, but what I can say is that we have been in contact with Twitter and separately with the Government of Turkey to talk about the fact that people should not have their access blocked to Twitter.

QUESTION: So it is a legal dispute right now, and that maybe – I mean, Turkish Government is pursuing this ban, and they took several additional measures during the weekend to stop the people to use Twitter, like DNS ban, et cetera.

MS. HARF: Which we think is an encroachment on their citizens' freedom of expression, and we don't think that it should be continued.

QUESTION: You are in contact with the Twitter in terms of legal dispute or --

MS. HARF: I'm not say in terms of any – I don't know the legal – the specific legal aspect you're referring to. We are in touch with Twitter, yes, broadly speaking. I don't know exactly what that contact is like, but I don't know if the legal – if that's an internal Turkish matter, I'm not exactly sure, but we've been in contact with both Twitter and the Turkish Government.

QUESTION: I mean, because Twitter is represented by the lawyers right now in Turkey, and there will be maybe case against --

MS. HARF: I don't have more details on any legal action that may or may not be happening in Turkey. I just don't have those details. What we've said is separate and apart from that. People should be able to express themselves freely, whether it's on Facebook or Twitter or whatever – Flickr, Tumblr, whatever people want to use – and that governments should not encroach on their – they shouldn't block access for their citizens to do so. I don't have a lot more information.

QUESTION: Yeah, but --

QUESTION: What about Instagram?

MS. HARF: And Instagram too.

QUESTION: Yeah, the problem --

QUESTION: Not Instagram.

QUESTION: Not – (laughter). Don't play favorites now, Marie.

MS. HARF: I am not. I am not on Instagram, but --

QUESTION: The problem, the Turkish Government is trying to get some information about some users, specific users who are tweeting against the government and --

MS. HARF: What I'm saying is that we oppose the Turkish --

QUESTION: And the Twitter -- and my question -- okay. My question is --

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: -- Twitter assured to Turkish Twitter accounts users that they will not disclose any private information.

MS. HARF: That would be a question for Twitter, not for me.

QUESTION: Yeah. But are you supporting this stand of Twitter against Turkish Government?

MS. HARF: That's not something that I should take a stand on. I don't think that's something that the company, Twitter, can decide on its own.

QUESTION: Because --

MS. HARF: What we have said is that governments should not block access for their citizens.

QUESTION: Yes. But at the same time it's a privacy question -- not only freedom of expression, but the people are also trying to protect their privacy --

MS. HARF: Again, that a question that's --

QUESTION: -- and the Turkish Government is trying to get the information of all of the users.

MS. HARF: That's a question, I think, is better addressed to Twitter, who controls that issue. What I am saying is people's freedom of expression should not be blocked by their own government.

QUESTION: So no comment about the privacy?

MS. HARF: I don't have more for you than this -- for you on this case than that.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: I'm happy to check with our folks and see if there's more.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: I just don't think I'll have more.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you. Please.

And another question about the jet incident.

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: Are you concerned that this confrontation between Turkey and Syria can turn into a more broader confrontation just before the elections, because ---

MS. HARF: Well, I think that's the question Said just asked, and what I said was it's a little too early to make sweeping characterizations about what may come from this. Obviously, we know there was a situation here where the Turks repeatedly warned the Syrians before taking action. I don't think I want to probably draw broader conclusions about what will happen going forward.

QUESTION: No, I'm -- my question wasn't related NATO that Said asked in terms of the NATO involvement. Beyond the NATO involvement, are you encouraging the parties to deescalate the tension?

MS. HARF: I mean, we're certainly in contact with the Turkish Government here on this issue. I'm not -- I mean, in terms of the parties, you're talking about the Assad regime?

QUESTION: No, the parties -- NATO ally, Turkey. Because there will be an election this week --

MS. HARF: Right.

QUESTION: -- and the main --

MS. HARF: I'm not seeing the connection here.

QUESTION: The main opposition party urged to not do any military intervention, military -- I mean, unilateral military action against Syria just before the election, to use a populist tool just before the election. So this is the concern of the main opposition party and other parties in Turkey.

MS. HARF: I think I probably don't have much comment on internal Turkish politics or how they may or may not respond --

QUESTION: It stirs an international crisis.

QUESTION: Well, are you encouraging the Turks to kind of remain calm and not escalate the situation?

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. HARF: I'm not sure how they -- I mean I'm not sure there's even talk of escalation here. I'm happy to check with our folks and see. To my understanding, it was a limited situation. I haven't heard that there is escalation here.

QUESTION: Is --

MS. HARF: I'm happy to check with our team. We're still talking to the Turks to get the facts about what happened here, but I, quite frankly, haven't heard talk that people are worried about that.

QUESTION: So -- because my question is related to another religious site within Syria belonging to Turkey. This is a Turkish territory, 35 kilometers from Turkish border within Syria, and it's under threat some groups, ISIS and other radical al-Qaida-affiliated groups. And some cabinet members, Turkish cabinet members, even urged not to do anything to provoke Turkey for any unilateral military action, for example. This is another concern for Turkey to be part of the unilateral military action within Syria. So only -- not only the jet, but this is another risk for Turkey to involve with Syria in terms of this kind of military action.

MS. HARF: Well, I don't have any, in terms of that specific question, any details for you on that. Again, I think I'll let the Turkish Government speak for what their response will or won't be here. As I said, we've talked to them, we've gotten the facts of what's happened here, and if there's more to share tomorrow, I'm happy to.

...

