

# Press Releases: Repression of Human Rights in Nicaragua

Press Statement  
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
March 18, 2019

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The United States condemns the Ortega regime's continued violence and repression toward the Nicaraguan people, including the arbitrary detention of hundreds of peaceful protestors and violence against independent media on March 16. The United States will continue to urge accountability for those who have demonstrated blatant disregard for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We call on the Ortega regime to release immediately and unconditionally all arbitrarily detained persons; respect Nicaraguans' freedom of assembly and expression; and commit to electoral reforms and to holding free and fair elections early.

We reiterate our support for the Civic Alliance and the Nicaraguan people in their quest to restore democracy through peaceful means. Now is the time for swift, just solutions and proof of good faith. Nicaraguans deserve to have a government that listens to their voices and respects their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

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# **Press Releases: Special Representative Biegun Travel to the United Kingdom**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
March 18, 2019

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U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun will travel to London March 19 to meet with UK, French, and German counterparts to discuss coordinated efforts to advance the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea.

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# **Press Releases: Interview With E.J. and Ellen of KMBZ Kansas City's Morning News**

Interview  
Michael R. Pompeo  
  
Secretary of State

Via Teleconference  
March 18, 2019

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**QUESTION:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo with us this morning. Mr. Secretary, it's an honor to speak with you. Good morning.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Good morning. It's great to be with you as well.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, I'm going to start here at home with our top story, flooding in Missouri and Kansas right now. It's been a crazy winter on the heels of another scorching summer. You travel the globe and see what's going on every day. Where is climate change on your list of global threats and what needs to be done here and around the world?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So the Trump administration takes very seriously these risks, the risk of flooding from all the things you just described. We need to make sure that the policies we put in place actually work. Frankly, what we saw happen in the previous administration was going to impose enormous cost on people from Kansas and Missouri. We've got flooding in Nebraska, the eastern part of Nebraska, as well today.

President Trump is very focused on making sure that the federal government does all it can, and we want to do so in an environmentally responsible way, but it does no good – does absolutely no good to put huge regulations, huge economic burdens which will only, in fact, make our country poorer, and poorer countries don't do nearly as good a job at keeping clean air and safe drinking water for their people.

**QUESTION:** And what do you say to those foreign leaders? Because the Trump administration makes the point that, look, we can do all this stuff, but the rest of the world's not doing it. What do you say, what can you say to them to try and get them to play along?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So many of these countries – your point is very well taken – so many of these countries have made promises, they sign agreements, they have fancy ribbon-cuttings and they celebrate, but then they do nothing. China is the perfect example. They are still in the Paris accord, but their climate record is atrocious. What really matters is what countries are doing. The United States is a global leader in environmental improvement. We will continue to be.

What I do when I travel around the world is I tell people it's not enough to say things, it's not enough to sign agreements; you have to begin to put your country down the right path, you have to grow your economy in an environmentally responsible way, and you too can then have the standard of living we have in the United States where we have cleaner air and we have safer drinking water each and every year.

**QUESTION:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo with us on the news line. Massacre in New Zealand last week and has thrust white nationalism back into the headlines. Can you talk about how big a threat white nationalism is at home

and abroad and which countries ought to be most worried about it?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So it was a real tragedy. I spoke with Winston Peters, my foreign minister counterpart there in New Zealand to share the American grief as a result of this tragic incident. Look, the threat from extremists that comes from a broad spectrum is real. The State Department plays an important role, as do other elements of American national security power to take down these kinds of threats. I did the same in my previous role when I was the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, where we worked closely with our Five Eyes partner, New Zealand, to try to provide them information that could protect them from every kind of threat. Look, governments have responsibility to reduce these risks, and the United States is at the forefront of trying to do so.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, I remember when the headlines came out that said Mike Pompeo may be the President's choice for CIA director, and we all looked at each other and said, well, that's great, but how did that happen? We know your credentials are impeccable, but how did you pop up on the President's radar screen, and what is it that clicks about the two of you?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So I've now had a chance to know the President for, goodness, coming on two and a half years. He's a leader who is crisp and demanding, has very high expectations, sets them out for us, and then allows us to go get our teams – my team at the State Department, the previous team I led at the CIA – to go execute and implement America's foreign policy, and previously its intelligence mission. I've enjoyed that. I hope I've served him well. I hope I'm continuing to serve the American people well. I keep my head down and I keep working hard and if we do those two things, I think Americans can continue to be increasingly secure the days and weeks and months ahead.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, my co-host Ellen could not be here this morning, but she wanted me to follow up with this question: Given the President's style and his way of talking to and about people, she wanted to know what you say to people who ask you, how can you work for this man?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Oh, goodness, it's really easy. I look at the things that we've achieved. Some of them are in national security space, but some of them aren't. I'm here in Kansas today for a global entrepreneurs seminar. It's part of our effort to grow the American economy. I look at the unemployment rate all across the United States. I look at the Supreme Court justices that are put in place. I was a small businessman in Kansas for a decade-plus. I can see how the regulatory environment has changed how businesspeople can take risks and, in turn, grow their businesses and hire people, great jobs for people all across places like Kansas. It's an incredible privilege to serve in this administration and to serve the American people.

