

Press Releases: Interview With John Dickerson of CBS Face the Nation

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
November 4, 2018

QUESTION: We want to go now to the State Department Diplomatic Room in Washington and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Mr. Secretary, I want to start with the sanctions that will be reimposed this week on Iran. A number of European countries do business with Iran. The President had formally said anyone doing business with Iran will not be doing business with the United States. So can European allies expect they will not be doing business with the United States?

SECRETARY POMPEO: John, good morning. That's right. The European companies will not be permitted to do business with both the United States and with Iran, frankly since May, since the President's announcement of withdrawal from the ill-fated agreement. European companies have fled Iran in great numbers. Hundreds of businesses have departed Iran. The whole world understands that these sanctions are real, that they are important, that they drive the Iranian people's opportunity to make the changes in Iran that they so desperately want and stop Iran from having the wealth and money that they need to continue to foment terror around the world.

QUESTION: But it's the companies that won't be doing business, not the countries themselves. In other words, they won't be punished if any company doing business in Iran – the country won't be punished.

SECRETARY POMPEO: That's right. These sanctions apply to those who conduct sanctionable transactions. The Treasury has a set of sanctions, the State Department has its own set of sanctions, and those will all come back into place on Monday of this week, and they'll be the toughest sanctions ever placed against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

QUESTION: The President put out a poster of himself and said, "Sanctions are coming." What was that about?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, he was putting the world on notice that the terror regime which threatens Israel through Iranian funding of Lebanese Hizballah;

that the terror regime that attempted to conduct an assassination in Denmark over the past few weeks; that the terror regime that continues to fund the Houthis launching missiles into Riyadh and into Dubai – that’s going to stop. That behavior must change, and sanctions from the United States will be reimposed at midnight tonight.

QUESTION: What if they restart their nuclear program in Iran?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We’re confident that the Iranians will not make that decision.

QUESTION: Let me ask you a question about North Korea. You have talks this week. North Korea is saying they might restart their nuclear program if the U.S. does not start lifting sanctions. Is it still the U.S. position that North Korea will not see any economic sanctions lift until there is complete denuclearization?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So, John, I will. I’ll be in New York City at the end of this week meeting with my counterpart, Kim Yong-chol. I expect we’ll make some real progress, including an effort to make sure that the summit between our two leaders can take place, where we can make substantial steps towards denuclearization.

John, we have to remember and the American people need to remember the North Koreans haven’t launched a missile, haven’t conducted a nuclear test. They allowed the return of American remains. We’ve had success in just the handful of months since this past June, and we continue to make good progress. I’m confident that we’ll advance the ball again this week when I’m in New York City.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you said that North Korea will not see any economic sanctions lifted until it has demonstrated complete denuclearization. Is that still your position?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It is. Not only complete denuclearization, but our capacity to verify that that has taken place –

QUESTION: Okay.

SECRETARY POMPEO: – is also a prerequisite to lifting economic sanctions.

QUESTION: Let me ask you about the caravan at the U.S. southern border. General Colin Powell said, “I see no threat requiring [that] this kind of deployment.” He’s referring there to the deployment of troops from the Pentagon. Retired General Martin Dempsey said it was “a wasteful deployment of over-stretched Soldiers and Marines.” What’s your response?

SECRETARY POMPEO: This is a problem that’s gone on too long. President Trump is determined to ensure that we have sovereignty of America at our southern border and that we protect our American border.

As the Secretary of State, I’ve been very involved in working with the governments in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and certainly the Government

of Mexico, and I've also had the chance to speak with the incoming government that is now 26 days out from taking power in Mexico. We have made clear to them they need to undertake every effort that they can to stop this illegal migration from entering the United States, and the President has made very clear they will not be permitted to enter our country unlawfully.

QUESTION: The charge –

SECRETARY POMPEO: If they want to come here legally, if they want to come here lawfully, that's the American tradition. It's the American way. We continue to be the most generous nation in the world with respect to immigration. But illegal immigration will not be permitted.