QUESTION: There are reports that 600,000 Syrians have applied for asylum in Europe and the United States. Could you tell us the portion of that that is being sought with the United States?

MS. HARF: I don't know the answer, Said. Let me check with our folks and see. I don't have the numbers.

QUESTION: Just one more question on the Syrian jet.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: You said we've established the facts and multiple warnings were issued, I guess.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. By the Turkish Government.

QUESTION: How -- yeah. How did you establish that? Did they share any information with the State Department?

MS. HARF: The Turkish Government?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. HARF: With the United States Government they did. I don't know if it was us or with the Defense Department, but --

QUESTION: Yeah. But they shared, like, intelligence information about the incident?

MS. HARF: I don't know if it's intelligence they told us. They warned the Syrians multiple times. I don't know the details of exactly what that --

QUESTION: Yeah. But how did you verify what they actually conveyed to you?

MS. HARF: I can check with our folks and see.

QUESTION: Were you in touch with them in real time during the incident?

MS. HARF: I don't know. I'm happy to check. It might be -- and it might be the Department of Defense, but I'm happy to check with them.

QUESTION: So did you --

MS. HARF: I just don't know.

QUESTION: Did you say that these pieces of information were verified, or you're not sure?

MS. HARF: We have no reason to believe that it's not accurate, correct. Yes.

QUESTION: Okay. But --

MS. HARF: And I'm happy to see if there are more details about how we verified it, correct.

QUESTION: I wanted to ask one more.

QUESTION: No, no. One more on Syria.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: News reports said that the U.S. Administration has finished its review on its policy towards Syria and decided not to intervene militarily and not to provide the opposition with sophisticated arms and not to allow Saudi Arabia to provide this kind of arms.

MS. HARF: I'm not sure those reports are true. I haven't seen them, but I haven't heard those reports. In terms of the first, we've always said all options except for boots on the ground are on the table. Happy to check with our team, but it's my understanding, as we've talked about in here, that this is an ongoing discussion of what policies we should undertake in Syria. I'm happy to check and see if there's been some decisions made, but to my knowledge there haven't been.

QUESTION: Is there any review?

MS. HARF: As I said -- we went over this, I think, ad nauseam one day, but there's constantly a review of our policy in Syria. We are constantly looking at options, what we could do, what

more we could do, how we could influence the situation. That's ongoing, yes. But to my knowledge, there hasn't been some sort of major decision on what we will or won't do.

QUESTION: Can you check on this, please?

MS. HART: I'm happy to.

QUESTION: Thank you.

March 21, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: The United States supports freedom of expression in Turkey and opposes any action to encroach on the right to free speech. We urge the Turkish Government to unblock its citizens' access to Twitter and ensure free access to all social media platforms. As President Obama has previously underscored, democratic governments must accept the challenge to, quote, "listen to the voices who disagree with us, to have an open debate about how we use our powers and how we must constrain them."

An independent and unfettered media is an essential element of democratic, open societies and crucial to ensuring official transparency and accountability. This action is contrary to Turkey's own expressed desire to uphold the highest standards of democracy and efforts to attract foreign investment.

...

QUESTION: Follow-up on statement, Turkish statement?

MS. PSAKI: Sure, go ahead.

QUESTION: Thank you. Have you talked to any of Turkey – officials from Turkey about the ban?

MS. PSAKI: About the --

QUESTION: About the ban on Twitter?

MS. PSAKI: We have. Our ambassador on the ground has been closely engaged, and we've expressed our concerns through those channels.

QUESTION: So Turkish officials basically – ministers arguing that Twitter blocked to prevent abuse of rights. What do you say to that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think I pretty clearly stated that we support and believe in freedom of speech, whether that's through the media or through individuals' rights to freedom of speech. And certainly, Twitter is a newer tool of communicating.

QUESTION: Many are criticizing recently Turkish Government about its authoritarian tendencies – increasing authoritarian tendencies. Are you worried about that?

MS. PSAKI: When we have concerns, we express them. As you know, Turkey is an important ally, it's a NATO ally, we work with them on a range of issues, but this is an issue we were concerned about, hence we expressed our opinion.

QUESTION: Same issue. Same issue, Jen.

QUESTION: Well, I just want to – I'm presuming that your opening statement – which I missed and I apologize for, I don't want to ask you to repeat it – but you take a dim view of --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. That is correct.

QUESTION: That is correct?

MS. PSAKI: Yes. Are you – we're just going to go – continue on Turkey and we'll move through that.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: Yeah, one question. The Secretary said many times that Turkey's a modern democracy --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- for the Muslim world. Does the Secretary think the same after the closure of Twitter and as – and other social media?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I just stated, I think actions like this are contrary to Turkey's own expressed desire to be a model of democracy to uphold the highest standards of democracy.

Do we have any more on Turkey? Go ahead.

QUESTION: Are you aware of the details of this ban? Because recently, Istanbul had a panel court – stated that this ban is not originated from a courtroom, it's an executive branch decision. Are you aware of this?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have that level of detail. I know there have been public statements made. I think that's what we were referring to, and obviously, actions taken. But in terms of the specific steps internally in Turkey how we got here, I don't have that level of detail.

QUESTION: Turkish Government blamed, actually, the Twitter company for not cooperating with Turkish Government for this kind – some kind of request to remove some content on

Twitter. Did they ask your help for this legal process, the Turkish Government ask any help from the U.S. Government to communicate with Twitter company?

MS. PSAKI: Not that I'm aware of, and again, I think I pretty clearly expressed our concerns about the announcement and the decision to ban Twitter.