**QUESTION:** You've mentioned jobs a couple of times in that answer, Mr. Secretary, and so let me ask you real quick: Why should we come work for the Foreign Service? Because I hear there are jobs available in the Foreign Service.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** There are. You should come work in the Foreign Service because it's an amazing opportunity to grow and perhaps, most importantly, an amazing opportunity to serve. We have people with all kinds of different skillsets from all across America. I want Kansans to know about that opportunity too, whether you're an engineer or you have a language specialty, we have historians, all the different skills that Americans can provide and serving – to get a chance to serve and represent America in Asia and Africa or in Europe is an incredible privilege, one that will make you better and one that, if we get enough folks from the heartland to come be part of, will make America better as well.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, you have two choices: K-State or KU. Who are you putting on the winning line on your bracket on this first Monday of the tournament week?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I like K-State's chances this season. They had a great season. They won the Big 12 Conference, but I'm really focused on the Wichita State Shockers and a deep run through the NIT. (Inaudible.)

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, it is an honor to talk to you. We welcome you back to Kansas and we thank you for this time we had this morning with you.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you very much, sir. You have a great day.

**QUESTION:** You too.

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## [Press Releases: Interview With Andy Hooser of The Voice of Reason, KQAM](#)

Interview  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference  
March 18, 2019

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**QUESTION:** Thirty-five minutes past the hour. Welcome in to the Voice of Reason here on a Monday. It's a beautiful day. I want to get right into it as we have limited time with our next guest, but I'm so excited to have him back on the program as he's actually back in Kansas for a couple of days here. Secretary of State for the United States, Mr. Mike Pompeo, on the line with us here.

Mr. Secretary, how are you, sir?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I'm great, Andy. It's great to be back on with you and it's great to be back home in Kansas.

**QUESTION:** Ah, it's great to have you back here and always great to have you on the show, my friend. You've been a busy guy – I know you're in town – but I want to talk about your entrepreneurial event that you're speaking at today up in Kansas City, but big stuff going on with the Secretary, the State Department.

We've got to ask – I know the big news, of course, has been lately with all the issues going on with North Korea, and then backing out of stuff. What's going on over there? Do we see any chance of negotiations still going on out there?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So we've been at this now for – goodness, a little over a year. We've made real progress. We've got missile tests stopped, we've got nuclear testing stopped, we got some of our hostages home, which was a blessing. But we still haven't made the progress we need to make on denuclearization. The conversations certainly continue. I hope we can achieve that. Chairman Kim made a commitment to President Trump and, frankly, to the world back in June of last year in Singapore. He promised he would denuclearize, and the world is demanding that. American safety depends on it, and we're determined to achieve it.

**QUESTION:** Well, good. And I think he would look pretty foolish if he starts backing out on stuff now for no apparent reason, so hopefully we do see that. Coming up today, you are speaking in Kansas City for an entrepreneurial event. Talk a little bit about that. What's bringing you back to Kansas?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So you know the State Department's first client is, of course, the American people and keeping the American people safe. Among the things that is most important to have a robust American national security apparatus is a growing economy, and the State Department helps with that.

