

Press Releases: Ambassador Deborah L. Birx Travel to Amsterdam

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 20, 2018

Ambassador Deborah L. Birx, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and U.S. Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy, is on travel to Amsterdam, The Netherlands from July 20-27, leading the U.S. delegation to the 22nd International AIDS Conference.

While in Amsterdam, Ambassador Birx will provide several keynote addresses at the conference and meet with key partners of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), including senior officials from governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society.

For further information, contact SGACPublicAffairs@state.gov. Follow the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief at [@PEPFAR](https://twitter.com/PEPFAR) and www.pepfar.gov.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

Press Releases: Remarks With Permanent Representative to the United Nations Nikki Haley

Remarks

Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

UN Headquarters

New York City

July 20, 2018

SECRETARY POMPEO: Good afternoon, everyone. First I want to commend my good friend Ambassador Haley and her excellent team here at the United Nations. Her leadership in advancing American interest on North Korea and many other issues has been evident here this morning, and she's got a great team behind her helping. So thank you, Nikki.

The main reason I came here today was to meet with members of the UN Security Council – South Korea and Japan as well – to convey details of my work on the trip to North Korea earlier this month and the progress that was made there. I also had the opportunity to meet with UN Secretary-General Guterres to discuss the topic and other topics as well.

The countries of the Security Council are united on the need for final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim. Strict enforcement of sanctions is critical to our achieving this goal.

Members of the UN Security Council, and by extension all UN member-states, have unanimously agreed to fully enforce sanctions on North Korea, and we expect them to continue to honor those commitments. When sanctions are not

enforced, the prospects for the successful denuclearization are diminished. Right now, North Korea is illegally smuggling petroleum products into the country at a level that far exceeds the quotas established by the United Nations. These illegal ship-to-ship transfers are the most prominent means by which this is happening.

These transfers happened at least 89 times in the first five months of this year and they continue to occur. The United States reminds every UN member-state of its responsibility to stop illegal ship-to-ship transfers, and we urge them to step up their enforcement efforts as well.

We must also crack down on other forms of sanctions evasion, including the smuggling of coal by sea, smuggling by overland borders, and the presence of North Korean guest workers in certain countries. North Korean cyber thefts and other criminal activities are also generating significant revenues for the regime, and they must be stopped.

President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects of denuclearization of North Korea. So do I, as progress is happening. It is the Trump administration's hope that one day the DPRK could be in our midst here at the United Nations – not as a pariah, but as a friend. Imagine UN Security Council meetings in which the DPRK nuclear and missile programs were not the agenda time and time again. We'll be able to focus our energy on so many urgent problems that face our world.

I believe this reality is possible, and so does President Trump. But it will take full enforcement of sanctions for us to get there. It will also take Chairman Kim following through on his personal commitments that he made to President Trump in Singapore. The path ahead is not easy; it will take time. But our hopes for a safer world for all of us and a brighter future for North Korea remains our objective, and that hope endures.

Thank you. Ambassador Haley.

AMBASSADOR HALEY: Thank you so much. And I'm very grateful to my friend, Secretary Pompeo, for coming out and meeting with the Security Council today.

This is what we know. Eighteen months ago when I came in, our biggest concern was North Korea. Everyone was wondering when that new test was going to happen, everyone was wondering when the new threat would occur, and the entire international community knew something had to happen. It was a herculean task by the Security Council to pass three massive sanctions packages, getting rid of all exports, 90 percent of their trade, 30 percent of their oil, expelling all labor workers and scheduling that down, making sure all joint ventures stopped. All of that combined with the international community coming together and expelling diplomats and stopping communication, and with the President's tough stance, all of that was really the combination that brought North Korea to the table.