QUESTION: Because it's a legal process for an American company to – Twitter company right now – Twitter is represented by Turkish lawyers right now and they are negotiating with the Turkish Government too, and it's about an American company at the same time. Are you any – somehow involved with this conflict?

MS. PSAKI: We're not, no, we're not.

QUESTION: So you're not aware of any contact between the U.S. Government, particularly your social media people, and Twitter or any other social media companies about the situation in Turkey?

MS. PSAKI: I'm happy to check and see if there's any contact.

QUESTION: There is – it has happened before --

MS. PSAKI: Sure, I understand that.

QUESTION: -- in the case of Iran. I also had a kind of --

MS. PSAKI: We're not engaged in a legal case, is what the question --

QUESTION: Right, okay. Also I had a kind of question about the logistics, and I realize this might be – you're going to say that it's sausage making, but I'm curious as to why a full 12, 14, even 16 hours after this came out, the Embassy in Ankara was still – was – their response to this was recycling year-old quotes from the President.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think, Matt, I provided – we provided a statement last night to those who asked. Nobody asked me about it yesterday, but --

QUESTION: It was – well, that's because I'm not sure people were yet quite aware of it yesterday. But even the statement that was provided to the people who asked last night was pretty weak tea, no?

MS. PSAKI: I think I pretty clearly --

QUESTION: Is it your --

MS. PSAKI: -- conveyed our viewpoint here, Matt.

QUESTION: Okay. But your statement today, you would admit, is much stronger than your statement from last night. Correct?

MS. PSAKI: It's perhaps more expansive.

QUESTION: But it's stronger, right?

MS. PSAKI: Look, Matt, I think we pretty clearly conveyed our concerns about --

QUESTION: Okay. I'm just curious as to why it took so long for you guys to come out with something that was stronger.

MS. PSAKI: It's not an indication of our concerns or level of concern. It's not an indication of how we've expressed those to the Government of Turkey.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: If I could just ask more broadly, this is one of a series of moves that we've seen by the government of Prime Minister Erdogan, including -- we had a whole bunch of police officers who were arrested or moved from their posts, judges who were moved from their posts amid this corruption scandal against him. More broadly speaking, is the United States worried that perhaps the government of Prime Minister Erdogan is moving in the wrong direction, i.e., away from democracy?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think any time an action like the banning of a social media site, unjust arrests, the steps taken to block the ability of journalists to do their jobs, we express our concerns. We've seen a couple of incidents of those in Turkey, you're right, but we continue to work closely with Turkey. They remain a close ally. And I'm not at the point of outlining a further impact.

QUESTION: And again, I'm sorry I missed the beginning as well. Did you say that you raised the concerns, your concerns directly with the Turkish Government?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. We have, yes.

QUESTION: Are you able to tell us what their response was?

MS. PSAKI: No. I would point you to them on that.

QUESTION: Will you give -- did you ask for any assurances that the block on Twitter would be removed?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think we pretty clearly conveyed our belief that there shouldn't be a block on Twitter. So obviously, they're going to make their own decisions. But we conveyed privately, as strongly as we've spoken publicly.

QUESTION: They didn't give you any of those assurances?

MS. PSAKI: I'd point you to them on what they are or aren't willing to do.

QUESTION: Just to follow up on the question about the recent removing security officials and the judges and prosecutors --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- are you also worried or concerned about those removings in Turkey?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we express concerns when we have concerns. We've done that around countless incidents about -- rather, I should say, a range of incidents over the past several months. We don't engage in, as you know, Turkish internal politics, and some of those events are -- fall into that category. But when there are efforts taken to block the ability of journalists or individuals to exercise their freedom of speech, we certainly make our concerns known.

QUESTION: And one last question: Prime Minister Erdogan has been consistently arguing that this is a plot by the foreign powers. And yesterday he actually argued for a long time that these corruption charges and all those leaks done by the foreign powers, that is why he's taking the measures he's taking. Do you have any respond to that?

MS. PSAKI: We've seen those comments. Clearly, our -- the United States is not engaged in any sort of effort underway in Turkey, and any notion that we are is false.

QUESTION: Jen?

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Turkey, or do you have --

QUESTION: Jen, I have a second question.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: You raised your concern on this ban, and you raised your concern about the (inaudible), et cetera. In general, what is the main concern of U.S. Government on Turkish -- the government on Turkey? Rule of law, press freedom, authoritarian tendency of prime minister -- what is the main concern?

MS. PSAKI: I didn't – I don't think I made a sweeping statement. I think I said that we convey our concerns about incidents that occur when they come up. We've done that today and we'll continue to do that when we feel it's warranted.

Do we have any more on Turkey?

QUESTION: Jen, one more.

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: Have you seen the – President Gul's tweet?

MS. PSAKI: I have not seen that, no.

QUESTION: He wished that this block will be lifted soon. Any comment on it?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any comment on it. I think we've expressed what the view of the United States Government is.

QUESTION: Again, to just follow up, you just stated that it is – you condemn or you express your concern when the incidents come up. Do you think a trend on that, or this is just individual particle incidents happening?

MS. PSAKI: We express concerns when incidents come up. Again, Turkey remains a close NATO ally and we work with them on a range of issues.

QUESTION: So you don't see any kind of trend towards the authoritarian --

MS. PSAKI: I'm not going to do analysis on that.

Do we have any more on Turkey?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: Okay, go ahead.

QUESTION: Just a small technical thing.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: How did you express concerns? Was this embassy to --

MS. PSAKI: Our ambassador in Turkey expressed that directly to government officials.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: Which government official?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not going to get into that level of detail.

