**Mark C. Toner**

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

**Washington, DC**

**April 6, 2016**

[**http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2016/04/255529.htm**](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2016/04/255529.htm)

**QUESTION:** On China?

**MR TONER:** Are we – China, sure.

**QUESTION:** **China has begun an operation with the lighthouse on the Subi Reef in the South China** **Sea**. Do you have any comment on that?

**MR TONER:** Aware of the reports. You’re talking about on the Subi Reef?

**QUESTION:** Yes.

**MR TONER:** Yeah. Well, this is, of course, a disputed area of the South China Sea, and I just would say **that constructing new facilities in these areas risks exacerbating or escalating what is already a tense situation.** So we’d urge China to focus on reaching an understanding with other claimants, as we often have, on acceptable behavior in these disputed areas.

**MR TONER:** No, no. I said we’ve seen reports stating that they will begin operating a lighthouse.

**QUESTION:** Right. Okay. One of the reasons that you guys have taken an interest in this is – this area and expressed your concern about what the Chinese, and indeed the other claimants, are doing in terms of unilateral actions is for the protection and safety of maritime shipping zones. Now, it seems to me that a lighthouse is not an inherently provocative thing. It’s, in fact, there to be a safety measure. So I mean, do – should no lighthouses be allowed in the South China – on disputed areas in the South China Sea, even if they help with maritime safety?

**MR TONER:** **No, but it’s unclear to us whether this is in the interest of maritime safety.**

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## **Press Availability for G7**

Press Availability

John Kerry
Secretary of State

International Media Center

Hiroshima, Japan

**April 11, 2016**

[**http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/04/255689.htm**](http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/04/255689.htm)

**SECRETARY KERRY:** Good afternoon, everybody. *Konnichiwa*. I am very privileged to be here, and I want to thank Foreign Minister Kishida and the Government of Japan for hosting us here in Hiroshima for the G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting of 2016. I also want to thank our terrific Ambassador Caroline Kennedy and her entire team for their hard work and for what they are accomplishing in strengthening, building the relationship between the United States and the people of Japan.

We also discussed international maritime issues. I reiterated the United States commitment to maintaining peace, security, and safety on the open seas by protecting freedom of navigation, overflight, and unimpeded lawful commerce, and the importance also of ensuring that disputes are managed without unilateral actions, without militarization, on the basis of international law and diplomacy.

**QUESTION:** I mean, given all the activity we’ve seen from North Korea, not only its nuclear tests but it’s threats to use a nuclear weapon, don’t you think the prospect of a world without nuclear weapons is becoming more distant, despite your efforts at a nuclear-free world? Thank you.

**SECRETARY KERRY:** So with respect to the first, with all due respect, I didn’t need to come here to, quote, “better understand” the real-world impact of war. I understand the real-world impact of war. I am a child of World War II, born in 1943, and have seen since I was growing up the effects of war. A young boy in Berlin, seeing the burned out Reichstag, Hitler’s bunker blown up, and the consequences of war for that generation that were our parents’. In addition, I obviously served in a war and I saw it there.

So I think we’re on track, though I would like to see a few measures that we weren’t able to get into the resolution yet implemented over the course, perhaps, of the next months depending on what actions the North decides to take. So it is still possible that we will ratchet up even more depending on the actions of the DPRK. We are prepared to get back to talks. We have made it clear that we are prepared to negotiate a peace treaty on the peninsula. We are prepared to negotiate a non-aggression agreement. We are prepared to actually provide economic assistance and welcome the North back to the community of nations. We’re prepared to provide aid and we’re prepared to work with our colleagues on development and the long-term future. We’re prepared to work with South Korea on the concept of reunification, if that’s what they want. But it all depends on the North making the decision that they will negotiate denuclearization, which is the agreed-upon policy of China, the United States, Japan, Korea, Russia, and we are waiting for that opportunity obviously to have a real negotiation.