We wanted to come here today to talk to that – talk to folks here in the heartland about that. If you've got a small business like I did back in south central Kansas and you want to sell your products, your goods, your services across the world in international markets, the State Department can help. If you're looking for investors from across the world or partners, or others to

help you innovate, we can help you with that too. We have a number of programs that are aimed squarely at growing the American economy, growing American businesses. And today we'll talk to entrepreneurs here in Kansas City and both sides of the state border, and share with them what it is the State Department can help deliver on their behalf so they can grow their company.

**QUESTION:** We are really seeing economic growth. I mean, the GDP's been growing more so under President Trump than it was under President Barack Obama. Are we still seeing the onset down the road here of continued economic growth all over the country?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** We're confident that we can, whether that's the reduced regulatory environment that we're in today or the pro-growth policies of President Trump. We're convinced the economy will still be thriving next year and the year after. Things look pretty good and we've got some of the lowest unemployment we've ever had in history. That's all across the board. That's for African Americans and women. President Trump has put the American economy on the right course, and one of the reasons I'm out here today is to make sure that continues.

**QUESTION:** Sure. This is a two-parter, isn't it? I mean, it's in Kansas City now, and it's going to be in the Netherlands, I believe, in June, correct?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** That's right, and we've got senior leaders from the Netherlands that will be with us here today, both government officials and entrepreneurs from their country. We'll be traveling to do this in the summertime there. This is a global effort. The folks who come today to the seminar will get to meet people from all across the world, to network, to develop relationships so that they can put their business on a trajectory for international growth.

**QUESTION:** I love it. International growth right here in Kansas, and that's something we should be very proud of. You guys actually at the State Department have opportunities, and I know you want to mention this as well at the event today, but even people that can't make it to the event, there's actually opportunities for people to jump on board and work with you guys at the State Department, correct?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So what the State Department does is absolutely central for America to keep Kansas safe, and being an American diplomat is a noble job. It's interesting. It's fascinating. We are engineers, linguists, we have people with – doctors, we have people with every skillset. And I wanted to come to Kansas today to talk to Kansans to tell them: If it's something that you're interested in, if you think traveling the world and representing America across the world is something you might be interested in, go onto our website to [careers.state.gov](https://careers.state.gov), and see if it's for you. It's great opportunities. They're wonderful jobs where you can learn, make yourself better, and do so while you're keeping American safe.

**QUESTION:** Hey, I love it. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. I know you're short on time, my friend, but we love every time you come back here to

Kansas. We love getting you on the program. There's a lot of stuff going on, especially with the elections going on next year, and I know they've been talking to you about that kind of stuff, but I know you're focused on a lot of great projects right now keeping America safe and working with a lot of the other nations. So we thank you for what you do each and every day, my friend.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Andy, thank you very much. It's great to be back with you and it's great to be back talking to Kansans. Hope you all are doing great.

**QUESTION:** Hey, I love it. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo right there.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you, sir.

**QUESTION:** We'll get you back on the show again real soon. Always a pleasure right there. There it is, Secretary of State for the United States, Mr. Mike Pompeo on the program.

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## [Press Releases: Interview With Pete Mundo of the Pete Mundo Morning Show, KCMO](#)

Interview  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference  
March 18, 2019

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**QUESTION:** KCMO 103.7 FM and welcome in Mike Pompeo. Mr. Secretary, really

appreciate a few minutes of your time as always.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** It's good to be with you.

**QUESTION:** You're in town – it's great to be with you as always. You're in town. I know you've got an event going on this morning in Overland Park. What's happening there?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So we're going to be out in Overland Park with a big State Department team and some leaders from the Netherlands as well talking about entrepreneurship and how the State Department can help Kansas businesses, Missouri companies sell their products around the world: goods, retail, you name it. And if a company wants partners or is looking for a chance to grow and expand all around the world, the State Department has tools and people prepared to assist them.

I ran a small business for a while here in Kansas, and it was always a challenge to operate internationally. I want to make sure these companies understand how to do it, and we can make it just a little bit easier for them.