March 7, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Okay. Just two quick questions. In Turkey, more than 500,000 people, including senior government officials, journalists, and business leaders have had their communications tapped and disseminated on social media. I was wondering if you had any comment on that, and also how the Administration would react to a similar situation, if you could, at all, say anything about that.

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me say, as we've previously said a number of times, but it's worth repeating, we share the serious concerns raised by the OSCE and others that the recently amended internet law has the potential to severely restrict free expression, freedom of the press, and access to information over the internet. That's something we remain concerned about, and obviously we've seen, to your point, that manifest itself in some ways.

I didn't really understand your second question.

QUESTION: It was just if you could comment on how – I'm not sure we even got the first question, just if you had any comment on the fact that more than 500,000 people have had their communications wiretapped and disseminated on social media. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. PSAKI: Oh. I haven't seen the report on that, so no, I don't have any comment on that.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you.

...

QUESTION: Yesterday, Prime Minister Erdogan said that the Turkish Government will take some necessary steps about – regarding social media, including banning – shutting down YouTube and Facebook. What's your remarks to this?

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Well, we are concerned by any suggestion that social media sites could be shut down as the internet law is implemented. We're looking to Turkey to uphold its commitment to respect the fundamental freedom of expression. Independent and free media are essential to an open society and an accountable system of government. We believe that all democracies are strengthened by the diverse voices of their people and a free and unfettered press.

February 10, 2014

Marie Harf, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: I had a question regarding FATF plenary meeting that will be holding this week in Paris. This Financial Action Task Force committee, it's a body which has funded by – under umbrella of OECD to combating money laundering and terrorism finance. One of the agendas of this meeting is the status of Turkey, because Turkey is under the risky countries category in terms of this combating money laundering and terrorism finance. And I'm wondering, what is your assessment on this issue and the status of Turkey? I know that Treasury Department people who are in charge with this, but there are some U.S. department people in the delegation, too. Do you have any assessment on that?

MS. HARF: Well, I don't want to get ahead of a meeting that – (cell phone rings) – hasn't happened yet, or your phone call. You can take it if you want. I would refer you, though, to the FATF's October 2013 public statement on Turkey, which placed Turkey on the list of jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies, I think is the word they used, in complying with the international standards on anti-money laundering and combating terrorist financing. The task force did welcome significant progress by Turkey in improving the counterterrorist financing regime, but it also noted some concerns that needed to be addressed. So we obviously have a close counterterrorism partnership with Turkey writ large. I think the FATF's last statement was in October 2013, and we'll see what they say at the upcoming meeting.

QUESTION: What will be your tendency during the meeting in terms of the status of Turkey?

MS. HARF: I don't have anything to preview. I'm happy to see if there's more of what our thoughts are to preview before this meeting. I just don't have anything more for you.

QUESTION: In general, the steps that Turkish Government took in terms of this combating money laundering and terrorism finance are satisfied for the U.S. Government?

MS. HARF: Again, I'm not making a statement about what the U.S. Government thinks. I was referencing the multilateral FATF report from 2013. I'm happy to check and see if our assessment is different in any way.

QUESTION: Because this is an issue between the U.S. and Turkey, too.

MS. HARF: I understand it's an issue. I just don't know what the answer is.

QUESTION: The U.S. Treasury Department released an announcement last week regarding some Iranian activities in terms of the support supplied to al-Qaida (inaudible) Syria through Turkey, for example.

QUESTION: So I'm wondering if – what do you think of this relationship with the Iranian activities, Iranian support going to – to Iran and Syria?

MS. HARF: I think I'll let the designations speak for themselves. And again, I'm happy to check with our folks and see if there's more I can share. I just don't have more for you.

QUESTION: Does that mean – because I had asked Jen a couple questions last week about Turkey and deeper concerns about terrorism financing and stuff like that. Was there not an answer to those questions?

MS. HARF: Well, this – I think – I don't think she had all of this last week.

QUESTION: No, she didn't, because that was FATF.

MS. HARF: Yeah, this --

QUESTION: Mine was not related to FATF.

MS. HARF: Well, but the – I think the FATF is what we are relying upon to sort of give the baseline assessment on this issue, to note that there has been some progress but there are still some concerns that remain. Again, I'm happy to see if we diverged from it in any way. I don't think necessarily that we do, but I'm happy to check. And there is this upcoming meeting that we can talk more about.

February 7, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Jen, I have a question, probably on Turkey --

MS. PSAKI: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: -- about the breaking news as we were coming in about the plane that has been diverted from the Ukraine to Turkey.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: From the State Department's conversations with your Turkish and Ukrainian allies, what can you tell us about the situation? Do you believe this is an isolated incident? And how serious do you assess this threat to be?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Catherine, as you noted, this just happened before -- or the reports of this just happened before I came out here. I'd, of course, refer you to the Turkish Government. We're in close touch. Our team on the ground is in close touch with Turkish authorities. But I don't have any analysis for you at this point on what it means or what it's an indication of.

QUESTION: When was Secretary Kerry made aware of the flight diversion?

MS. PSAKI: He was in a bilateral meeting with the Japanese while these events took place, so I would assume after it, but I haven't seen him since the bilateral meeting.

QUESTION: Do you think this will change the State Department's Travel Warning that's out there for U.S. citizens or change any security plans on the ground in Sochi?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Catherine, obviously, we take in a range of information as we make those evaluations. But again, because this just happened and Turkish authorities are looking into it and what it means, I don't want to go too far on what it will mean in terms of what we implement.

