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MR. CROWLEY: (In progress) one of our regional assistant secretaries here at least once. There's been many things that you've seen in terms of the work this week on Africa. Certainly the high-level meeting that's happening on Sudan is an example of that, and also the Secretary's bilateral today with President Museveni. But there are a lot of things that you haven't seen in terms of engagement by others, including Deputy Secretary Steinberg yesterday on Somalia, Assistant Secretary Carson on a wide range of issues from Zimbabwe to the Congo to others, so we thought we'd try to have Johnnie for about 20 minutes just to kind of give you a broad sweep and then answer your specific questions.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: P.J., thank you very much, and thank you all for coming this afternoon. It's a pleasure to see a number of the Washington faces also migrating up to New York with us at the UNGA.

As P.J. says, this has been an important UN session for us because of the Administration's focus on Africa. Two things that are happening this week that are critically important: One is our engagement on Somalia, which occurred yesterday; and the engagement on Sudan, which will happen this afternoon.

But over the course of the last several days, Secretary Clinton has, in fact, had a number of important bilateral meetings, including a very long and productive meeting yesterday with the South African Foreign Minister Mashabane, who is one of the most impressive foreign ministers on the continent. She also had a brief meeting with the president of Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan. And this morning she had a very productive hour-long meeting with President Museveni. Let me say a little bit about that meeting, if I could.

President Museveni is probably one of the most important leaders in East Africa, and certainly in the continent. And he has, through his military, provided the backbone of the AMISOM peacekeeping forces in Somalia. He has probably in excess of 5,000 of the nearly 8,000 troops on the ground helping to defend the TFG government and carrying out both a UN and a AU mandate. The Secretary expressed her deep appreciation to President Museveni for what he is doing in Somalia on behalf of the AU and also on behalf of the international community.

The Secretary also took the opportunity to indicate to President Museveni that the U.S. will continue to work with him and his government as he seeks to end the repressive activities of Joseph Kony and the LRA. As you know, the LRA has been one of the most ruthless rebel groups in all of Africa, having started its rampage of terror in Uganda, taking it to Uganda, and taking it from Uganda to Congo and into the Central Africa Republic. We will continue to work with the Ugandans as they try to eliminate the scourge of the LRA, and we will certainly continue to provide them support and assistance.

One of the other big things that we've been working on here is on Somalia and our Somalia policy. Yesterday afternoon, there was a major meeting on Somalia chaired by the Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. There were approximately four or five heads of state there, including the prime minister of Ethiopia, the president of Uganda – President Museveni, and a number of the foreign ministers, including the foreign minister of France Kouchner, the

foreign minister of Italy Frattini, the foreign minister of Great Britain, Mr. Hague, and we were represented at that meeting by our Deputy Secretary of State Jim Steinberg.

Mr. Steinberg pointed out to those there that we see the problem in Somalia as a national problem, a regional problem, and also a global problem. It is a problem that has metastasized over the last two decades, which has led to a situation where we now have international piracy, foreign fighters going into Somalia, and some groups in Somalia supporting remnants of the al-Qaida East Africa cell that was responsible for the destruction of our embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi in August of 1998.

It's a regional problem because of the large number of refugees that flow out of Somalia into neighboring Kenya, an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 move out every year^[1] from that country into Kenya, but refugees going into Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, and Djibouti as well; large amounts of illegal arms flowing, large amounts of illegal commerce. Somalia is a collapsed state with a weak government unable to project either power or stability or to provide services to its people.

The African Union has stepped up and has put troops on the ground, but it does need additional support in terms of more troop contributing – troop contributors, more material support, and more monetary support. The U.S. Government has been working very hard alongside of African governments to gain more men, more materiel, and more money for this force. At the last African Union meeting approximately six weeks ago in Kampala, I met with some 13 states and organizations to try to marshal greater support for our initiatives in Somalia, and we have followed up in Washington with a meeting of the same groups to try to increase support for any AMISOM effort.

We also outlined yesterday in a statement made by Deputy Steinberg what, in fact, is a two-track policy. We will pursue one track, which is the familiar track of supporting the Djibouti peace process, the TFG, and the government of Sheik Sharif, trying to help it become more effective, to make it more inclusive, and to give it the ability to provide services to its people. And we will also continue to work to strengthen AMISOM. That is the first track. That's the track that most people are familiar with.

But we will also be pursuing a second track, which we think is also increasingly important, and that is we will work to engage more actively with the governments of Puntland and Somaliland. We hope to be able to have more American diplomats and aid workers going into those countries on an ad hoc basis to meet with government officials to see how we can help them improve their capacity to provide services to their people, seeing whether there are development assistance projects that we can work with them on. We think that both of these parts of Somalia have been zones of relative political and civil stability, and we think they will, in fact, be a bulwark against extremism and radicalism that might emerge from the south.