QUESTION: The charge here, Mr. Secretary, is that the President is thinking about this in political terms and that's why he's done this deployment, all of this rhetoric this week. Do you think he thinks about it in political terms, this caravan and how it might benefit the Republicans?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I've been involved in scores of conversations about stopping illegal immigration from Mexico, and never once has there been a discussion of the political impact in U.S. domestic politics. It has always been –

QUESTION: Then, Mr. Secretary –

SECRETARY POMPEO: – about securing the safety of the American people and securing our southern border.

QUESTION: So if that's never happened, why then did the President – in a rally said, speaking about the caravan, "Did they energize our base or what?"

SECRETARY POMPEO: The President has been trying diligently to get our foolish immigration laws changed since he took office. He talked about this in his campaign. Many of the challenges we face today with illegal immigration are because we have a set of rules, a set of laws, that don't allow us to fully secure that southern border. The President is working through the proper process, the Constitution and political process, to make those changes to the laws, and he is very hopeful, I think, that when Congress returns in January there will be a Congress prepared to support his efforts to secure our southern border.

QUESTION: But you would agree –

SECRETARY POMPEO: That's completely appropriate.

QUESTION: You would agree that the President thinks this is a benefit for his base, which he says has been energized by this caravan and his response to it. So it seems like he does see it as a political benefit.

SECRETARY POMPEO: As the Secretary of State, I want to talk about American national security. We are determined to secure the southern border, John.

QUESTION: Okay. I'll take that lack of a response as a yes. Final question,

Mr. Secretary, is on Saudi Arabia. You are waiting for more investigation on the death of columnist Jamal Khashoggi. What more needs to be answered?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We still have lots of work to do to figure out the full range of persons that need to be held accountable. We're working with the Turkish Government, with the Saudi Government, and with anyone else who has relevant facts for us to be able to determine all of those who were responsible for this atrocious murder of Jamal Khashoggi, which the Saudis themselves now acknowledge was premeditated. We need to get to the bottom of it. We need to find out who was responsible and hold them accountable, and do all of this, John, while protecting the enormously important strategic interests that the United States maintains with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We began our conversation about Iran. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been an important partner for the United States in attempting to change the behavior of the world's largest state sponsor of terror from that Islamic republic.

QUESTION: Very briefly, is it still possible the crown prince could be involved in this?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We're going to chase the facts wherever they go –

QUESTION: All right.

SECRETARY POMPEO: – and we're going to hold accountable each of those who we find responsible.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, we're very grateful. Thanks so much for being with us.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, John. Have a good day.

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[Press Releases: Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance to Rukban](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
November 3, 2018

We welcome the news that the UN is finally able to begin delivering aid to the Rukban encampment from Damascus. This delivery comes after months of pressure from the United States, the UN, the UN Security Council, and wider international community for the Syrian regime to allow the UN to deliver critically-needed assistance to the displaced persons at Rukban.

We also recognize Russia's role in persuading the regime to finally comply with the UN Security Council's authorizations for the delivery of cross-line humanitarian aid by issuing the administrative approvals required for this convoy to move; we hope to see Russia use its influence with the regime to address the continued lack of humanitarian access across much of Syria.

Above all, we must recognize the tireless, courageous efforts of the humanitarian workers who are undertaking these operations. We hope this delivery lays the foundation for sustained rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to Rukban and all areas in need throughout Syria through cross-line and cross-border aid deliveries in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2393, and we will continue our diplomatic efforts to ensure that is the case.

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[Press Releases: Under Secretary Hale's Meeting With Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Onal](#)

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
November 2, 2018

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale met Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal at the State Department today to discuss the U.S.-Turkish bilateral relationship and regional affairs. They welcomed the November 1 start of joint patrols between U.S. and Turkish forces west of the Euphrates River along the demarcation line outside of Manbij. These joint patrols are part of the roadmap endorsed June 4 by Secretary Pompeo and Foreign Minister Cavusoglu and are designed to help maintain calm and support stability in Manbij. Under Secretary Hale expressed concerns about recent events in northeast Syria, called for a halt of exchanges of fire in the area, and underscored the need for stability in northeast Syria to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS. Under Secretary Hale welcomed the return of Pastor Andrew Brunson to the United States and urged the release of other unjustly detained U.S. citizens, including NASA physicist Serkan Golge and U.S. Mission Turkey local staff. Both sides presented recommendations for ways to broaden and deepen bilateral cooperation.