Later

QUESTION: A short question about press freedom in Turkey: Azerbaijani journalist Mahir Zeynalov, who was working for Turkish daily *Today's Zaman*, deported this morning from Turkey because of his critical tweets to the Turkish Government.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Would you like to make any comment on this?

MS. PSAKI: We are looking into these unsettling reports. As we have said, we have been and continue to be strong advocates for freedom of expression around the world, and we believe that democracies are strengthened by the diverse voices of their people. We look to Turkey as a democracy and ally to uphold the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, and association. We believe that an independent pluralistic media is critical to a healthy and strong democracy, but I don't have any specific confirmation of any of the details that have been reported.

February 6, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: And I don't know if you've seen that there are new internet laws on the verge of being adopted or being adopted in Turkey --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- which critics are saying could be pretty repressive. And I wondered if there was a U.S. comment on that.

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Pardon me; give me a moment here. So this is – these laws are part of a larger bill, an omnibus bill that has not yet been passed. We, of course, are monitoring the status of the legislation to amend Turkey's internet law. We have been and continue to be strong advocates for freedom of expression around the world, and we believe, of course, that democracies are strengthened by the diverse voices of their people.

We share the concerns recently expressed by the OSCE's representative on freedom of the media – and there was a whole statement put out I'd point you to – that these proposed measures are not compatible with international standards on freedom of expression. They also have the potential to significantly impact free expression, investigative journalism, the protection of journalist sources, political discourse, and access to information over the internet. So those are all areas we would be concerned about.

QUESTION: You said it has not been passed. But our reporting says that it has passed parliament, but it has not yet been enacted because it must be approved by the president. Did you mean passed, or did you mean enacted?

MS. PSAKI: My understanding was “passed,” but I can double-check with our team, and certainly wouldn't want to dispute. That was the understanding I had before I came down here.

QUESTION: Did you say that you shared the view of the OSCE?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: You do.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Okay. Staying on Turkey?

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: There seems to be a surge in concerns in some quarters about Turkey and what some people might regard as support or at least acquiescence to groups that the United States accuses of being terrorist organizations; members of Hamas, people who are known to have been financing, other designated FTOs.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. Concern around the world, concern from --

QUESTION: Yeah, well, no. Concern here among some, concern from one of your former ambassadors to Turkey, concern in Israel.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And I'm just wondering if you share those concerns, if you believe Turkey is doing enough, considering it is the chair or co-chair of this international committee on -- I can't remember the exact name, but this large consortium of countries that get together to talk about counterterrorism cooperation.

MS. PSAKI: I'd have to talk to our team about their evaluation of that.

QUESTION: Can you?

MS. PSAKI: I mean, obviously, it's an issue that's discussed whenever we meet with them. And they are, as we all know, a neighboring country to Syria and the events on the ground there which has had a trickle-out effect. But I'll talk to them and see where we are as a U.S. Government.

QUESTION: Well, I think this goes beyond just concerns Syria. It goes more to al-Qaida-linked groups as well as Hamas, which is --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. Okay, let me check with them.

January 23, 2014

Marie Harf, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Turkey. I asked a couple of questions last week. Just to follow up those questions. First, how do you view the current unfolding corruption case in Turkey? It has been five weeks now.

MS. HARF: Well, we've been following Turkish domestic developments in the wake of the corruption investigations. As we've said repeatedly and I will repeat again today, we are not going to comment on those investigations beyond reiterating our support for the strong desire of Turkey's citizens to see all investigations conducted in a fair, transparent, and democratic manner. I think as you heard the Secretary say earlier this week, the United States is not and will not become involved in Turkey's domestic politics. I think we'll leave it up to them to have those conversations.

QUESTION: Last week I again asked whether the Prime Minister Erdogan has been – and the government has been arguing that there's a coup attempt and this has nothing to do with the corruption. What's your take on that?

MS. HARF: Again, we're following the developments domestically in Turkey and are just not going to get involved in Turkey's domestic situation or do any analysis of it from here.

QUESTION: The government accuses the Gulen Movement – it is an Islamic movement and they accuse that they are behind these cases. First of all, what do you know about the Gulen Movement? What's your assessment about that?

MS. HARF: I think, as Jen said, we're not going to do an assessment on an internal Turkish domestic matter. Obviously, we're in contact with the Turkish Government on a range of issues, but we're just not going to do more of an assessment of this group that you've asked about, I think, than that.

QUESTION: There is a judicial bill at the parliament currently being discussed. It has been criticized by the EU many, many times. Do you think this bill, if it passes the parliament, would be – would damage the separation of powers in Turkey?

MS. HARF: What bill are you asking about? I'm sorry. What specific bill?

QUESTION: It's judges and prosecutors. It's about the judges and prosecutors council. It changes the structure. I'm, again, just follow up this question from last week.

MS. HART: Yeah. Again, I hate to sound like a broken record, but these are all internal Turkish domestic issues, and it's just not our position to take a position on them one way or the other.

January 16, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: I have a couple of questions on Turkey. One of that is the – it has been a month that this corruption case started. How do you assess the current situation in Turkey now, in general terms?

MS. PSAKI: In what capacity?

QUESTION: Whether the country is stable.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I mean, I think we've stated many times, but I am happy to reiterate it today, we continue to follow the ongoing corruption investigations in Turkey. In our conversations with all stakeholders in Turkey, we continue to make clear that the United States supports the desire of the people of Turkey for a legal system that meets the highest standards of fairness, timeliness, and transparency, where no one is above the law. We remain in close touch on the ground. Turkey is a valued ally, a valued NATO ally, a valued partner. We work closely with them on a range of issues, including Syria, including preparations for the Geneva conference. So beyond that, I don't have any new analysis for you.