Now, North Korea and the U.S. have started to have talks. And as those things are happening, we and the Security Council and the international community have to support those talks. And the best way we can support those talks is

to not loosen the sanctions. And what we have been seeing is certain countries wanting to do waivers, certain countries saying, "Let's lift sanctions," certain countries wanting to do more. And what – I appreciate Secretary Pompeo coming up and what we continue to reiterate is we can't do one thing until we see North Korea respond to their promise to denuclearize. We have to see some sort of action. And so until that action happens, the Security Council's going to hold tight, the international community – we ask you to hold tight as we go forward.

The problem that we are encountering is that some of our friends have decided that they want to go around the rules. You saw that there was violations of the oil ban. We have, as Secretary Pompeo said, seen 89 times where that has happened. We have photographs of proof of ship-to-ship transfers. And our friends, what we decided was let's come together and let's make sure that this stops. So the U.S. put yesterday a halt to all additional refined petroleum shipments to North Korea. China and Russia blocked it.

Now for China and Russia to block it, what are they telling us? Are they telling us that they want to continue supplying this oil? They claim they need more information. We don't need any more information. The sanctions committee has what it needs. We all know it's going forward. We put pressure today on China and Russia to abide and be good helpers through this situation and to help us continue with denuclearization.

And so I think this was a day of very frank talk between the Secretary, the foreign minister of South Korea, our Japanese friends as well, as well as the Security Council to say: If we want to see success, we have to see a response from Chairman Kim, and we have to continue to hold the line until that happens. And so very successful day, again, promising that the Security Council has remained united and continuing to put pressure on our members to not fall through on that process. Thank you.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary –

MS NAUERT: Three quick – three quick questions. Rich Edson, Fox News.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, UN Ambassador Haley mentioned that Russia isn't being all that helpful to sanctions enforcement. The President mentioned after his meeting with President Putin that President Putin was going to help on North Korea. Is Russia reneging on an agreement that it made with the President? And is – what else did the two presidents agree to when they met?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So enforcement of sanctions is a continuing process. There are many places where the Russians have been helpful. Certainly since the very beginning of the time of the UN Security resolutions the Russians have done many things to enforce these sanctions, and we're deeply appreciative of that. What we need now, though, is we need to continue that. We need to make sure that the world doesn't begin to see this – this is not an American demand for the North Koreans to denuclearize; it is the world's demand and we need the world to continue to participate.

And so where we find issues where any country, whether it's Russia or another one, not doing their part to enforce it, we're going to make sure that we provide the information to them so they can all see it and the world can see it, and we're going to demand that every country in the world do their part.

MS NAUERT: Kylie from CBS News.

QUESTION: Just following up, Mr. Secretary, on a question about Russia, because that's kind of what everyone in Washington is talking about today. Why is it a good idea for the President to invite Vladimir Putin to the White House? What does the U.S. have to gain from that visit?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, I'm happy that the two leaders of two very important countries are continuing to meet. If that meeting takes place in Washington, I think it's all to the good. Those conversations are incredibly important. We have our senior leaders meeting all across the world with people where we have deep disagreements with. It is incredibly valuable to the people of the United States of America that President Putin and President Trump continue to engage in dialogue to resolve the difficult issues that our countries face between each other. I think this makes enormous sense, and I'm very hopeful that that meeting will take place this fall.

MS NAUERT: And final question, Michelle from Reuters.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, what concrete steps do you need to see North Korea take now to show that they are committed to denuclearization? And on Russia, the Russian defense ministry said this morning that they've sent proposals to Washington about the return of millions of Syrian refugees. They said it's based on an agreement that was reached by President Putin and President Trump. Have you seen those proposals, and what is this agreement that they've reached?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I'll take the second one first. So lots of discussion taking place. There was a discussion between President Trump and President Putin about the resolution in Syria and how we might get the refugees back. The President shared with me the conversations that they'd had. It is important to the world that at the right time, through a voluntary mechanism, these refugees are able to return to their home country. It's what we've all been working on. It's what the UN has been working on with Staffan de Mistura working on that very same problem set. And President Putin and President Trump did discuss that. There's lots of work to do to figure out how to implement that, but the United States certainly wants to be part of help achieving that resolution in Syria, make no mistake about it.