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[Press Releases: U.S. Condemns Deadly Attack in Egypt](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC

November 2, 2018

The Department of State condemns today's deadly attack on a bus heading towards a Coptic Christian monastery in Upper Egypt. We extend our condolences to the families of these innocent victims. We remain steadfast in our support of Egypt's efforts to combat terrorism and violence against religious communities.

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[Press Releases: Interview With Sean Hannity of the Sean Hannity Show](#)

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference
November 2, 2018

QUESTION: All right, 25 till the top of the hour. Glad you're with us. Four days until the important midterm elections. I'm just going to take a slight break in our programming because that's all we've been talking about today, but starting Monday, the President now reimposing all the sanctions that were lifted under what was the acceptable – unacceptable Iranian deal. And the President is putting in place what are the single toughest sanctions ever on the Iranian regime, targeting much of the corrupt regime's critical sectors, including the economy, energy, shipping, shipbuilding, financial sectors. The

impact already being felt in a lot of ways.

Here to update us on the importance of this is, I think, the Secretary of State – the best we’ve had in our lifetime – Mike Pompeo is with us, also former CIA director. How are you, sir?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Sean, I’m good. Thanks for the kind words.

QUESTION: Well, you’ve been doing really well. I had a chance to see you in Singapore and Helsinki, and you’ve been traveling the world pretty much day and night, and a lot of good things on foreign policy happening. Let’s start with these sanctions.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir. So come Monday, as you said, we will not only be reimposing the sanctions that were in place before the crazy JCPOA was entered into, but there’ll be over several hundred designations. We will ultimately move Iran to zero crude oil. That’ll take us some number of months to do that. We’ve been able to do that in a way that hasn’t had a huge impact on crude oil prices. That’s a good thing for American consumers.

But remember the purpose. The Islamic Republic of Iran is the world’s largest state sponsor of terror. We’re trying to change the ayatollah and Qasem Soleimani’s behavior to keep the American people safe and secure. That’s the mission, these sanctions are a part of our effort, and they’re already being felt by the Iranian leadership.

QUESTION: We’ve known for a long time they’re the number-one state sponsor of terror, but they also have been fighting many proxy wars in the region, including their responsibility and culpability of killing Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But with that said, there is – and putting aside what happened to this individual Khashoggi, there seems to be an opportunity and a new alliance that has risen against the potential of a nuclear-armed Iran and Iranian hegemony in the region, and that is the United States, Israel, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, the Saudis, the Emirates all standing together in ways that nobody even imagined just a few years ago creating an alliance against Iran. What is the status of that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Sean, that is all the good work of President Trump. He made this fundamental decision early on in the administration that this was the greatest threat to the United States and so did, in fact, build out an enormous coalition. There are some European countries in that too. We need to get more of them. But you’re right, whether it’s the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or the Emirates or Egypt, these are all countries that understand their threat to regional stability in the Middle East. And we, of course, know the risk that it presents to us.

Sean, you would have probably seen this week there was another assassination attempt in Europe by Iran trying to kill Europeans. This is outrageous and it’s the kind of behavior that the sanctions that go back next week are aimed at correcting.

QUESTION: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is with us. One of the things that I think is going to be one of the President's biggest legacies is his advancement towards full and complete energy independence for the United States. And by that, we have the North Dakota Keystone pipelines; the President lifting the bureaucratic assault on the coal industry has helped West Virginia and Kentucky – we see immediate results there – opening up ANWR and drilling in the 48 states and off our coast. We have more oil, more natural gas, more coal than the Middle East combined, which means not only will we be able to produce all of our energy needs, which is the lifeblood of any economy, but then we can also help out our Western allies like Germany recently. And instead of making Russia and Putin rich again and the threat of him turning off the spigot one day, we could help out our Western European allies.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Sean, this is often overlooked in the national security realm, but the importance of the American energy renaissance that President Trump has greenlighted, has permitted to happen, can't be underestimated. Our ability to produce nine, ten, eleven million barrels of oil today, enormous natural gas resources, gives us freedom from others who might want to use their energy to extort America into engaging in behavior they preferred. It gives us the capacity not to have to accept a bad deal because we needed some energy. And then in fact, you're right, it gives us the capacity to influence what's going on elsewhere in the world by delivering good American energy that creates jobs at home as well.

