

Secretary Antony J. Blinken And Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Dr. Alfred Mutua At a Joint Press Availability

REMARKS

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SECRETARY BLINKEN: Good morning everyone, and a very warm welcome to my friend the Cabinet Secretary Mutua. Alfred, very good to have you here, and I really appreciate the good, productive conversation that we had a short while ago.

However, before I turn to that and to the U.S.-Kenya Strategic Dialogue, which is underway today, let me just share a brief update on Sudan.

On Saturday, I directed the temporary suspension of operations at Embassy Khartoum, and we conducted a successful operation to safely evacuate all U.S. embassy personnel and their dependents.

I want to reiterate my appreciation for the leadership of Ambassador John Godfrey and the entire embassy team who managed the consolidation of our people and the necessary preparations for the evacuation under a very fluid security situation, even as they were tirelessly working to broker an Eid ceasefire. I could not be prouder of our team, most of whom are now en route back to the United States.

I especially want to express my gratitude to Secretary of Defense Austin, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Milley, and the men and women of the U.S. military who executed the evacuation operation with their usual extraordinary precision and skill. They once again demonstrated that they are the finest in the world.

A decision to suspend operations at the embassy, remove our personnel from their assigned post, is among the most difficult that any Secretary has to make. But my first priority is the safety of our people, and I determined that the deteriorating security conditions in Khartoum posed an unacceptable risk to keeping our team there at this time.

I want to be clear that even as we have temporarily suspended operations on the ground in Khartoum, our diplomatic and consular work in Sudan continues. Indeed, in just the last 36 hours since the embassy evacuation operation was completed, we've continued to be in close communication with U.S. citizens and individuals affiliated with the U.S. Government to provide assistance and facilitate available departure routes for those seeking to move to safety via land, air, and sea.

This includes Americans who are traveling overland in the UN convoy from Khartoum to Port Sudan. We also continue to coordinate with allies and partners who are conducting their own operations, and to leverage those efforts to include Americans. We're taking further steps to support Americans and are exploring options to return the diplomatic and consular presence to Sudan as soon as possible.

We also continue to engage directly with General Burhan and General Hemedti to press them to extend and expand the Eid ceasefire to a sustainable cessation of hostilities that prevents further violence and upholds humanitarian obligations. The Sudanese people are not giving up on their aspirations for a secure, free, and democratic future; neither will we.

The United States will work with all parties, in coordination with regional and international partners, to bring an end to the fighting and a return to the transition to a civilian government.

Kenya, under President Ruto, has been a strong partner in this effort. And indeed, Kenya is a security leader throughout the region. That's evident not only in its commitment to resolving the current crisis in Sudan, but also in its support for United Nations and African Union peacekeeping efforts and the counterterrorism mission in

Somalia, in its partnership to reach the November 2nd Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Ethiopia, and in its stewardship of the Nairobi process to advance peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

And over the last two years, its tenure on the UN Security Council, Kenya has consistently stood up for the UN Charter and focused members on addressing the humanitarian and human rights crises across the continent and beyond.

Beyond peace and security, Kenya and the United States are partnering on a wide range of issues. And that's reflected in the breadth of topics that we're tackling in the Strategic Dialogue. One of the major focuses we had today is public health, an area in which Kenya is demonstrating its potential to be a regional and indeed a global leader. The United States is supporting Kenyan-led vaccine production, including through Moderna's \$500 million investment in a new manufacturing facility near Nairobi, which will produce mRNA vaccines to tackle viruses from COVID-19 to Ebola, from RSV to HIV.

Kenya remains at the forefront of the global HIV response. Today that's nearly reached – and has nearly reached – excuse me – its 95-95-95 targets: diagnose 95 percent of all HIV-positive individuals, provide anti-retroviral therapy for 95 percent of those diagnosed, and achieve viral suppression for 95 percent of those treated. That is a tremendous milestone that is saving countless lives, and we're proud to have supported this effort over two decades with PEPFAR as it's been operating in Kenya. Now, we're building on that success by moving to a Kenya-owned, Kenya-driven, and Kenya-funded framework that will position the country to achieve sustained HIV epidemic control by 2025.

