

Remarks
John Kerry
Secretary of State
Washington, DC
July 16, 2015

SECRETARY KERRY: Good morning, everybody.

QUESTION: Good morning.

SECRETARY KERRY: It's my pleasure to welcome a very old friend. The foreign minister and I go back to literally my first trip to Saudi Arabia as a senator when he was working in the foreign office, in the ministry of foreign affairs. And we have known --

FOREIGN MINISTER AL-JUBEIR: I had just started.

SECRETARY KERRY: Had just started.

FOREIGN MINISTER AL-JUBEIR: Yes.

SECRETARY KERRY: It was his first -- one of his first moments. And we've worked together closely ever since, and this morning I was delighted to welcome him here to talk not only about the Iran nuclear deal but also to talk about the regional issues writ large and particularly to talk about Syria, ISIL, the challenge of Yemen, and the things that we need to do.

As everybody knows, at Camp David we had a very thorough discussion with all of the GCC members about the security challenges of the region, and we came out with a plan which we are filling out now. Secretary Carter will be in the region and in Saudi Arabia next week. We are committed to working together to push back against any extremist enterprises, including the activities of Iran in the region, as well as other challenges to the security and stability of the region.

That commitment you heard the President yesterday in his press conference double down on. And we also, obviously, discussed some aspects of the Iran nuclear deal. But I am confident about our ability to continue to work together to strengthen our cooperation, our relationship, and I'm grateful to the foreign minister for his commitment to that and for spending time here today.

Thank you.

FOREIGN MINISTER AL-JUBEIR: I want to thank you, Mr. Secretary, for receiving me today. It's always a pleasure to see you and to discuss issues of mutual concern with you.

As the Secretary mentioned, we discussed the situation in the Middle East in general, the Iran nuclear agreement, the situation in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, counterterrorism, and how to confront Daesh and defeat it, God willing. We discussed ways of implementing the understandings reached at Camp David between the President and the leaders of the GCC. We both are committed to ensuring that the strong and historic and strategic relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia continues to broaden and deepen and strengthen.

We look forward in the Gulf to receiving the Secretary on August 3rd in Doha for another meeting, and we look forward also to receiving the Secretary of Defense this coming Tuesday in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for meetings not only with the leadership of my country but also with the defense ministers of the GCC to look for ways to further broaden and strengthen the security and military relationship between the United States and the GCC countries.

And so thank you again, Mr. Secretary. Always a pleasure to see you. We have known each other now, I believe, for now 28 years. I was a teenager, I guess. (Laughter).

SECRETARY KERRY: Keep believing that. (Laughter).

FOREIGN MINISTER AL-JUBEIR: Well, you were just out of college.

SECRETARY KERRY: I know, and you were not even married yet.

FOREIGN MINISTER AL-JUBEIR: Yes.

SECRETARY KERRY: Anyway, thank you all very much. Good to be with you. Appreciate it.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. Foreign Minister, will you take any questions? No? Yeah?

QUESTION: Can you take one question, please?

QUESTION: Could you take a question, please?

QUESTION: Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Sure. Yes.

QUESTION: Yeah, thank you. Mr. Foreign Minister, how do you feel about the fact that the United States has agreed to this agreement and that it will probably allow General Soleimani off the hook after it's alleged that he tried to kill you?

SECRETARY KERRY: First of all, it does not let him off the hook.

QUESTION: It doesn't let him off the hook?

SECRETARY KERRY: He is – no, it's a different Soleimani who is listed. But anyway, go ahead.

FOREIGN MINISTER AL-JUBEIR: Yes. Well, I think in general, all of us in the region want to see a peaceful resolution to Iran's nuclear program. We all look forward to an agreement that prevents Iran from acquiring a nuclear capability, that has a robust and continuous inspections regime to make sure that Iran does not violate the terms of the agreement, and that has an effective and quick snapback provision that allows the re-imposition of sanctions against Iran should it violate the terms of that agreement.

We all support the continuation of the sanctions against Iran related to counterterrorism and related to its support for terrorism and other issues. And we hope that the Iranians, if a deal is implemented, that the Iranians will use this deal in order to improve the economic situation in Iran and to improve the lot of the Iranian people, and not use it for adventures in the region.

And we are committed that if Iran should try to cause mischief in the region, we are committed to confront it resolutely. And so we are – we will – we're looking at this agreement and we will be studying it, and we are discussing it with our friends in the United States. But the bottom line is everybody wants a good deal, and so we expect that with time we will be exchanging ideas with our friends in the U.S. and with the other P5+1 countries, and in order to get at questions – answers to some of the questions we may have.

QUESTION: What is your (inaudible)?

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

SECRETARY KERRY: And I will be meeting with the entire GCC and giving them a full briefing download, answering any questions they have. On August 3rd I will be traveling and meeting with them, so we look forward to that. Thank you all very much. Appreciate it. Thank you.

QUESTION: Thank you.