QUESTION: I know you've followed up since Singapore as it relates to North Korea. Let me ask you – I couldn't understand the media's coverage of it because the President really gave up nothing except for a few kind words, but we did get the remains sent back from the Korean War, we did have hostages returned as well. We don't see rockets being fired over Japan or the world being threatened. It looks like little rocket man fire and fury, our button's bigger than yours and works, all of a sudden now we're talking about the denuclearization of the entire Korean Peninsula. What is the status of those talks? I know you've had numerous since Singapore.

SECRETARY POMPEO: I have. In fact, I'll have another set of conversations next week with my counterpart, the number two person. I was with Chairman Kim early in October. In each of those conversations he has made clear his intention to denuclearize.

Sean, you know as well as I do we've got to verify that. We've got to make sure that we get that piece of it right. We won't accept anyone's word for it. But that work, which will take time, has delivered for America good outcomes already, outcomes that weren't delivered by previous administrations and ones that have benefited America enormously, right. No nuclear testing, no missile testing. Those are not small things. They're good steps along the way. A lot of work remains, but I'm confident that we will keep the economic pressure in place until such time as Chairman Kim fulfills the commitment he made to President Trump back in June in Singapore.

QUESTION: He's even talking about having a denuclearized North Korea within a year. Do you think that's possible still?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think it's physically possible. I think it will be a real challenge to move to that timeline. And President Trump's been pretty clear, we're not going to be driven into – to artificial timelines that are set by others. We're going to continue to make progress. And so long as we have the capacity to understand what's going on there and to continue the march towards denuclearization, this is an acceptable place for us to be.

QUESTION: One of the things that I think the President has not gotten enough credit for, I was arguing even before President Trump got elected, he doesn't want a trade deal. He's the consummate, never-ending negotiator. And yeah, we've had some really horrible trade deals over the years, but if you don't take the strong position that we will fight back and that we will put tariffs on you, I don't think anybody would take any word seriously. So the President has successfully now done that with Mexico and with Canada. Now it's going on with our European allies. He's even renegotiating the contribution of other countries as it relates to NATO. But I think the biggest showdown is with China and with their economy falling, what, 30, 35 percent. I'm guessing China's going to be banging down Donald Trump's door soon wanting a trade deal.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Sean, this has been an enormous success for the administration. To create wealth and jobs for American people, we need other countries to trade fairly with us. His raising the specter of tariffs has caused these countries to change their behavior, to be willing to engage in negotiations they would not otherwise have been prepared to engage in. You can say the same thing on the national security front, too. You mentioned NATO, but in the Middle East as well we've gotten our partners to share more of the burden of their own defense, and that's the appropriate place. America's there. We understand our interests, but these other countries have a responsibility to secure their own people and their own nations and protect their own sovereignty. Our responsibility is to keep the American people safe and secure.

QUESTION: Well, it made no sense for the United States to pay 72 cents of every dollar in terms of protecting the NATO alliance, and then some of our NATO partners, in the case of Germany and Chancellor Merkel, going ahead and doing billion-dollar deals with Russia, which would make them rich again and also he would have control over the lifeblood of their economy there.

What is the overall relationship with China like? And as it relates to China, Russia, the United States, where are those – where are their alliances going now?

