

# Press Releases: Eighth U.S.-Laos Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue

Media Note  
Washington, DC  
July 25, 2017

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The United States and the Lao People's Democratic Republic held their 8th annual Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue on July 25 in Washington. Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Susan Thornton led the U.S. delegation, which included representatives from the U.S. Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce; Office of the U.S. Trade Representative; and the United States Agency for International Development. Lao PDR Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Thongphane Savanphet led the Lao delegation. The two sides affirmed that the U.S.-Lao relationship is stronger than ever and expressed satisfaction at progress in forging greater cooperation as outlined in the 2016 Joint Declaration on the Comprehensive Partnership.

U.S. and Lao officials discussed broader regional developments and threats to regional security, including those posed by the DPRK. Thornton reiterated the enduring U.S. commitment to Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and the Asia Pacific region and to continued close relations with Laos.

The U.S. and Lao delegations reviewed progress in removing unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Laos and welcomed continued U.S. support for clearance efforts, highlighting progress made on a national cluster munition survey which will define and quantify contamination in the most heavily impacted areas. U.S. and Lao officials also reviewed wide-ranging development cooperation in health, nutrition, and education and discussed freedom of expression, religious freedom, and labor rights, emphasizing the important role of civil society and rule of law to good governance, shared prosperity, and stability in the region. The two delegations reaffirmed their support for the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), a collaborative agreement between the United States, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam that facilitates transboundary development and regional integration. The United States thanked the Lao government for agreeing to host the upcoming LMI Regional Working Group in Vientiane in the fall. The two sides pointed to the importance of human rights of vulnerable groups, including disabled persons, as well as the Lao PDR's efforts to implement its National Action Plan to combat trafficking in persons.

The two delegations agreed to cooperate on the repatriation of Lao nationals subject to final orders of removal, pledging to establish a standing process

to review cases and facilitate speedy removals.

The U.S. and Lao delegations agreed on the importance of deepening people-to-people ties, noting the potential of English language training; academic, professional, and youth exchanges; and university partnerships to enhance mutual understanding. They also reviewed mechanisms to facilitate bilateral trade and investment, including their Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, and noted the opportunities for increased business between the two countries. Both delegations look forward to holding the ninth Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue next year.

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## **Press Releases: Selection of the Sixth Annual U.S. Youth Observer to the United Nations**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 25, 2017

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The U.S. Department of State, in partnership with the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA), is pleased to announce the selection of the sixth annual U.S. Youth Observer to the United Nations. Ms. Munira Khalif of Minnesota was chosen from a competitive pool of applicants that included top-ranked university students and young professionals from across the United States.

Ms. Khalif studies economics and government at Harvard University. She co-founded a youth-run non-profit organization called Lighting the Way, which

works to make education more accessible and equitable for girls in East Africa. She has actively advocated for women and girls' issues at the United Nations through the UN Foundation's Girl Up Campaign and is passionate about empowering youth voices through grassroots community initiatives.

The U.S. Youth Observer to the United Nations program was launched in 2012 to increase youth engagement in global affairs. As the Youth Observer, Ms. Khalif will represent American youth at the 72<sup>nd</sup> UN General Assembly in New York and other UN events throughout the coming year, traveling within the United States and overseas to share her impressions and experiences. Ms. Khalif follows Ms. Nicol Perez, who served as a voice for American youth at major global events in New York, Rome, Dubai, and Berlin as the U.S. Youth Observer for 2016-2017.

For further information, please contact Cain Harrelson, Public Diplomacy Chief for the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, at [HarrelsonBC@state.gov](mailto:HarrelsonBC@state.gov). Follow the program and the Department of State's multilateral engagements on Twitter at [@USYouthObserver](https://twitter.com/USYouthObserver) and [@State\\_IO](https://twitter.com/State_IO). Complete details about the U.S. Youth Observer program are available at [http://genun.unausa.org/youth\\_observer](http://genun.unausa.org/youth_observer).

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## **[Press Releases: WiSci Girls STEAM Camp in Malawi Begins July 30](#)**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 24, 2017

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Building upon the success of the [WiSci \(Women in Science\) Girls STEAM Camp](#)

[held in Peru](#) in 2016 and in [Rwanda in 2015](#), this year's WiSci Girls STEAM Camp will take place in [Malawi, July 30–August 14](#). A public-private partnership designed to expand science, technology, engineering, arts and design, and mathematics (STEAM) exposure and opportunities for adolescent girls, the 2017 camp brings together 100 students from Malawi, Rwanda, Uganda, Liberia, Tanzania, Zambia, and the United States.

Led by industry experts, WiSci 2017 focuses on the applications of science and technology in creating a safer, more prosperous, and secure world. Campers will learn about coding and app development, engineering and robotics, micro- and molecular biology, satellite mapping, and sustainable development. They will have the opportunity to present project ideas and designs that use the skills and tools they gained to address a social or development challenge. The camp will also provide the girls with leadership and communication skills, teamwork opportunities, cultural exchange, educational excursions, mentorship, and professional development and networks extending beyond the camp to continue participants' engagement in STEAM fields.

The 2017 WiSci Girls STEAM Camp is led by founding partners the [U.S. Department of State](#), [United Nations Foundation's Girl Up campaign](#), and [the Intel Corporation](#), and sustaining partner [Google](#). Additional programmatic support is provided by [Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany](#), [American Society for Microbiology](#), and [NASA](#). The implementing partner for WiSci 2017 is [World Learning](#).