Your first question was about what we need to see. It's really pretty straightforward, right? And it's not my – it's not my description of what needs to take place. Chairman Kim made a promise. Chairman Kim told not only President Trump, but President Moon that he was prepared to denuclearize. The scope and scale of that is agreed to. The North Koreans understand what that means. There's no mistake about what the scope of denuclearization looks like.

So what do we need to see? We need to see Chairman Kim do what he promised the world he would do. It's not very fancy, but it's the truth.

MS NAUERT: All right. Thank you. Thank you.

QUESTION: One more – one more question, Mr. Secretary?

MS NAUERT: Thank you, everyone.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Call With Kuwait Foreign Minister Al-Sabah](#)

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 20, 2018

The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Secretary Pompeo spoke with Kuwait Foreign Minister Sabah al-Khaled al-Hamad al-Sabah yesterday. The Secretary thanked the Foreign Minister for Kuwait's strong partnership and longtime friendship with the United States. The Secretary also expressed appreciation for Kuwait's continued support for humanitarian causes. They discussed the regional situation, including Iran, and how to further strengthen robust bilateral economic and trade ties.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Interview With Andrew West of ABC Radio Australia](#)

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Telephone
July 19, 2018

QUESTION: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, welcome to the ABC. Thank you for your time.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Great. It's good to be with you this morning, Andrew.

QUESTION: Yes. You are holding a ministerial summit, and I want to ask you about some of the challenges to religious freedom that your own department has identified. Your administration has reached out to North Korea. Your own department has identified shocking violations of religious freedom there. Will any further rapprochement with North Korea depend on North Korea opening up to religious freedom and human rights?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, thanks for the question. We have a first-ever religious freedom ministerial here at the State Department. We're going to have over 80 delegations from all across the world, 40 at the foreign minister level. Religious freedom is something that's very important to me personally; it's very important to President Trump. And the State Department is going to lead the world in opening up religious freedom to every citizen. That would certainly include places like North Korea. Well, that will be a real priority for our administration as well. We believe every human being ought to have the right to worship in the way that they prefer, or to choose not to if that's their preference as well. All faiths.

QUESTION: Yeah. Mr. Secretary, you have met Kim Jong-un. Have you raised

directly with him the questions of religious freedom in his country?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I've not talked about the details of my conversation with Chairman Kim. The world should know, and your listeners should know, that in every place I go, whether they're countries with strong values of religious freedom or those that do not, we place this as a real priority and we raise this issue in countries that are difficult and challenging every time we confront them. We believe that religious freedom for every citizen of the world is something that's very important.

QUESTION: The religious – the Commission on Religious Freedom report that your department publishes has also accused Russia uniquely of repressing religious rights through the invasion of another country – that's Crimea. It says Russia should be criticized in multilateral settings. Can the world rely on President Trump to publicly raise religious repression in Russia with President Putin in future?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Look, there are a lot of issues that we have with Russia, and the President just returned from Helsinki, where they discussed a broad range of issues and, frankly, broke some ground across a broad range of them. And our mission, Andrew, with this ministerial meeting is to re-force this set of issues. We're going to have countries here that aren't perfect, that are on the cusp of religious freedom. And we want to push them all in the right direction. And that's our mission statement. We're welcoming Christians and Muslims and Jews and people of diverse faiths from all across the world to become part of this. We believe this is a central pillar of American foreign policy, to have religious freedom at the front. We bring up these issues privately, and we bring them up publicly.

QUESTION: Is Russia going to be at the ministerial meeting?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I haven't seen the full list. We've invited countries from all around the world.