SECRETARY POMPEO: China, I think, Sean, you have correctly identified as the most important long-term strategic challenge for the United States of America, and that's across multiple fronts. We've talked about trade. We need that to be fair and reciprocal with them. But just this week we indicted 10 Chinese for stealing intellectual property. It's been going on in previous administrations for decades. This is really important to American business and protecting the human capital, the talented work of American people, and national security. We've seen –

QUESTION: I know somebody this has happened to. They literally just steal patents. They just steal them.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Absolutely, Sean. And they do it through cyber means or by extorting it. If a business wants to sell into their market, they require them to turn over some or all of their intellectual property. These are unacceptable behaviors that Donald Trump has made clear, that President Trump has made clear he will not accept, and we're working to correct them.

QUESTION: Oh, I hope that gets done. What is the status of the relationship the United States now has with Putin and Russia? I mean, the media loves to fixate and focus on it. There was no Russia collusion unless you consider the phony dossier that was bought and paid for by Hillary that was disseminated to the American people on a FISA court, but I'm not going to drag you into that mess. But what is the relationship with Putin now?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's been a real challenge, but President Trump's made clear he wants very much to have a good relationship with the Russians. We need them to do a handful of things to change the behavior there. They're causing challenges, trouble, reducing America's security. We've seen this – the work. We need them to come back into compliance with their missile treaties, agreements that they've made as well. If we can convince them and we should have dialogue with them – I did when I was CIA director; I spoke with my Russian counterpart – if we can have conversations that can cause them to change their behavior in a way that doesn't put Americans at risk, this is an enormously good thing. And I have encouraged the President and other cabinet members to do exactly that.

QUESTION: Last thing. We've learned an awful lot about – going back over many, many years how America has been assaulted in cyber warfare. And at some point, you build a sword, then somebody builds a shield. As I understand it, we have 250,000 IT employees that work for our government and yet still, our government agencies we hear, we read are hacked. And to me, that is just unacceptable because we know the threat is real. Are we taking the steps to fix that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Sean, I think we are. It is a space where offense is easier to play than defense. I think America's commercial sector has seen that as well. So it is – I think it's a permanent part of the world in which we live. We're going to have to continue to expend the resources necessary to protect especially our most sensitive assets, especially that information which is most important to be kept private. We need to spare no cost to prevent it from being hacked, stolen, disrupted, destroyed. We're –

QUESTION: I don't think anybody ever had any idea, but I mean, it's been going on 40 years apparently.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Forty years now.

QUESTION: Now that I'm getting a – oh, it's crazy. Last question. The caravan, the President's comments, Mexico. You've been active and involved in

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SECRETARY POMPEO: Yep.

QUESTION: – talking to Mexican officials. What I don't understand in the whole equation is why haven't they turned the people around and said no, you can't stay here either? I know they've offered jobs in southern Mexico for some of the caravan – offering work permits to some people. They've turned down public – turned off public transportation, but they're still letting them walk.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Sean, it's a difficult challenge. The President has got this right. Securing our southern border, enforcing American sovereignty is an enormous national security issue. It's why, as Secretary of State, I've been very involved in these discussions. We're encouraging – I've spoken to the leaders of the three Northern Triangle countries in the last 48 hours. I've spoken – spoke with my counterpart down in Mexico and the incoming counterpart down in Mexico nearly every day. We are – encourage them to do all the things they can to break up these migrants.

And more importantly, Sean, these caravans are a symptom. We have a continuing problem there separate and apart from the caravans, and we need to make sure everyone understands there's only one way to enter the United States. It is legally. And if you come here illegally, you won't be able to stay. President Trump's made that very clear and I am hoping that will assist in deterring people from making this arduous, dangerous travel through Mexico trying to enter our country unlawfully. It's unacceptable for them to try and come not through a legal port of entry.

QUESTION: Well, I think you're one of the President's best picks both as CIA director, now as Secretary of State. What did you graduate from West Point? What were you in your class?

SECRETARY POMPEO: (Laughter.) I was a pretty good student, Sean.

QUESTION: You don't want to – how come the President said he's number one in his class, he was number one? Anyway, great to talk to you, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Sean.

QUESTION: I know you've been traveling a lot on behalf of the country and it looks like we're making a lot of good progress, and that's good for all of us. Thank you for what you're doing.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Amen. Bless you, Sean. Have a good day.

QUESTION: You too. Have a great day.

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