Health security and food security are closely intertwined. We've heard loudly and clearly from African leaders that emergency aid cannot be the only solution. So we're investing in sustainable, long-term African food production. That includes our work, with the AU and the UN, to invest in nutritious, climate-resilient crops and develop climate-smart agriculture. And it includes mobilizing the private sector in that effort.

President Ruto recently announced 14 investments valued at over \$150 million by private firms in Kenya's agro-industrial productivity. In total, these new partnerships will create over 20,000 Kenyan jobs, boost incomes by – for more than 1 million smallholder farmers, and increase sales and exports by over \$130 million – while, of course, dramatically increasing local crop production and reducing malnutrition.

U.S. companies are eager to invest in Kenya's success. We're committed to supporting U.S. investment in Kenya – particularly in key sectors like information and communications technologies, agriculture, renewable energy – which will help Kenya achieve its goal of reaching upper-middle income status by 2030, while creating jobs and opportunity for people in both our countries.

Finally, we're discussing through the Strategic Dialogue how the United States can continue to support Kenya's democratic progress. Its recent and fair elections and orderly and peaceful transition of power are a model for the region – demonstrating the commitment of its people, civil society, and leaders to transparent governance that is accountable to its citizens.

So we have made a lot of progress, and we're proud of it, and we have a lot on the agenda today. And as with all of our Strategic Dialogues, particularly with Kenya, the work of today is also the work of the 364 days that follow. This is an effort that takes place day-in, day-out between our governments, between our officials, between our experts, but also between our private sectors, our civil societies, our citizens, building, strengthening a partnership between our countries.

I want to thank the cabinet secretary for his commitment to advancing this agenda, and Alfred, the floor is yours.

CABINET SECRETARY MUTUA: Thank you very much, Secretary Blinken. I'm very happy to be here with my team. And I want to thank you for the warm welcome that you have given to us and the hospitality, and this Strategic Dialogue that is very important for both our countries, and not just both our countries, but also the African continent.

Let me start the way you finished, and that is the issue of democracy. Kenya prides itself to be a democratic country that believes in the rights of the people to be able to go to the ballot box and choose their leaders and to live in a stable country where there's economic growth. And we want to thank the United States for the support you've given us over the years in ensuring that we have a democratic country. And we will continue expounding the views and the principles and philosophies of true democracy as it is and stability in the region.

Kenya is open for business, as we usually say. We are moving into an era where we are saying we want more trade, not aid. Kenya is well placed in the African continent to be a hub for American investors. In the African continent, we now have the African Continental Free Trade Area, with a population of 1.3 billion people. When you come and invest in Kenya, it means you're investing in the continent of Africa. You're able to supply your goods, you're coming from a hub that can able to help you. We have worked very closely with American companies, and we had a very good Chamber of Commerce meeting in Nairobi, where a raft of new initiatives were announced to enable people to be able to – American farms to be able to come and invest in Kenya. So welcome, Americans, to come and invest in Kenya as you continue.

In the area of our cooperation and Strategic Dialogue, you mentioned Moderna as a company that is about to break ground in Kenya. We welcome more companies to come to Kenya, because we've always been very good partners, and we'll continue working well together.

In this Strategic Dialogue, I think we're also talking about issues of climate change. The reality is that it is not a matter of when but if the world has transitioned from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Kenya, we're at a good place and only 2 percent of our energy is renewable energy, using hydro, geothermal, solar, and wind. And we want to grow that to 100 percent by 2030. And we want to work with American farms and American Government towards supporting the production of green hydrogen, which is what the future will need.

So we have looked at the past. We have fossil fuels. We've decided not to tap into them because the environment is very important. We have to protect now for future, otherwise the world will not be in a very, very good place. So we want to be able to work together in those many ways.