QUESTION: Another area which is difficult for the United States is the question of Saudi Arabia. Ever since this religious freedom report has existed, Saudi Arabia has always gotten among the worst results. Why does the U.S. continue, however, to give Saudi Arabia a waiver or an exemption from sanctions even though the report recommends it?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Andrew, you have to remember the purpose of the gathering here for the next couple days. The mission is very clear. It's to take each country and help make the case for them why it's in the best interest of their citizenry and their country to grant rights of religious freedom. Not every country is in the same place. We recognize that; we are eyes-wide-open. But make no mistake about it, unlike previous administrations, we have raised this to every one of our foreign partners and friends, and they know it's a priority for the United States and for this administration. We believe deeply in this and we're working in every one of those countries to improve religious freedom for their citizens.

QUESTION: But Mr. Secretary, you yourself are a very sincere Evangelical

Christian. You know that in Saudi Arabia, you would not be permitted to worship in your faith. Why does the United States continue this strategic partnership with a country that is so repressive against other religions?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Andrew, look, thanks for the question. I've got to run off now. But make no mistake about it, religious freedom is not the only issue that America faces with any one of our partners. It won't be the only and sole focus. Our relationships are broad. They're diverse; they cover lots of various issues. And we are acting to make sure that our relationships are in America's best interest, and religious freedom is a central part of each one of those.

Thanks, Andrew, for your time this morning.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you. So long.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Interview With Shannon Bream of Fox News](#)

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Treaty Room
Washington, DC
July 19, 2018

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, thank you for your time today. We're here to talk about an historic meeting that you've gathered next week on persecuted

religious minorities around the globe, but first I want to get to some news of the day.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, ma'am.

QUESTION: Let's talk about Russia. What do you make of the assessment our President appeared weak standing next to President Putin in Helsinki, and even allegations by lawmakers that he must, quote, "have something" on our President for him to be acting this way?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, Shannon, thanks for having me on today. I think those allegations are absurd. This administration has been relentless in its efforts to deter Russia from its bad behavior. We inherited a situation where Russia was running all over the United States. These last few days have been, frankly, more heat than light. This administration has been strong in supporting the Ukrainians, strong in making sure that we're protected against Russian expansion in other parts of the world. We all recognize that that threat is real, and President Trump has been strong in protecting America from Russian aggression.

QUESTION: *New York Times* is reporting that the President was fully briefed a couple of weeks before the inauguration about meddling, presented compelling evidence about that. Do you worry as a member who has deep roots in the intel community that it appears he continues to equivocate on this issue of whether or not there has been Russian meddling?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm in a position to know. I did have the chance to talk to the President about this. Frankly, over the last – goodness – almost year and a half now, the President's consistently been briefed on this issue. He understands that the Russians have interfered in our elections. He, frankly, understands that's been going on for an awfully long time. It wasn't just the 2016 elections. Somehow America seems to forget the history of Russia's efforts to undermine Western democracy for decades now. It gets confused because there are those who want to make a partisan case out of this with respect to the Mueller investigation. The President understands what Russia did in our elections in 2016, but he has empowered each of us to make sure that it doesn't happen again in the 2018 or 2020 elections here in the United States as well.

QUESTION: And looking at those things moving forward, the President was asked repeatedly yesterday by a member of the press corps about whether he believes meddling is still ongoing. He responded, "Thank you. No." The White House says he was saying no to any further questions. Do you believe Russia is still meddling in our elections?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I have great confidence that the Russians will try and undermine Western democracy in 2017, 2018, 2019, and for an awfully long time. It is our responsibility as leaders of the United States Government to do all that we can to deter them from interfering with us, not only in our elections but more broadly as well.

QUESTION: The Russian ambassador to the U.S. is now saying that there were,

quote, "important verbal agreements" made in private conversations between our presidents. Can you tell us anything about those?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, I'm not sure I'd take the Russian ambassador's word for a whole lot. From time to time they are wont to tell stories. Here's what I know. I'd have a chance to talk with President Trump about his discussions with President Putin. There was progress made on a handful of fronts: agreements to try and work more closely on counterterrorism, an effort to begin conversations around arms control to prevent the spread of nuclear proliferation. There were lots of things discussed. There remains a great deal of work to do, but the President accomplished one of his goals, which was to create a way where the two leaders of these important countries can have positive, constructive conversations that surround these incredibly important issues. There'll be lots of places our two countries' interests and values diverge. President Trump's deeply aware of that.

