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STATE**

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Thank you so much, and thank you, John, and congratulations for once again a truly extraordinary conference. I had some remarks prepared, focused on the nuts and bolts of stabilisation, what we are doing in Raqqa, what we are doing in Mosul, but listening to the extraordinary presentations today, I thought I would perhaps take a step back and think a little bit about what we were talking about here in Manama four years ago when ISIS was really on the rampage.

And if you look back at four years ago, and you look at kind of what was being discussed when we had this forum then, ISIS was controlling territory the size of the United Kingdom. Some 7.7 million people were living under the control of ISIS. They were committing acts of genocide against minority groups, Christians, Yazidis and others, as we know. They were planning major acts of terrorism in the streets of our capitals. And it looked like something – almost a situation we did not really know how to fully get a handle on.

At the time, about a year ago now, we formed a coalition in Jeddah with about 12 countries at the time. And we determined that in order to actually take back this territory from ISIS and have a more stable Middle East and a more stable world and protect our homelands, we had to have a truly comprehensive approach. There was a military component to this, but we were going to try to do this in a different way, we were going to try to empower local Iraqis and Syrians to take back their territory. And every single thing we did on the military side had to be followed by a comprehensive humanitarian programme and a comprehensive what we now call stabilisation programme – stabilisation really being the nuts and bolts of what comes immediately after the military operations: clearing landmines, getting basic water, essential services, electricity back into these areas so that people can return home.

So, we built this coalition in Jeddah with about 12 countries. And if you fast-forward to where we are now, we have 79 members of the coalition in 75 countries, plus NATO, the EU, Interpol and the Arab League.

And just a little bit of statistics on, kind of, what we have done: 31 of those countries have contributed military partnerships in Iraq and Syria. Almost US\$20 billion in humanitarian stabilisation, economic support, has been provided by the coalition – particularly grateful for Foreign Minister Kono in Japan for about US\$2.5bn of contributions over this time period. Seventy countries in our coalition have strengthened their counter-terrorism laws to make sure that foreign fighters – it is harder for them to travel across borders. We have 32 countries in our coalition in the daily grind of the counter-ideological message on the internet, in mosques, in our capitals around the world, which is now going on. And the results now, I think, speak for themselves. Nobody has been doing this – and I want to echo Ayman's remarks: we have a long way to go here. So, nobody is declaring mission accomplished, but we have had some success. As you heard from Secretary Mattis today, the conventional military campaign in the physical space that ISIS used to control, it is really down to now the last 1%. The conventional military phase of this operation, I think it is fair to say, the end is really coming, although there is difficult fighting ahead in this last area of the lower Euphrates valley in Syria.

But most significantly, all the territory that was retaken in this military campaign, it is all held. I see General Petraeus here, and we worked, of course, very closely during the difficult days of the surge focusing on clear, hold and build. Holding the territory, because before we had the

surge, we had this problem that you would clear territory then it would fall back to the enemy. All the territory in this campaign has held. ISIS has clandestine cells; they are trying to go underground, there is no question about that. We anticipated that. This will be a long-term effort. But they are not able now to control major territory. They are not able to generate the types of revenues they were generating four years ago, almost US\$1bn a year in revenue four years ago. And I think that is because we put together this comprehensive campaign with so many partners around the world. And when President Trump came into office, he asked us to do two things: accelerate the campaign, and he delegated authority down to the lowest level in the field that allowed us to really accelerate the military phase; and dramatically try to increase the burden sharing from the coalition. And I think we were able to do that.

So, I will give you just one example of the Mosul campaign, probably one of the largest and most significant military operations in decades. The humanitarian scale was off the charts. The worst-case scenario, we thought, was over a million internally displaced persons (IDPs) would come out of Mosul and would need aid. That was the worst-case scenario. And it turned out, we had more than a million IDPs who came out of Mosul. But because of the planning we did as a coalition, because of so many partners we had contributing to this, because of a really comprehensive programme from the UN and others – and I think Lise Grande is here, who is now leading the humanitarian response in Yemen – we put together a pretty sophisticated approach in which every single one of those IDPs that came out of Mosul received a shelter and aid because of what we did on the coalition side. And then transition to stabilisation. So in eastern Mosul you have seen an awful lot of Iraqis go back. Western Mosul is going to take a very long time. But just on the Iraq side, because of this stabilisation approach, we have 4.1m Iraqis who were displaced from ISIS [who] are now back in their homes. That statistic is completely off the charts in terms of conflicts like this. So, 4.1m Iraqis are back in their homes in areas once controlled by ISIS. But there are still a number of Iraqis displaced, and until they are all back, we are not going to rest.