We'll be discussing many issues, ranging from security, peace in the region – as you know, Kenya has been quite involved in the mediation in Ethiopia, and also looking at what you can do for Democratic Republic of Congo. COVID has taught us that what happens in one part of the world will happen – will have an influence or an impact on what happens in the rest of the world. So we want to acknowledge the support we have been receiving, and the comradeship between us and the United States in terms of bringing peace to the region. And we are committed to be the peacemakers of the continent of Africa, if not the world, looking at silencing the guns, people sitting down and being able to work together.

It is in the same spirit we are talking about the Russia and Ukraine conflict where Kenya recognizes Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders, and we've been calling for cessation of hostilities, and the steps that have been taken so far to tell others that you cannot roll back history. We're at a place we are by now; we have to move forward. You can't start claiming countries, or claiming countries that are part of you. Nostalgia is not the order of the day now. We need people to be respected, they need peace and security, and we have to have a system where we don't let things get out of hand. Because today it's Ukraine; what about tomorrow? What will it be?

We also are very happy about many things that are happening. But as they happen also, we are quite sad of what's happening in the Sudan. And we've been working closely with the Government of Sudan, trying to get to a place whereby we can have peace and stability. It is quite tragic that we have more bullets coming into Sudan or being used in Sudan than food. And it's a tragedy, because we see from where we sit a lot of international interference, a lot of other players trying to use Sudan as a playing field for whatever reason, for the gold in Sudan, for territorial strength and control of the region.

And we're trying to ask – we are asking external forces to leave Sudan alone. As an African continent and the AU and intergovernmental organization called IGAD, we are trying to find solutions for Sudan. I know you've pulled your teams out. Kenya is not pulling its diplomatic offices. We're not shutting them down because we want to have a presence as we negotiate.

President Ruto is looking forward to going to Sudan as soon as it stabilizes and there is enough security to try and see how we can engage the leaders. We are trying to engage the two warring parties, we're trying to bring them to the table so that we can have a good end, to a cessation of the violence. And what we want is civilian rule eventually over there.

President Ruto has offered Kenya to mediate the conflict and to restore civility and peace. And we are quite persuaded that a peacefully negotiated solution to the conflict in Sudan is within reach. And as always, we stand ready to make our contribution, and we'll be playing hand-in-hand with that. So we'll be able to work together and see what we can do.

I want to thank you. There are many topics we can talk about. We look forward to welcoming you back to Kenya sometime soon, and we look forward to President Biden also visiting Kenya, and President Ruto coming back, and thus holding these meeting at presidential level as we continue to work.

What I can assure you is that Kenya will remain a good partner, will remain a friend of the United States, and we'll be able to work in sync as we try to improve the world that we live in. When it comes to issues of trade, when it comes to the issue of health, when it comes to the issue of peace and stability, when it comes to issues of humanity, we are all the same people and we want to have a good life while we're here. And if we can work together as friends, it will be very good.

And at that note, I want to welcome Americans to visit Kenya. We don't get as many Americans coming to Kenya as they should. I think our elephants and lions are complaining that they don't see a lot of Americans in our national parks. So Kenya is a

safe and happy place, and we welcome Americans to come down for safari where you actually get to interact with the animals as long as they don't – you don't get too close. But they'll be happy to see you.

Thank you.

MR PATEL: Thank you. We'll take three questions. First, we'll go to Cindy Spang from Voice of America.

QUESTION: Yes, thank you. Good morning. I have one question for you, Secretary Blinken, and several questions for both of you, please. Secretary Blinken, do you have numbers of how many Americans remain in Sudan? And could you share any updates on their safety and well-being? And what options are there for those who want to leave?

And for both of you: Cabinet Secretary Mutua, you mentioned foreign involvement in Sudan. Could you elaborate on that, please? And have either of you seen direct or indirect involvement from Egypt or the United Arab Emirates? And if so, have you spoken to their leaders about that? And have you seen involvement by the Wagner Group, and you are – how concerned are you that Russia may fan the violence? Thank you.