The WiSci Girls STEAM camp is part of the U.S. government's efforts to empower adolescent girls, especially in the STEAM fields, and to prevent and respond to gender-based violence

For more information on the WiSci Girls STEAM Camp, visit [girlup.org/wisci](http://girlup.org/wisci), follow [#WiSci2017](#) on social media, or contact Alex Campbell, [CampbellAM2@state.gov](mailto:CampbellAM2@state.gov) or Anita Ostrovsky, [Ostrovskya@state.gov](mailto:Ostrovskya@state.gov).

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**[Press Releases: Joint Statement of the](#)**

# Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue

Media Note

Washington, DC

July 24, 2017

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Following is the text of a joint statement issued by the Government of the United States and the Government of Japan at the conclusion of the fifth Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue:

**Begin text:**

1. Following the meeting between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Donald J. Trump in February 2017 and building upon their joint statement which reaffirmed that the two countries will expand bilateral security cooperation in the field of cyberspace, the Governments of Japan and the United States held the fifth Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue in Tokyo on July 20 and 21, 2017.
2. Japan and the United States share the view that the Japan-U.S. Cyber Dialogue has facilitated whole of government cooperation on a wide range of bilateral cyber issues and affirmed their determination to further enhance their joint endeavors in this field.
3. Both countries, as allies sharing fundamental values of freedom, democracy, and human rights, and as advanced states with leading technological capabilities, recognized that an accessible, open, interoperable, reliable and secure cyberspace has contributed to global economic, social and political development.
4. Japan and the United States shared concerns that the most serious malicious cyber activities have the potential to undermine peace, prosperity, and stability of the international community.
5. Japan and the United States recognized that the security and resilience of cyberspace can only be fully achieved through close cooperation and collaboration, both nationally and internationally, with various actors including the private sector, academia, and civil society, and committed to promoting public-private coordination in and between both nations.
6. Based on "The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation" issued on April 27, 2015, the two countries noted their steady progress on cyberspace cooperation. Japan and the United States also welcomed the progress of the Cyber Defense Policy Working Group (CDPWG) between the Ministry of Defense of Japan and the U.S. Department of Defense.

7. Japan and the United States welcomed continued and enhanced cooperation, particularly in the areas below, and recommitted to further develop efforts, consistent with relevant international and domestic law, to continue promoting security, stability and prosperity in cyberspace.

(1) Information Sharing

Japan and the United States reviewed recent cyber incidents and response efforts as well as emerging threats from strategic, policy and technical perspectives. The two governments continue to make progress in cyber threat and incident information sharing. In particular, the National Center of Incident Readiness and Strategy for Cybersecurity (NISC) of Japan announced in May 2017 that it will join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Automated Indicator Sharing (AIS) program. Both countries affirmed that they will further strengthen their cybersecurity information sharing to support prevention of and response to cyber incidents that may occur.

(2) Enhancing national efforts

a. Based on a whole of government approach, the governments of Japan and the United States enhanced respective domestic cybersecurity measures, sharing their work and knowledge in the field. The two countries recognized that critical infrastructure resilience is essential to both countries and affirmed that they will deepen each other's understanding of respective approaches. The two countries also committed to further strengthen collaboration on cybersecurity of industrial control systems, including through joint training efforts between the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of Japan and DHS.

b. Japan and the United States discussed preparations regarding the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and welcomed cooperation among relevant authorities, including NISC and DHS, to strengthen cybersecurity efforts for this purpose.

c. Japan and the United States shared perspectives on their evolving approaches for classifying cyber incident severity and agreed to build on each other's efforts and cooperate to effectively address future incidents.

d. Japan and the United States recognize that automated large-scale distributed cyber attacks, such as through botnets, may pose a significant threat to cyberspace, in particular in the context of increasing connectivity through the Internet of Things (IoT). They intend to share approaches to enhancing resilience of the Internet, combating botnets, and to enhancing the cybersecurity of the IoT, in coordination with appropriate stakeholders.

(3) Maintaining and strengthening international stability in cyberspace

a. Japan and the United States have closely cooperated in the areas of international law, voluntary, non-binding norms of responsible State behavior in peacetime, and confidence-building measures, including through the 5th United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security

and the G7 Ise-Shima Cyber Group (ISCG), and will continue to promote a strategic framework for conflict prevention, cooperation, and stability in cyberspace.

b. Japan and the United States will continue to enhance cooperation to deter and respond to malicious cyber activities, consistent with relevant domestic and international law, including the law of State responsibility.

c. Japan and the United States recognize that building developing nations' capacity not only contributes to their own security, but also reduces the overall risk in the international community. Japan and the United States intend to partner together and with the private sector to provide assistance, taking into account needs of the recipient nations.

8. The international community's access to, dependence on, and innovations for cyberspace continues to grow. Japan and the United States affirmed their determination to advance shared efforts, together with private sector partners, for peace, stability and prosperity of both states and the international community, including through this Dialogue.

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## **Press Releases: The United States Congratulates Timor-Leste on Parliamentary Elections**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
July 24, 2017

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The United States congratulates the people of Timor-Leste for holding peaceful national parliamentary elections on July 22. This achievement represents another major milestone in Timor-Leste's young democracy. We applaud all political parties for their participation and look forward to working with the new government.

We commend Timor-Leste's national election bodies for leading an electoral process that was well-managed, credible, and accountable to the people. The United States also appreciates the robust engagement of domestic and international observers during the elections.

Timor-Leste and the United States share many values and principles, and we look forward to deepening our partnership.

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