QUESTION: When you say you talk to all stakeholders, is the Gulen movement, which is the – accused by the prime minister and the administration as behind these investigations, do you talk to them as well?

MS. PSAKI: We've seen, of course, a lot of reporting about Turkish domestic politics in the wake of the corruption investigations, and we're not going to comment on those.

QUESTION: Yesterday, again, the prime minister said that this coup attempt – not about corruption – actually, he said that this is package as corruption, but it's actually coup. Do you agree with that? Have you been updated on these attempts?

MS. PSAKI: I haven't seen those. I know we're in close touch. Obviously, we're not going to get engaged too closely in comments back and forth on the ground.

QUESTION: Do you think there is a coup attempt against your ally in Turkey?

MS. PSAKI: I just don't have anything further for you on those comments, which I'm happy to take a closer look at.

QUESTION: Last couple days, Turkish security forces have been raiding some IHH offices, and today, just according to reports, there are about dozens or dozen al-Qaida operatives or suspects arrested. Have you been updated on these issues?

MS. PSAKI: I would point you to the Government of Turkey. I can check and see if there's anything I can read out for all of you about any updates we've received.

QUESTION: What's your general understanding of the al-Qaida operatives or al-Qaida presence in Turkey?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any particular announcement or analysis on that for you from the podium.

QUESTION: Today, it has been about – there have been about half a dozen warning came out of the European Union, and today, also Council of European Commissioner on Human Rights said that this new judicial bill at the parliament undermining the public's confidence in the judiciary. Do you have any take on that?

MS. PSAKI: I think I would just point you to the comments I've made and the comments and the analysis that we put out every year when we put out our own reports and analysis on those issues.

QUESTION: This obviously new development just happened last couple days. So my question is that – do you think this bill being discussed at the parliament is a blow to separation of powers in Turkey?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any analysis on it for you, but I'm happy to check and see if we'd like to add anything.

January 10, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Can we go to the situation in Turkey where there's been a building political crisis since Erdogan sacked – Prime Minister Erdogan sacked about 700 police officers?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Yesterday there were moves to try and curb some of the powers of the country's leading independent judicial body, and today there's more moves to impose strict controls on the internet. I wondered if you could give us a broad kind of overview of the U.S. position on this.

MS. PSAKI: Well, you're right, and as you pointed to, it's been ongoing and there have been different developments each day. In our conversations with all stakeholders in Turkey, we continue to make clear that the United States supports the desire of the Turkish people for a legal system that meets the highest standards of fairness, timeliness, and transparency in civil and criminal matters, where no one is above the law and where allegations against public figures are investigated impartially. You are familiar with our view on freedom of speech and freedom of media, which we've expressed as needed and express annually in our report as well. And we're certainly communicating that directly to the government.

QUESTION: At what level? From whom in this building?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any readouts or updates on calls from Washington, but certainly it's being communicated on the ground.

QUESTION: So are there concerns that this could lead to instability in what is a key U.S. ally in that region?

MS. PSAKI: You're right that Turkey is and remains a key U.S. ally. We're not going to get ahead of where we are now. We've expressed our concerns about some of the events that are happening on the ground directly, publicly and privately, and we'll continue to do that.

QUESTION: But I mean, this – there's been since the summer, really, all this political unrest and a lot of violence related to how Prime Minister Erdogan has been treating the opposition. Do you think that this makes Turkey a less reliable ally if there's so much chaos in the country and they're diverted dealing with this domestic instability?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Elise, certainly I would not qualify it that way from the United States Government. We express concerns when we have them, as I just did in this case. We've had

them in the past, and when we've had them in the past, we've expressed them. But Turkey remains an important ally, remains a country we work closely with on a range of issues, and when we have concerns, we'll make those known.

QUESTION: I didn't say it wasn't an important ally. I'm asking about the reliability in terms of the stability of the government, the security of the government, whether they are too preoccupied with their own domestic chaos to be a reliable and productive partner with you in other arenas.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I don't think we want to make a prediction of that. As you know, Turkey is -- will be participating in a range of discussions about Syria and the crisis in Syria. They're obviously an important partner on that. We work with them on other issues, so --

QUESTION: So you haven't seen over the last, what, six months that this political instability and chaos and periodic violence in Turkey has not affected your business with them?

MS. PSAKI: We've continued to work closely with Turkey, and obviously, we've expressed concerns about issues going on domestically as we see fit.

QUESTION: Yes, on Turkey: Do you consider Mr. Erdogan a leader who respects democracy since he dismissed judges and prosecutors, since he put more than 1,000 journalists in jail? Is he a leader that (inaudible) democracy, you think?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I will say that when we have concerns about his actions, we express those. And that's something I have just done today.

January 9, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Can we go to the situation in Turkey where there's been a building political crisis since Erdogan sacked – Prime Minister Erdogan sacked about 700 police officers?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Yesterday there were moves to try and curb some of the powers of the country's leading independent judicial body, and today there's more moves to impose strict controls on the internet. I wondered if you could give us a broad kind of overview of the U.S. position on this.

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MS. PSAKI: Well, Elise, certainly I would not qualify it that way from the United States Government. We express concerns when we have them, as I just did in this case. We've had them in the past, and when we've had them in the past, we've expressed them. But Turkey remains an important ally, remains a country we work closely with on a range of issues, and when we have concerns, we'll make those known.