SECRETARY BLINKEN: Thanks. Happy to start. First, in terms of American citizens in Sudan, as you know, in any country around the world, whether it's Sudan or anywhere else, we never know with any precision how many Americans may be there at any given time because Americans are not required to register with the embassy, with the government, either when they go, when they reside, or when they leave. So we don't have a good fix on the number of Americans who are there at any given time, including now.

We do know, of course, the number of Americans who have registered with us and with whom we're in very active touch, communication. And of those, I would say some dozens have expressed an interest in leaving, and as I mentioned just a few moments ago, even with the withdrawal of our embassy personnel from Sudan, our efforts to provide services to American citizens who are there – consular services, other services,

advice – continues, and we're in regular communication with American citizens. We are looking to see how we can help them ensure their own safety. We have been working with allies and with partners to do as much as we can to enable them to find their way out if that's what they choose to do.

Now, keep in mind as well that the overwhelming majority of American citizens in Sudan are dual nationals who have made their lives there, been living there for years, for decades, for generations, and many want to continue to do that. But for those who are seeking to leave, we'll continue to engage directly with them to see what we can do to help them, and as I said, with allies and partners as well to help facilitate their departure. And this is going to be an ongoing process.

In addition, we're looking at what options we have to perhaps resume a diplomatic presence in Sudan, including in Port Sudan; that's something that we're looking at. But conditions are very challenging and we're tracking that very carefully.

Just to pick up on the second part of the question, look, on one level, a whole variety of countries are involved in Sudan, have been engaged there, and engaged in – to some extent in trying to help Sudan move forward with its transition to a civilian-led government. And we have been in touch repeatedly throughout this crisis with a variety of them. I've spoken directly to counterparts in Saudi Arabia, in the United Arab Emirates; other members of our team have spoken to Egypt and other countries, the United Kingdom – all to the same end, which is trying to get a ceasefire, trying to get a more sustainable cessation of hostilities, and then trying to get the country back on track to the transition to a civilian-led government that it was on before the violence that erupted derailed that effort. And it remains vitally important that countries use whatever positive influence they have to try to move Sudan in that direction.

We do have deep concern about the engagement of the Prigozhin group, the Wagner Group, in Sudan. It's in so many different countries in Africa – an element that, when it's engaged, simply brings more death and destruction with it. And it's very important that we not see its further engagement in Sudan. And I know a number of countries are very concerned with that prospect.

CABINET SECRETARY MUTUA: Thank you. Thank you very much. I agree with you there with the last statement about all these groups coming in and destabilizing. Currently in Sudan, we are trying also to evacuate Kenyans who have been working and living in Sudan. We've (inaudible) to a lot of requests by the international organizations, the UN particularly, and other countries to help evacuate some of their people and bring them to Kenya or get them out of Sudan because of current need to accompany, and so we'll be proceeding.

But it would be good if we can find a way of establishing a ceasefire, even for a few hours or even a half a day or a day, to enable people to be able to move, to enable food and supplies to be brought in to the – especially in the capital, Khartoum, and other places.

In terms of involvement and indirect and direct involvement of various groups, we've been quite concerned by some of our friends in the Middle East as (inaudible) Russia and others who for a long time have been friendly to either one or the other side. And we are just saying that at this particular time, it is not a time to take sides in a war. It's time to be able to come together and bring them together because at the end of the day, peace has to prevail. And so it doesn't matter who you support; at the end of the day, we need to have the people of Sudan have stability.

So all these other interests, if they can just keep off and let us bring peace to Sudan, we do believe it is possible. And that is where we are working towards as Kenya, together with our partners. And we don't want to be talking to people who are being supported and armed more and given strength by outsiders who don't live in Sudan. We care about Sudan. As part of the African Union, we want to silence the guns in Sudan, want to find an African solution to African problems with the support of our friends. But we can't effectively do that if we are talking to groups that are being strengthened every day by the parties who believe that all they need to do is to fight to the end. There is no fighting to the end. At the end of the day, it's the local and the normal people who lose, not just their leaders.