QUESTION: Any chance this administration would actually entertain the idea of allowing Putin or his – anyone from his team to have the ability to question or have physical custody of people like our former Ambassador McFaul or other DHS officials who've clearly been investigating things that are not beneficial to the Putin regime?

SECRETARY POMPEO: None.

QUESTION: Okay. Let's talk North Korea, because tomorrow you head to the UN to have –

SECRETARY POMPEO: I answered that question, Shannon, that quickly because it – I've watched the noise these last few days. The President's been very resolute. He understands precisely who it is we're dealing with in Russia. He gets it. He's trying to take opportunities, places where we find we can work together, and put America in a position to do the things he wants to do on behalf of the American people.

QUESTION: Okay. North Korea. Tomorrow you to the UN to have discussions about our ongoing conversations with them. What do you make of the reports and assessments that North Korea has no intention at all of getting rid of their nuclear ambitions or their program?

SECRETARY POMPEO: No one's been closer to that than I have, so everyone else is simply speculating about what's taken place to date. I've been there. The North Koreans have consistently reaffirmed their commitment, the commitment that Chairman Kim made to President Trump. No one was under any illusion that this was going to happen in hours or days or even weeks. It's going to take time to achieve this outcome. We hope for a brighter future for the North Korean people, and if Chairman Kim continues to follow through on his commitment, the people of North Korea will have a brighter future.

QUESTION: Let's talk about the historic meeting that you've put together, the ministerial-level meeting addressing religious freedom and persecution around the globe. Why was it important to you to do that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Religious freedom is a fundamental human right. The State Department of the United States of America ought to be in the lead in promoting that religious freedom around the world. Shannon, not every country has the religious freedom we have here in the United States. Individuals are punished for their beliefs or, frankly, the absence of their beliefs. We ought to promote that around the world. I want the United States and our State Department to be front and center talking about religious freedom. Not every country will get to the place we want, but I'm confident that if we focus on this as part of American diplomacy, we can make the religious freedom for individuals all across the world at least a little bit better.

QUESTION: We have the case of the American pastor, Andrew Brunson, who is being held in Turkey, again yesterday denied freedom as what many are calling a sham trial continues on with him. Turkey is a NATO ally of ours. What can we do about that situation?

SECRETARY POMPEO: There's been enormous work done by this administration to try and gain the release of Pastor Brunson. We also have others held in Turkey, other Americans that – excuse me – others who worked for the United States held in Turkey today. We're working diligently on that case and, frankly, every place an American is held.

This is one example of why religious freedom matters, and so we're going to have over 80 delegations here at the State Department in a handful of days, 40 of my counterparts, foreign ministers. This is a historic opportunity. The Vice President will be speaking at the event. We believe that we can increase the capacity for human dignity and religious freedom by gathering the nations of the world and working together to get outcomes so we can prevent situations just like the one that Pastor Brunson is experiencing today.

QUESTION: Do you think that there are – you mentioned, obviously, our country is unique when it comes to the issue of religious freedom. How much do you think you can cut across some of those biases and other theocratic areas around the world where this is a real issue, life and death for many people?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It is indeed life and death. That's why this ministerial gathering is so important. We're under no illusions. We don't think we're going to change each of these countries to become as religiously tolerant as the United States is. But we've seen this every time we take an action to protect from anti-Semitism or protect Christian freedoms or protect others from across a broad range of religious faiths. Every time we act in that way and gather the nations of the world to talk about why that matters to make their country better, we think it's real progress and we think every little increase in religious freedom is better for the world.

QUESTION: I wish you great success in that, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Shannon.

QUESTION: Thank you for your time.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Wonderful to be with you.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.