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MS. PSAKI: Well, I will say that when we have concerns about his actions, we express those. And that's something I have just done today.

January 3, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Yesterday, *Washington Post* editorial was addressing the U.S. Government and saying that the Obama Administration should be pressing Mr. Erdogan to respect the rule of law and give police and prosecutors the opportunity to present their cases in court. Do you agree with that, or what's your reaction?

MS. HARF: Well, we've continued obviously to follow the investigations going on in Turkey. We've certainly over months and years made concerns known to the Turkish Government about freedom of the press, about some of the – freedom of – some of these issues that I think were mentioned there. I don't have any, I think, any further analysis on that other than to say we have a close relationship with Turkey. We'll keep raising these issues as we think it's appropriate. And again, this is an internal matter in Turkey, and we'll follow it, but this is something for them to deal with.

QUESTION: So you have been repeating some of the norms – universal norms here, transparency and judiciary and all that.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. And due process --

QUESTION: Due process.

MS. HARF: -- effective access to justice, all of that. Absolutely.

QUESTION: So over three or four weeks that the hundreds of police officers and prosecutors also – the one that launched the case – removed from the case. Do you think that the Administration's handling the cases over the months is --

MS. HARF: Well, I don't have any comment on the specifics of the cases. Obviously, we would reiterate again that we expect Turkey to follow and meet the highest standards for transparency, for timeliness and fairness in its judicial system. But I don't have any specific comments, again, on these cases.

QUESTION: So last week the Prime Minister Erdogan basically said that this corruption case is a plot, is planned in the U.S. in April. Did you guys hatch such a plot to overthrow the Turkish Government?

MS. HARF: Absolutely not. We find this attack baseless. We've made it known to Turkish authorities our concerns about these kind of allegations regarding American officials just

completely baseless. Again, this is an internal Turkish matter. We'll keep following it, but don't have much more on it than that.

QUESTION: The Administration argues that there is planned movement. It is an Islamist – the Islamic movement is behind these cases that tried to overthrow the government. Do you know anything about this? Do you have any comment on this?

MS. HARF: I mean, I've seen some of those reports. I don't have a comment on it. I'm happy to check with our folks to see if there's more that we can share.

QUESTION: Would you be able to define the current U.S.-Turkey relationship under the circumstances?

MS. HARF: Well, I think broadly speaking, they are a very important NATO ally, as we know. We work together on a host of issues very closely, including on regional issues like Syria and other issues as well. I think as I said about a number of countries, the sign of a close partnership is the ability to speak frankly when you have disagreements, which we do. And we're focused on working together on all these issues going forward. I don't think I have much more analysis on the bilateral relationship than that.

QUESTION: Any development on the U.S. ambassador so far? Is he staying or is he --

MS. HARF: I don't have anything new to announce on that. I'm happy to check, but I don't have any update on that.

QUESTION: And lastly, yesterday there were some trucks in Turkey confiscated and then let go. Do you have anything – do you know anything about the trucks?

MS. HARF: I haven't seen those reports. I'm not sure if they're the same thing you're asking about, but I'm happy to look into them.

December 20, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Yes. Today is the fourth day of the corruption revelations are going on. What is your current assessment is going on in Turkey?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we of course have seen the media reports of these arrests of individuals in Turkey on alleged corruption charges. Beyond that, we would refer you to the Turkish Government for more information and specifics on the cases.

QUESTION: So two days ago, I ask about police chiefs --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- removed by the administration. Now it's over 100 police chiefs across Turkey, including police chiefs and prosecutor who launched the investigation. Do you have any comment, reaction to that?

MS. PSAKI: We, of course, have seen the reports. We're following the issue. We have no comment on the specifics of these cases. We would reiterate that we expect Turkey to meet the highest standards for transparency, timeliness, and fairness in its judicial system. And beyond that, I'd again refer you to the Turkish Government for details.

QUESTION: Do you think -- some of the EU officials made statements. That's why I'm asking.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Do you think this removing police chiefs is any way breaching those norms, the fairness and transparency and all that? Do think this --

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any more analysis for you, other than to say that, as we've made clear in the past, including in our annual Human Rights Report, we remain concerned about due process and effective access to justice in Turkey. That continues to be the case, but I don't have any particular further comment or analysis on these reports.

QUESTION: Have you been talking to Turkish administration about these cases?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything to read out for you along those lines. I can tell you that the Secretary spoke with Foreign Minister Davutoglu earlier today, but the purpose of that call was on other issues, including Syria, Iran, Middle East peace, et cetera.

QUESTION: Many officials, Administration officials, have been arguing that this is basically a plot and planned by the foreign powers, and some of the officials have been pointing to U.S. or Israel or other corners of the world. What's your assessment?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything to say, other than this is an issue that I would point you to the Turkish Government on. It's obviously an issue that they're dealing with within the country.

QUESTION: U.S. Ambassador Ricciardone actually made a statement that this is – this cannot be the truth, that the administration should not look for responsible people outside of the country.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Would you agree to that?

MS. PSAKI: I certainly would agree with our ambassador's statements.

QUESTION: Two days ago, I also – another question I asked and I'm just following up. This gold trade and Turkish public bank, Halk Bank, the question was whether you have any concerns over the gold trade with the Iranian transaction.

MS. PSAKI: I would point you to the Turkish Government. I don't have any other specific comment on that.

December 18, 2013

Marie Harf, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

MS. HARF: Turkey, yes.

