

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

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The Department of Defense today held a video conference co-chaired by Acting Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Elissa Slotkin and Lieutenant General Kenneth McKenzie Jr., director, J-5, Strategic Plans and Policy on the Joint Staff, with Russian Ministry of Defense counterparts. This was the latest 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 recent concerns over the safety of operations since the two sides last met, including the need to enhance current measures to avoid incidents. The two sides reiterated the need to adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding to 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 separate from other discussions regarding the Cessation of Hostilities in Syria, yesterday's UN Security Council session to discuss the attacks on humanitarian aid convoys, and today's scheduled meeting of the International Syria Support Group.