MR PATEL: We'll next go to Julian Pecquet from *The Africa Report*.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. Julian Pecquet of *The Africa Report, Jeune Afrique*. You mentioned, Secretary Mutua, about President Ruto's involvement with IGAD and the talks with the Sudanese, so I have a few questions. One of them is what are you hearing from the parties to the conflict? What are you telling them? What kind of progress are we seeing, are we making since the past week? Any progress on when the president might host the parties in Nairobi if he can't go to Sudan because of the security situation? And how are you working with the African Union, which has its own effort going on? Secretary Blinken perhaps can talk to what the U.S. can do to help with the African-led negotiations.

Eastern Congo is another conflict where foreign actors are working at cross-purposes. I wanted to ask if Kenya can be a meaningful force in the DRC. Are you willing to take on the fight to the M23, which is what the Congolese seem to want? And can you tell us what the latest is with negotiations to renew the mandate of the East Africa Community regional force? And here as well, what role can the U.S. play?

And then finally, on trade, perhaps we can talk about agriculture specifically, which is a very big deal to the Kenyans, obviously. What kind of progress are we making in the bilateral talks on agriculture, and particularly U.S. GMO exports to your country? Thank you so much.

CABINET SECRETARY MUTUA: Thank you very much. As members of IGAD, we have decided to be at the forefront in finding a solution to all these problems. We do believe that we are at a good place because the two warring leaders are talking to us, so that's a good sign. They are not – they – when you talk – when they are being talked to, they're talking back, and we're able to open the channels of communication. The fighting is still going on in Sudan, but we just feel that at least we have an entryway. They have not locked themselves up and shut their ears to the world. They are listening to the world, and they know the pressure that is being felt around them.

Our president is ready. We have said that Kenya is ready at any moment's notice. Even if our president may not be able to go there immediately, we are ready to start discussions, and that's a message we are communicating to them, is that send us part of your teams. Let's start talking about what needs to be achieved because there's

a reason they are fighting. They are fighting because they can't agree about something and we need to be able to sort out what they can't agree about, find a common, agreeable ground and then be able to move forward. And this is also under the auspices of the African Union. The African Union had a ministerial meeting where they called cessation of fighting, where they called for dialogue, and so this is part of the process.

What we are doing as Kenya is that we are not just going to wait. We are saying – we've put – stuck our necks out and said, we can provide a solution. We've been in this game for some time. We've – kind of have a bit of experience in how these things are done, and we love the people of Sudan so much that we say that we are ready to commit ourselves to hosting a negotiation between the two of you, the two warring groups, and trying to find solution so that the innocent people of Sudan – great people of Sudan – who are suffering can have this burden lifted from them.

In terms of eastern Congo, yes, our troops are on the ground, and it's not about us fighting the M23. We are not there to fight M23 or to fight anybody. We are there to provide a corridor that allows the groups that are fighting the Congolese Government and the ones that are being fought by the Congolese Government to have a sense of security through there. That they can start – we can – they can start putting down their guns and getting to the table and be able to negotiate.

It is important to note that M23 has been in operation for over 30 years. It is not just a simple problem that just started yesterday. So we are working together, and the Nairobi processes are still – is still going on, process still going on. We have Nairobi 4 coming up, and so we are fully engaged. And they have different meetings being called this coming month to try and sort out the issue.

In terms of the regional force and extending, that's in the process, and we are confident that will be – Kenya is not planning to withdraw its troops until we find an amicable solution. And we want to thank our partners, the United States and others, for the promised support that we can be able to work together to ensure that that region is stable.