QUESTION: First of all, for the last two days there have been arrests are going on --

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: -- some of them very closely, key officials, and ministers. What do you think is happening?

MS. HARF: Well, we've seen the media reports of the arrests -- I think it happened on the 17th -- of individuals in Turkey on alleged corruption charges. I'd refer you to the Turkish Government, I think, for more information. We're obviously following the issue closely. We don't have a specific comment on these cases specifically. Obviously, we would reiterate that we expect Turkey to meet the highest standards for transparency, timeliness, and fairness in its judicial system. And if we have any more to share, I'm happy to.

QUESTION: So since these arrests started -- over dozens, maybe 50 people -- today the prime minister fired about 50 or 60 police officers -- I believe chiefs, some of them. Do you think -- or what -- do you have any reaction to that?

MS. HARF: Well, we -- again, we've seen these reports as well. We're following it closely. I don't have a specific comment on these cases. We're trying to get more information. If we do going forward, I'm happy to share of it.

QUESTION: The part of the case is focusing on the Halk Bank. It is a public bank which is dealing with the gold trades, with Iran and all those that. Do you still have any concerns regarding gold trade with the Turk and Iranian --

MS. HARF: I'm happy to check on the latest on that issue. I just don't know what our assessment is of that at the moment.

November 6, 2013

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I had a quick question on Turkey.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: About the – according to the Turkish press reports, there was a meeting – the summit – of FATF, the Financial Action Task Force, in Paris recently last month. And in doing that meeting, Turkish Government asked to be de-listed from the high-risk countries categories in the regulatory listing of this organization. I don't know what is the details, but off this list. But according to the Turkish press reports, U.S. Government objected, objected this demand, and you want to stay for Turkey in this category. Is that true? And --

MS. HARF: I share your concern that I don't know the details about it. I'm happy to take the question. I just don't know if that's true. I don't know anything about that one, so I'll take it and see what I can get.

October 16, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Quick question on Turkey, Jen.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: *The Wall Street Journal* published an article last week about the chief intelligence service of Turkey. It was (inaudible) actually. And it's treated still a debating, that you're debating Turkey, and that some unnamed U.S. officials were very critical of the Turkish Government and the chief of intelligence service, according to the piece.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And the Vice Prime Minister of Turkey also accepted these comments. And he said that the U.S. and western countries are troubled with the independent foreign policy of Turkey. Did you discuss this issue with Turkish officials? And do you have any comment on (inaudible) --

MS. PSAKI: I don't, not -- I don't have any update for you on that. I will see if there's any update from our team on the ground.

QUESTION: And another question about Syria. There are some press reports arguing that there are some clashes in northern Syria --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- between Turkish army and al-Qaida-affiliated groups.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And Turkish artillery shot hit the -- a region which is controlled by the ISIS. Do you have any update on clashes (inaudible)?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we are, of course, aware of the reports of continued clashes. Moderate opposition forces, as we've said before, are now fighting on two fronts -- against the regime on the front lines, and against al-Qaida-affiliated groups like ISIS who are staying on the back lines, trying to establish Sharia courts and seeking to advance their extremist agenda. This remains a concern of ours, and is, of course, an additional challenge for the opposition.

QUESTION: How are you going to help with that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as you know, Arshad, we're in very close touch with the moderate opposition, whether that's General Idris or whether that is President Jarba and other leaders in the opposition. We're working on two fronts both to continue to help them on the ground, but as you know, we're working towards a Geneva conference and continue to feel, as the Secretary said just two days ago, that a political solution is the only way out of the civil war.

October 15, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Do you have any update on Turkish selection of Chinese missile and air defense? Defense Secretary Hagel a couple days ago stated that this – Turkey’s decision-making process and we respect that without any kind of concern. I just want to make sure that – do you have still concerns over the issue, or are you sold? And --

MS. PSAKI: I know we expressed them even before I left on the marathon trip we just got back from, so I don’t have any updates. I don’t think our position has changed, and I’m not sure that anything has been formalized on their end either.

QUESTION: So your position is that you --

MS. PSAKI: We had expressed concerns in the past, but I don’t have any update for you. I don’t think anything has changed from our view.

October 7, 2013

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Just one quick question on Turkey.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Last week you were asked about the new Turkish decision to get the Chinese air defense, and you said that you are talking to Turkey.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Did you have an update on that?

MS. HARF: Well, we have conveyed our serious concerns about the Turkish Government's contract discussions with the U.S.-sanctioned company for a missile defense system that will not be interoperable within – with NATO systems or collective defense capabilities. Secretary Kerry spoke to Foreign Minister Davutoglu in New York at – on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly regarding our concerns. The Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, who I think you're all very familiar with, also discussed this issue with senior Turkish officials, and our discussions on it will continue.

July 8, 2013

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, Selections on Turkey
Washington, DC

QUESTION: The protests are going on in Turkey as of this weekend, even today. And my first question is: What is your understanding, current understanding? I know that you have been in contact with the Turkish administration. The second is that a few weeks ago, you said that you had full confidence, I believe, in Turkish authorities to go on with the investigations against – about police brutality. Do you have any update? Did you receive an update from Turkey at least?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, we have been following this very closely for a number of weeks. We've talked about it quite a bit in here; we continue to. We've called on all parties, and I'll call on them again, to ease tensions and resolve the situation through dialogue, and we urge all sides to exercise restraint and avoid violence. I don't have any other update. As you mentioned, they'll be looking into various incidents that have happened over the course of the last several weeks, but I would refer you to the Government of Turkey for any update on that.