So there’s an enormous amount that is happening now. North Korea remains the single one hard spot with respect to that policy, but as I just said to you, we have toughened up and ratcheted up the sanctions with respect to North Korea, and it is very much at the top of our priority list with respect to this endeavor.

So I think we’re moving in the right direction, notwithstanding North Korea. And my hope is that together with China particularly, because China obviously has such an important connection to North Korea – it’s the supplier of all of their fuel for trucks, planes, cars; it’s a supplier of food; it’s their banking connection to the world – China has an enormous ability to send a message to and have an impact on North Korea. And China, we are pleased, joined us in doing some things that have an impact on China and its economy. And we have to go step by step and continue to build as we go forward, and that’s what we’re going to do.

**Mark C. Toner**

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

**Washington, DC**

**April 12, 2016**

[**http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2016/04/255741.htm#CHINA**](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2016/04/255741.htm#CHINA)

**QUESTION:** On a different topic, South China Sea.

**MR TONER:** Sure. Okay.

**QUESTION:** So Manila is to restart a military airport, to revamping, South China Sea on the illegally occupied island, Zhongye Island. So what is the U.S. point of view on this? What kind of stand do you hold?

**MR TONER:** Well, I’d refer you to the Government of Philippines to talk about their activities. I mean, overall our position regarding the South China Sea hasn’t changed.

**QUESTION:** But Mark, Manila once announced a suspension to the construction, but now you see they restart the construction. So do you think they are playing the hypocrite? What’s your point of view?

**MR TONER:** Look, I’m not going to characterize their actions, beyond saying that our position regarding the South China Sea is very well known. We don’t want to see construction activities on disputed features. We don’t want to see any kind of militarization of outposts. What we want to see, frankly, is a de-escalation of tensions and refraining from provocative actions – excuse me. With regard to Philippines specific plans or proposals for – in the South China Sea, I’d just have to refer you to them.

**QUESTION:** But why? But why, Mark? You – when the Chinese do things that you say are provocative and unilateral in terms of construction on disputed areas, you tell them that – you say it’s bad and they should stop and you call on them not to do it. Why won’t you do that in the same vein for the Philippines?

**MR TONER:** For one thing, I don’t have specific details about what they’re planning to do or not do on the islands, and we’d have to wait to get more details about that.

**QUESTION:** Well, but I mean, you said – the other day when you were asked about this lighthouse that was going up on – a Chinese lighthouse was going up --

**MR TONER:** And I said we’ll have to certainly wait and see what it looks like.

**QUESTION:** Yeah. But you said they shouldn’t do it.

**MR TONER:** Well, I also – I think in response to her second question, I did say our policy has not changed.

**QUESTION:** So the Philippines should not go ahead with any plan it has to build an airstrip on --

**MR TONER:** That’s not – that specific policy is not exclusive to --

**QUESTION:** China.

**MR TONER:** -- to China.

**QUESTION:** -- on Matt’s point. Last week when China finished building the lighthouse, you immediately expressed your objection. So when it comes to Philippine, are you trying to turn a blind eye to Philippines’ action in South China Sea?

**MR TONER:** I think what I said – and I have – as I said, we’ve seen the reports stating that China will begin operating a lighthouse on Subi Reef – and again, I just haven’t seen nor do I have any greater detail on what, frankly, the Philippine Government is proposing to do. So all I can say is revert back to what our stance is, our position is regarding any kind of attempt to construct new facilities or in any way develop the South China Sea islands. So I’ll stop there.

**QUESTION:** So you wouldn’t condone Philippines’ action in South China Sea if it’s confirmed true?

**MR TONER:** We don’t – again, not – without singling out the Philippines, I think broadly, yes, we don’t want to see any kind of development on any of the islands that will further escalate tensions.

**QUESTION:** Are you concerned if China take any counteraction to go against Philippines --

**MR TONER:** Well, again, I mean, we’re certainly concerned, and that’s one of the reasons why we always speak to our concerns about these kinds of actions is that we don’t want to see – as they often do set off an escalation of tension. That’s the last thing we want to see.