**John Kirby**

**Spokesperson**
**Daily Press Briefing**

**Washington, DC**

**March 11, 2016**

[**http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2016/03/254629.htm**](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2016/03/254629.htm)

**QUESTION:** One more on North Korea. Are you heartened by the comments from the Russian and Chinese foreign ministers at their news conference in Moscow, essentially saying that the DPRK’s nuclear ambitions are unacceptable, that its actions have been irresponsible, and so on?

**MR KIRBY:** I think those are encouraging comments and certainly in line with what we’ve been saying.

**QUESTION:** And do you have any reason to think that the Chinese are any more willing to pressure the North directly given their economic and other ties?

**MR KIRBY:** I would just point you to what they’ve said themselves about this and the very significant vote that they had on this particular resolution, which does include much more stringent sanctions on the North, as well as a pretty significant enforcement mechanism, which they signed up to.

So I’ve seen – let me put it another way. I’ve seen certainly no indication and have seen no comment, no reason to believe that the Chinese are any less committed to enforcing these sanctions as they voted for and signed up to do.

**QUESTION:** Oh, wait. Just on the Russian and the Chinese, they also said – while condemning the North Korean actions, they also said that they were opposed and will remain essentially forever opposed to THAAD. Your standard response to Chinese opposition in the past has been, well, if you don’t want it there, then do more on North Korea. Is that still your position?

**MR KIRBY:** Our position on – I saw those comments. Our position remains that the THAAD system is defensive. It is not an offensive capability. It is purely defensive. And we are in consultations with South Korea about the potential deployment of THAAD to the peninsula. No decisions have been made. And we believe that these consultations – we continue to believe these consultations are prudent given the continued rhetoric and provocative behavior coming out of Pyongyang.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, but is it still your message to the Chinese and now to the Russians that if you don’t want us to deploy THAAD in South Korea, you need to do more to get – to rein in North Korea?

**MR KIRBY:** No, no, no, Matt. Our --

**QUESTION:** No? Okay.

**MR KIRBY:** I mean, obviously – obviously, we --

**QUESTION:** So they’re going to have to suck it up regardless? Is that what you’re saying? Even if North Korea goes totally non-nuclear, you’re still going to deploy THAAD? Is that --

**MR KIRBY:** No.

**QUESTION:** -- what you’re saying?

**MR KIRBY:** No.

**QUESTION:** No?

**MR KIRBY:** No, I’m just waiting for you to finish and then I’ll – so, look, the message is, first of all, we want – as we’ve said in the past, particularly in China’s case, we want them to use the influence they have and the leadership in the region to engender a different set of behaviors out of Pyongyang. That’s the same. And we have said that privately and publicly to Chinese leaders.

Number two, if you’re asking what’s the message here to Russia or China or anybody else, the message is this is a purely defensive system. It hasn’t been deployed. It – I don’t know if it’s going to get deployed. But if it does, there’s no reason for the Russians or the Chinese to be concerned about it, because it is purely defensive in nature. And we continue to believe that consultations on the potential deployment are important given the continued rhetoric and behavior out of the North.

**QUESTION:** Also on North Korea?