**QUESTION:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Pete Mundo, 710 KCMO, 103.7 FM. So, Mr. Secretary, I know you've been in Houston and in Iowa doing similar things. And some people might say: Well, what's he doing with some of these domestic trips? I know for you it's been important to make sure that people, young professionals in the heartland are considering the State Department so you get less of that I-95 corridor – not that they're bad people, but it brings a different perspective. So how do you try to facilitate that process?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** We need a diverse workforce at the State Department. That means getting people from Appalachia and from Iowa and all across America. I wanted to go out and talk about the opportunities for smart, young people who want to serve America. The State Department is a great place to be an American diplomat. It's a real privilege. We use talents all across the spectrum, from historians to linguists, from mathematicians to engineers. A broad range of skills are applicable to what it is we're trying to do to help keep Americans safe. And I want to make sure that young people who are graduating from school here in Kansas or in Missouri or in Iowa or Texas are aware of these opportunities. It's a great place to work, it's a wonderful opportunity, and the chance to serve is very real.

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, obviously with you being back in the state it's a topic and a question that we've had a lot of interest on this show, so – and it's kind of brought back up as well with some recent newspaper interviews that you've done here locally. I know you ruled out on the Today Show any idea of running for the Senate in 2020. Is that still the case, and how much do you think about a future back here in Kansas doing something politically on the state level?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I think others think about it a lot more than I do. (Laughter.) I must say I'm incredibly focused on what I'm doing today. Being the Secretary of State is more than a full-time gig. I have a privilege to

serve President Trump and America in this role. I'm going to keep doing this as long as President Trump will permit me to do so.

I love Kansas. It's home for Susan and me for sure, but at this point we're very, very focused on the mission in front of us.

**QUESTION:** Are there any – there's a lot of names being talked about for that Senate race, especially now that you're out of it. Whether it's the former governor Jeff Colyer or Kevin Yoder or Kris Kobach, is there somebody in this realm that you like more than others, that you think about for that seat with Pat Roberts retiring?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I know all of those folks. I'll let the good people of Kansas sort it out. I'm very confident when they do so, they'll pick a new, really talented, good senator.

**QUESTION:** Fair enough. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo joining us on KCMO. All right, Mr. Secretary, obviously North Korea's taken a lot of your time here lately. You had the second summit in Vietnam a couple of weeks ago. Now there's some rumblings that maybe North Korea basically wants to blow up any of the positive discussions that you guys have had here lately and they might go back to some of the testing that they've done. How concerned are you that some of the positive discussions you guys have had over the past year are going to be for naught?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So I always go back to first principles. When we came in, this threat was real. There was no diplomatic engagement. They were firing missiles. They were conducting nuclear tests. We've got each of those things stopped, and we hope that that will continue to be the case. So we have made progress. It's – as President Trump has said, this is a long journey. It's going to be difficult. To convince North Korea to give up their nuclear weapons took a great deal of work, but in, goodness, June of last year Chairman Kim made a promise, he wrote it down for the world to see, that he was committed to denuclearizing.

Now the task in front of us is to get him to deliver on the promise that he made to President Trump and to the world. We made a little bit of progress in Hanoi along that route, not nearly as much as we had hoped, but the effort continues because it's important. This threat to the world from North Korea's nuclear weapons is real. President Trump is determined to diminish that risk to people all across the globe, including right here in Kansas.

**QUESTION:** Now, Mr. Secretary, you mentioned right there that you didn't make as much progress as you had hoped. As you've had a couple of weeks to digest that trip, is there something in particular that you think Chairman Kim and North Korea were hung up on, bothered by? Is there some reason that the progress wasn't made that you and all of America was hoping for on that specific trip?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So I can't say much about the details of the negotiation as those are important private conversations, but it's clearly a range of issues around timing and sequencing and how it is we achieve this. President Trump's

commitment, the commitment he made for a brighter future for the North Korean people, is very, very real, but it must follow – it has to follow the verified denuclearization of North Korea. And getting that sequencing right and getting it laid out in a way that each of the parties can agree to and take down the tension level along the North and South Korean border, it matters to the people of Japan and South Korea, our important partners, and it matters to the whole world.

**QUESTION:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Mr. Secretary, before we let you go, a number – we're giving away Royals tickets here. So give me your favorite number between 1 and 10 and that caller's going to get our Royals tickets. Give me – what's the number?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I'm a big seven fan. (Laughter.)

**QUESTION:** He's a seven guy. That works out for 710 KCMO. How about that? Well done, Mr. Secretary. Always appreciate your time.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you very much. Thank you, sir. Have a good day.

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