

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

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Immediate Release

Dec. 21, 2016

The Department of Defense today held a video conference co-chaired by Acting Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Elissa Slotkin and Maj. Gen. Richard Clarke, vice 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 ongoing work regarding the safety of operations since the two sides last met. The two sides reiterated the utility of adhering 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.