Equally as a part of the second-track strategy, we are going to reach out to groups in south central Somalia, groups in local governments, clans, and sub-clans that are opposed to Al-Shabaab, the radical extremist group in the south, but are not allied formally or directly with the TFG. And we will look for opportunities to work with these groups to see if we can identify them, find ways of supporting their development initiatives and activities.

Let me stop right there and probably take your questions, which are probably more central to your thinking than what I'm saying to you.

QUESTION: Well, actually, what you said about Somaliland and Puntland, at one point you referred to them as countries. Are you contemplating some kind of a diplomatic recognition?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: No, we are not. We believe that we should follow the African Union position on this. We still recognized only a single Somali state. This is the position of the Africa Union, which is the most important and largest continental regional body. We do not contemplate and we are not about to recognize either of these entities or areas as independent states.

QUESTION: So what does the greater engagement –

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: The greater engagement can be defined as meeting on a periodic basis with government officials from these two political entities, talking to them about development issues, including a range of health, education, agriculture, water projects that they might want to develop, looking for ways to strengthen their capacity both to govern and to deliver services to their people. In the past, we have not engaged these areas and political entities aggressively. We will now start to do so.

Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Is that decision – I mean, how does that decision reflect on your assessment of the TFG's ability to have them get up and running? It sounds like you're getting sort of a couple of backups ready because you don't think the TFG is really going to pull it together.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: We will continue to pursue the first track because it is an important track. The TFG is the recognized political government of Somalia. It is recognized by IGAD, which is the subregional organization. It's recognized by the AU and it's recognized by the UN. Sheik Sharif and the TFG government senior representatives are here participating in the UNGA.

The TFG faces enormous challenges because governing Somalia has been an enormous challenge over the last two decades. It faces a security challenge from a radical extremist group called Al-Shabaab. It faces the challenges of living in a very harsh climate in which rainfall is frequently unpredictable. It is a challenge because of its location, its history, and its environment.

We will continue to work with the TFG and its leadership, and we will work with other moderate forces and elements in the south who share many of the same values and principles of the TFG even though they may not be directly allied with it.

QUESTION: I mean, do you anticipate setting up some kind of permanent offices in Somaliland, Puntland, or Hargeisa, or wherever?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: No, we do not anticipate setting up any new diplomatic facilities in all of those – in any of those areas. But I must say that we were very pleased with the announcement yesterday at the meeting on Somalia that the UN is going to begin to staff on a regular basis its offices in Mogadishu. We think that's a positive development to have UN staff there (inaudible).

QUESTION: (Inaudible) Somaliland or Puntland in terms of specific projects, money that --

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: No, but we did have both embassy and AID officers in Hargeisa approximately four weeks ago. They had some very useful and exploratory meetings with the government there. We hope that we will be able to have, on a regular basis, opportunities to exchange views with government

officials and to look for areas where we can provide development assistance and to help them stabilize and improve the economic and social conditions in their country.

QUESTION: Okay. Just to – this is run out of Nairobi?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: This is run out of Nairobi. Our operations for Somalia, all of Somalia, are based in Nairobi.

QUESTION: One more about AMISOM. The Ugandans were quoted again and the military chief of staff was quoted recently as saying that they're ready to send up to 10,000 additional troops but they're awaiting U.S. funding to get that going. Given the troop deficit you've frequently mentioned, is the U.S. to fund this? Is that a plan, and when is that money going to happen?

And secondly, on AMISOM, there's a discussion about whether or not they should – the forces there should be going on a more – taking a more aggressive stance and actually going after the rebels. What's the U.S. position on that?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: First of all, the U.S. Government has been one of the largest supporters of the AMISOM peacekeeping effort. We support the AMISOM peacekeeping effort because it grows out of an African desire to support the Djibouti process, the TFG, and the current TFG leadership. We also endorse and support the efforts of the IGAD and the AU to expand the number of AMISOM peacekeepers. The United States will continue to make contributions to the AMISOM force based on our ability to win the appropriate congressional support for funding of that operation. We will not take responsibility for paying for all of the additional troops that go in there. We think that obligation should be shared broadly by the international community. As I said earlier, we believe that the problem in Somalia is both a regional and a global problem and, in fact, should be shared globally.

Let me just point out again the fact that over the last three years, we have seen an enormous upsurge in the hijacking of ships passing through the Red Sea and the upper northwestern corner of the Indian Ocean. When that happens, it has an impact not just on the states in the region, but it has an impact on the global community as a whole.

Yesterday afternoon, I had a conversation with my counterpart in the Japanese Government, and we talked about how the situation in Somalia directly impacts Japan. Any products that are moving from Japan or from Asia to Europe, or vice versa, from Europe, Germany or England and the Netherlands around to Asia, comes out and around through the Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal, down to the Red Sea, and around.