I came here last night. I landed here from Baghdad; I was in Baghdad off and on over the last couple of months working on this kind of final phase of the counter-ISIS campaign, and also working with the Iraqis as they work through their difficult political challenges and try to form a new government.

And as has been mentioned here in a number of panels, they have just sworn in a new government. We had a peaceful transition of power, about 48 hours in Baghdad, that I think has given a lot of optimism and hope that a government can act in its own national interests, increase its own sovereignty and its own independence. We all owe, I think, a real debt of gratitude to outgoing Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi who took on this challenge four years ago. He has left Iraq in a much better place than when he came into office, and the new Prime Minister, Adel Abdul-Mahdi, who is a close friend of many in this room, has a big challenge ahead of him but also has an awful lot of support and has a national vision for the country that I think we can rally behind. Similar leadership, President Barham Salih and others who are part of this government, I think there is some real hope, at least I sensed that in Baghdad when I left. And I sense it here today.

Syria is a far different challenge. In Syria, we do not have a government to work with. We will not work with the government of Bashar al-Assad, obviously. We will not help reconstruct any of the areas that were retaken by the Assad regime with the help of the Iranians and the Russians. What we do, though, in the areas that we as a coalition helped clear from ISIS, we are focused on the nuts and bolts of stabilisation. And again, what started in a small battle of Kobani and has now really expanded to almost a third of the country, working with the Syrian Democratic Forces and our partners, those forces now have basically control of about one-third

of the country. We are focused on stabilisation. I have been to Syria I do not know how many times, about 20 times, throughout the course of this campaign. The challenge is enormous. And I do not want to sugar-coat it. This is going to take many, many years. But again, focused on the nuts and bolts of stabilisation in Raqqa alone, the first time I went to Raqqa shortly after the battle, I think I was with General Votel, we had found, I think from an ISIS fighter or a prisoner, a phone that basically showed where improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were throughout Raqqa, where they had planted explosive devices.

And basically, every single structure in Raqqa had an IED. I have never seen anything like it. And we thought, this is like a Chernobyl situation, in which it is going to be very difficult for anybody to return here given this extent of explosives planted by ISIS and just the residue of war.

So, we worked pretty hard to get explosive-ordnance disposal teams into place. And they have cleared in Raqqa and the environs about 250,000 IEDs. I have been to Raqqa now four times. If you go now, you will see, you will think, my God, this is an incredibly desperate situation. But if you went shortly after the battle, the transformation from then is truly extraordinary: 150,000 Syrians have returned already to their homes in Raqqa, just because of this work we have done – focus on stabilisation, focus with the coalition.

But this is not over. I think the hardest work, really, will be ahead of us. Just in closing, just an anecdote: a book a lot of young diplomats in the United States read by Robert Murphy, called *Diplomat Among Warriors*, about a foreign-service officer who was really the right-hand man to General Eisenhower in World War II in the campaign in Europe, and then remained on with Lucius Clay in the occupation of Germany and had a very high-profile career. It talks about, really, after the war is when the diplomacy got most difficult, and not something that he had fully anticipated. And I think we are now heading into a period in which there is tremendous opportunity coming out of this counter-ISIS campaign, but also tremendous challenges. And the only way, I think, we will address these challenges is working together and building on a lot of the great work that we have done.

The US is committed to continue to lead this counter-ISIS coalition. We are committed to that. That is a commitment from the President in areas that we cleared, not others, into the longer-term reconstruction, which is something that really the World Bank and others are taking a leading role on. And just on that point, we are very grateful for Kuwait, which had a very significant reconstruction conference about a year ago focused on Iraq's long-term reconstruction needs, where about US\$30bn was pledged in that meeting. And now that we have a new government, we can get on with some of that difficult work. That is the long term, over the next decade, but I think we have an opportunity.

So finally, just to reflect on where we were four years ago, when you think about the challenges that have been discussed in this really remarkable conference today, they are daunting. But it was pretty daunting four years ago, and we have made an awful lot of progress and I think we have something to build upon. And again, thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

Dr John Chipman, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS

Special Envoy McGurk, thank you very much; and I thought it was really important not only to have the perspective that you provided in the initial remarks you delivered, but also actually the detail which you characterised this as nuts and bolts at one point, but to understand quite how many IEDs were in every single structure in Raqqa gives also a sense of perspective on how enormous the reconstruction and stabilisation challenges are. And I know our friend Deputy

Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Khalid of Kuwait will have deeply appreciated your word of thanks for the very important conference that Kuwait hosted that delivered these promises of aid.