

Statement by Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook on U.S.-Russia Video Conference

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Immediate Release

Sept. 14, 2016

The Department of Defense today held a video conference co-chaired by Acting Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Elissa Slotkin and Rear Adm. Michael J. Dumont, deputy director, J-5, Strategic Plans and Policy on the Joint Staff, with Russian Ministry of Defense counterparts. This was a regular session of our dialogue with the Russian Ministry of Defense under the Memorandum of Understanding for the safety of flight in Syria to ensure that each side continues to adhere to agreed-upon measures to mitigate incidents in the air over Syria.

Department officials discussed the safety of operations since the two sides last met to discuss the implementation of the current memorandum, including the need to enhance current measures to avoid incidents. The two sides reiterated the need to adhere to measures to enhance operational safety and avoid accidents and misunderstandings in the air space over Syria.

Today's meeting follows previous video conferences between the Department of Defense and the Russian Ministry of Defense on this topic. This video conference was in keeping with the established safety of flight over Syria memorandum of understanding and was not part of separate discussions taking place on the possible stand-up of the Joint Implementation Cell.

The conversation was constructive and the two sides agreed to continue safety discussions in this format in the future.