Maybe you can take agriculture fast, then I can —

SECRETARY BLINKEN: Thank you, Alfred. Let me just add that in terms of our engagement in Sudan, first, we've been deeply engaged directly with the parties. I have spoken to Generals Burhan and Hemedti on multiple occasions. We strongly support African-led efforts to help both mediate this crisis, to end the hostilities, and, as I said, get back on the – on track to transition to a civilian-led government. We participated in, I think, an important meeting by video conference that was convened by the chairperson of the African Union, Mr. Faki, just at the end of last week that included the secretary-general of the United Nations, that included virtually all of the stakeholders in Africa and beyond who have an interest in trying to help Sudan get back on track, and we continue to support those efforts.

We all have the same goal. We're all driving to the same place. That is a ceasefire that's genuinely durable, that turns into a full cessation of hostilities between the competing forces, and that resumes the very important negotiations that were underway to create a transition to a civilian-led government – negotiations that had produced very significant progress, including the agreed framework. So that is everyone's goal, and we'll use both our direct engagement as helpful and as appropriate, but also strongly in support of AU-led efforts to put this back on track.

With regard to the United States and Kenya and trade, I think first it's worth pointing out that it's up 20 percent over the last year. That in and of itself speaks volumes. And when it comes to agriculture, that's exactly one of the things that we focused on today in a variety of ways, and I think that's going to be also the product of the Strategic Dialogue that we're having today and that you'll hear more about when we conclude our conversations.

One of the things that we talked about – and this has been part of an ongoing conversation – is of course Kenya is on the receiving end of an acute food insecurity challenge, like many other countries in Africa and beyond. And we've seen an almost perfect storm that's emerged – the combination of climate change, of COVID, and of conflict, including the Russian aggression against Ukraine – all of which have contributed dramatically to rising food insecurity in Africa and beyond.

We have been deeply and intensely engaged in meeting this challenge. If you go back to February of last year when Russia invaded Ukraine again, we've provided since then about \$13.5 billion toward building greater food security, including direct assistance to Kenya and to many other countries. The United States has provided about 75 percent of the United Nations appeal for Kenya when it comes to food security.

But for all of the efforts that we and other countries are making in partnership with Kenya and other friends to address the immediate crisis, we're equally focused on helping countries build sustainable, long-term, productive capacity themselves. That is fundamentally the answer to the challenge. And I think there's tremendous opportunity there, including in the work that we're doing with Kenya.

One aspect of that is making sure that, using remarkable technology that we've developed over recent years, that two things are addressed: the health and strength of soil, and the resilience of seeds. We have the capacity to basically map soil anywhere to determine whether it's strong or not and needs help. We also have remarkable technology when it comes to seeds to make sure that they are much more resilient to climate change, to droughts, to extreme conditions. And this is one of the things that we're working on with Kenya, as well as building out the entire production infrastructure that's also vital to making sure that there's genuine food security.

So this is very much part of our dialogue. It's part of our ongoing conversation. And I expect you'll see more on that in – both today and in the months to come.

CABINET SECRETARY MUTUA: Thank you very much. Just to add on to issues of agriculture, and this is where with the impact of climate change I think it's a lesson to all of us that we can't keep on relying on rainfed agriculture. So we have a massive program in Kenya of building dams so that we can be able to conduct irrigation – hold irrigation programs so that now when it rains – it doesn't rain at least over there, but we still have to combat climate change. That's why we are planting 15 billion trees over the next few years to try and roll back what is happening.

Agriculture in our region will only thrive if our farmers feel that they need to use it for economic reasons. Agriculture is not only for food, because when a farmer grows

crops, that farmer uses – sells those crops, eats some and sells the crops and gets money for school fees, for building, for their car, et cetera, et cetera. So to us when it came to agriculture is also an economic issue, and that's why we are talking about value addition in the conversation we're talking about, getting our products here.

I can say with no fear of contradiction that Kenya has the best tea and coffee in the world, and so we would like to be able to get more of that in the United States. And even our products – as we add value to our products, which means that with opening up of the markets means that our farmers get more money in their pocket as a motivation, they engage more into growing crops, and then it becomes a cycle that is able to continue. So it's about sustainability.