When ships are subject to hijacking, it has three or four negative global impacts. First, it raises substantially the cost of international insurance. Second, it can, if the countries believe it too dangerous to go through the Suez Canal and down to the Red Sea, extend the journey, the movement of products from Europe to Asia, or Asia to Europe, by as much as a week after they go around the Cape of Good Hope. And thirdly, it increases the cost of not only insurance and potentially time, but it also costs those countries that are contributing naval forces to prevent piracy – it costs them enormous amounts to fund the naval operations out here. So the impact is global.

We are encouraging countries not only in Europe and Africa, but the Middle East and Asia, to recognize the negative impact that Somalia has on the global community as much as it has on Africa. African countries take a disproportionate burden for handling of the Somali pirates.

I also would point out that the – still the second largest source of income for a country like Egypt is the use of the Suez Canal. When traffic is diverted because of problems in the Red Sea, it costs them money as well. So it's a major problem, not just a problem for Africa.

MODERATOR: This has to be the last one, because I'm getting the staff scared that Johnnie is paying for our lunch.

QUESTION: In the context of your meeting with your Japanese counterpart, did you discuss any possible joint projects or new solutions to this problem?

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: I certainly encouraged the Japanese Government to think about financial contributions to help defer the cost of countries in the region to handling pirates. States like Kenya, Tanzania, Mauritius, the Seychelles incur an enormous amount when they take pirates, have to prosecute them and jail them. Assisting them financially in doing that was one of the issues I discussed.

I also encouraged them to think about making monetary contributions that can be used and directed towards AMISOM and directed towards supporting the TFG in its ability to deliver services. I also asked them to think about and consider providing the military equipment that could be used by AMISOM. This is something that we are encouraging a number of states in Europe, the Middle East, and in Asia to look at. It's important that countries in – who are part of the Arab League participate in this as well. We've seen the hijacking of some supertankers from Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia could be of great assistance in this. It is a close neighbor to Somalia and it is impacted by what happens in Somalia. They too could make substantial financial and material contributions to this.

So when President Museveni says Africa and Uganda are prepared to put in troops, that's their part of this international contribution. It is important that European, Middle Eastern, and Asian states find a way to make a contribution as well through material support or through monetary support. That's what I think President Museveni was saying, and it's a point that we believe is important to stress as well. Africans are prepared to play their role; it's important for others to do so as well.

MR. CROWLEY: Thank you.

QUESTION: P.J., what's the latest on the settlements?

MR. CROWLEY: I have nothing to add to what I said last night. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Thank you.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON: Okay, take care.

MR. CROWLEY: Thanks, Johnnie.

QUESTION: P.J., EAP in Washington is telling us to ask you for any statement on the release of the Chinese captain by the Japanese. They keep deferring us back up here to you. They say, "P.J. will have something to say on it."

MR. CROWLEY: Well, as we had stated yesterday, we were concerned that this was an issue that had the potential to escalate. I think Jeff Bader yesterday talked about the strong nationalist fervor that had been generated both on the Chinese side and the Japanese side, so we are gratified that the situation has been resolved. It was something that the Japanese Government assured us that would be done within accordance of their legal process and international law. This was a Japanese decision to make, and we're just hopeful that with the release of the ship captain, tensions will recede and the countries in the region will get back to normal business.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Just one Japanese question. Is this – I mean, maybe that Prime Minister Kan's – his new cabinet is criticized by the other side, opposite side of the party – I mean the – this compromise means that Japan lost diplomatic – diplomatically with the Chinese – I mean this kind of chicken game, people (inaudible) chicken game. Don't you think that this kind of criticizing (inaudible)?

MR. CROWLEY: I mean, as we – we think this is a proper outcome. And we had discussed this with the Japanese. It came up, as we said, in the meeting that the Secretary had with Foreign Minister Maehara yesterday. We had some low-level – lower-level conversations with the Chinese as well, and we sensed that there was a desire on both sides to resolve this soon. We think this is the right decision. It's how mature states resolve these things through diplomacy. And we think this is in the interest of the two countries and the interest of the region. Obviously, there are some underlying issues that have been triggered by this episode. The United States continues to support freedom of navigation in the region, and we will continue to emphasize that. Obviously, we have an important meeting that'll be going on today involving the ASEAN countries and you'll be seeing a communiqué that comes out of that meeting.

QUESTION: Regarding to the Clinton and Maehara discussion, was there any indication from the Japanese side of this possibility to release him?

MR. CROWLEY: This is a decision for – that Japan has made, and I'll defer to the Japanese Government to explain its reasoning. But obviously, we believe that this will significantly reduce the existing tension. We think it was a proper decision for Japan to make.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. CROWLEY: Thank you.