MR. PATEL: Final question. Kylie Atwood, CNN.

QUESTION: Good morning. Thanks, you guys. I'm going to start with Secretary Mutua, please. I just wonder if you could be a little bit more explicit for us in terms of how exactly Kenya has seen the Wagner Group's involvement in the ongoing conflict in Sudan. And you said that you believe that a peaceful resolution is in reach in Sudan. Why exactly do you feel that that is in reach?

And Secretary Blinken, just questions on Sudan and then also on Russia and Ukraine. First, on Sudan, have the convoys that have attempted to leave Sudan, that have American citizens who have joined them, run into any problems, any violence along the routes on the way out, as far as the U.S. knows at this point? And you mentioned potentially resuming a U.S. diplomatic presence at Port Sudan. Could that happen as soon as this week?

And then just one question about a report this morning in *The Washington Post* on the – on Ukrainians planning to attack Moscow earlier this year, on the one-year anniversary of the war. Based on that article, which comes from leaked classified U.S. Intelligence documents, it says that the country's military intelligence directorate agreed to postpone the strikes at Washington's request. Have Ukrainian officials ever discussed with you such potential plans for an attack on Moscow? And what's your message to any Ukrainian Government officials who may be privately advocating for such an approach? Thank you.

CABINET SECRETARY MUTUA: Thank you. I think the position that Kenya holds is that we don't want interference by any group, may be Warner Group or individual countries that may be involved directly or indirectly. At this particular time, we'd just like us to be left with Sudan without foreign and other groups interfering with the peace process.

We are quite encouraged about peace being found in Sudan very soon. This is because we've had negotiations and mediation and a process in Sudan that has gone on for some time. And a few weeks ago, there was a very successful forum held in Khartoum, where there was an agreement basically in terms of returning the country to civilian rule, in terms of when the next elections will be held, in terms of the balance of how things will run. And it was only one item that there was a bit of disagreement, and it's not even a major item. It was all about the militia – the RSF joining the national military and how the timelines and the groups – which was a very, very small issue, and we are confident that that is an issue that you can tackle. Basically, it's a 2 percent that remains; 98 percent has already been done and agreed and signed to. That is why we are very confident that, once there's cessation, and with a bit of mediation, we believe that by the end of this year we'll be talking a different story about Sudan.

SECRETARY BLINKEN: Kylie, in terms of the convoys, it's – look, it's a moving picture, and we've seen to date different things. Some of the convoys that have tried to move people out, including all the way to Port Sudan but also to places closer into Khartoum, some of them have encountered problems, including robbery, looting, that kind of thing. Others not. But it's something that we're tracking very, very carefully.

To the extent that we've been able to facilitate Americans being folded into some of those convoys, we'll continue to do that. But we're also trying to provide the best possible advice we can to anyone asking for our assistance about conditions, about safety, about security, so that they can make their own decisions with the most information possible. But it's something that we're tracking as carefully as we can, and of course we're in very close contact with a number of countries that are engaged in removing their personnel from Sudan to make sure that we know from them what they're experiencing, what they're encountering. All of that factors into the advice that we can provide and the decisions that we make.

When it comes to resuming our own diplomatic presence in Sudan, look, that's going to be entirely dependent on the conditions in Sudan. Again, something that we'll look at day-in/day-out, but I can't put a timeframe on it at all. It's really conditions dependent.

And finally, the last part of your question: I'm not going to comment on any purported intelligence documents that are being reported on in the press. Thanks.

MR PATEL: Thank you, Your Excellencies.

SECRETARY BLINKEN: Thank you.

MR PATEL: Thank you.

SECRETARY BLINKEN: Thanks, everyone.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MR PATEL: Thanks, everybody.

SECRETARY BLINKEN: When it comes to what Ukraine does to defend itself against the Russian aggression, these are decisions for the Ukrainians to make.

Thank you.