

Press Releases: Interview With WOAI San Antonio's First News With Charlie Parker

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference
March 12, 2019

QUESTION: San Antonio's First News with Charlie Parker, Charity McCurdy in the 24-hour news center. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Houston, Texas today for the CERAWeek conference all about energy, in particular America.

Mr. Secretary, appreciate the visit this morning, but before we talk about what's going on here in Texas, in particular Houston today, have to ask you about last night and what's currently going on in Venezuela. Back in January, the decision to withdraw all dependence and reduce embassy staff to a minimum, and then your announcement last night that it's time for everybody to get out.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Charlie, thanks for having me on the show. It's great to be in Texas. We did in fact make the decision last night that we needed to remove the remaining folks we had on the ground there in Caracas. The situation is continuing to deteriorate. We've all seen the power outages – food, water all becoming more and more difficult – and we wanted to make sure we kept all the Americans working for the United States Government safe and get them back home.

QUESTION: Yeah, and the international effort to get Maduro out – well, I say international, not counting China, Russia, and Cuba – if things are to this point, if things are this bad and probably looking like they could get worse, what are the options? What do we do in Venezuela?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, the Venezuelan people have set the direction very clearly. They want Maduro gone. The Interim President Juan Guaido is leading an effort to get humanitarian assistance and the American taxpayers have been incredibly generous. Over 200 metric tons of food and hygiene kits and medicine on the ground, we haven't been able to get them in. The Maduro regime has denied food to starving people and medicine to the sick. It's

really, really evil. And we need to continue to work to deliver. The Venezuelan people deserve it. This is a once-proud, resource-rich nation, and I'm confident. One of the reasons I'm here in Texas is to talk about energy, and Venezuela has it. We need to return the capacity of Venezuela to produce and create wealth for the Venezuelan people, and we're working diligently with all of our partners in South and Central America and Europe to hopefully achieve that here as quickly as possible. The time is drawing short.

QUESTION: Secretary Pompeo, good morning. This is Charity McCurdy. As you mentioned, you're in Houston to talk about America's energy revolution, and the U.S. is on pace to overtake Saudi Arabia and Russia as the world's biggest oil producer. As you know, Texas's Permian Basin is a major player in that. What's being done by the Trump administration to address pipeline capacity to ensure this production growth continues?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, Charity, great question, and incredibly important. First, I think the administration's done an awful lot to get us where we are today, to reduce regulation, to make permitting faster. I was in this business for a bunch of years before I entered government service. I ran a company that made pumping units. I've spent a lot of time in Midland, Odessa, East Texas. I know the industry well. We now need to take all this product that we've got in the Permian Basin, and frankly in other places in America too, and make sure that we can get it to markets not only through pipelines here, but my task as America's most senior diplomat is to make sure that there are markets available around the world, that the Europeans and Asia – they're prepared to buy not only our crude oil, but our natural gas so that we can continue to create wealth here in America. And importantly, it has deep national security implications as well if we're successful at this.

QUESTION: We're talking to the Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo. Obviously when it comes to energy, you got to be strong, you got to grow, you got to integrate, diversify, and advance energy security. Just exactly what does that mean, Mr. Secretary, to advance energy security?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Everywhere I travel – I was in the Philippines last week and in Vietnam, I'll be in the Middle East next week, then I'll be back on to Europe – no matter which country I go to, they're very focused on their own energy security. What does that mean? It means they have the capacity to deliver the energy that their citizens need to heat and cool their homes, that they have what they need for their infrastructure, for their businesses. And they want to get it from friends and allies and partners, and they don't want to have to rely on adversaries who, when times get tough, can cut them off or raise prices or make their life difficult or, frankly, use energy to coerce them.

And so this American boom, this skyrocketing of energy production – you talked about us being number one in the world in crude oil exports. We're going to approach that and natural gas before too long. Our ability to deliver that to our friends and partners around the world creates enormous security for people here in Texas and all across America.

QUESTION: We appreciate what you do and I guess on a light note, I'd like – I

wish you got frequent flyer miles.

SECRETARY POMPEO: (Laughter.) Doesn't quite work that way, but it is an incredible privilege to represent America around the world.

QUESTION: And we are glad that you do, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much. You all have a good day.

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[Press Releases: Interview With Hal Jay and Brian Estridge of WBAP Morning News](#)

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QUESTION: Yes, and Secretary Mike Pompeo joins us (inaudible) Secretary of State, kind enough to carve out a couple of moments for us. He's headed to Houston for a – to deliver a keynote to – at a big energy conference, Hal.

QUESTION: All right.

QUESTION: And we've got a lot to get into. Secretary, thanks for the time this morning. Let's dive right into the news that came out this week that all of the sudden, the U.S. is the number one exporter of energy in the world, and this really strengthens our standing internationally, doesn't it?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well great, it's thanks to be with you. And it does, that's why I'm down here. I wanted to talk about what U.S. energy production does for American national security, how it keeps people from Dallas and San Antonio and Houston and all across Texas safer, lets us work more closely with our friends and puts real pressure on those who want to do harm to the United States. So this energy production really matters. I wanted to come down here and talk about how, as American's most senior diplomat, we use that to advantage to keep America safe.

QUESTION: Yeah, is that leverage for you when it comes to negotiating around the world?

SECRETARY POMPEO: There are very few countries I travel to – I was in the Philippines last week and Vietnam, I'll be in Europe in a couple of days and the Middle East. Everywhere I go, energy is at the top of the list. Demand for energy is only growing, and those who can produce and provide it have an enormous advantage when it comes to security around the world.

QUESTION: Are we at the point now where America can say we don't have to worry about other countries anymore, Middle East oil, anything like that, we're – we are on our own?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we're getting close to where we'll have true American energy dominance. It's a global market; it's a complicated market. But the more energy that we produce here in America, so the more we can do – and the Trump administration's done a lot of this, reduce regulations, create opportunities for jobs and wealth creation in the energy industry in America – the safer Americans will be around the world as well.

QUESTION: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is with us right now. That leverage that we talk about when it comes to energy doesn't just play in the Middle East. Does it factor into the negotiations that are ongoing with North Korea at all?

SECRETARY POMPEO: North Korea presents a special situation for sure, but nobody can escape the truth. The truth is to grow an economy you need energy. Their electrical infrastructure needs work. They need refined petroleum products. One of the ways that we've convinced North Korea to move towards denuclearization is to reduce the amount of energy that they can import, and those sanctions that the United Nations put in place alongside of us have made a material difference. It's made it harder for the North Koreans to do the things they need to do, and I think that's at least in part why Chairman Kim made the commitment to denuclearize, and we're hopeful that even though we didn't get as far as we would have liked when the President and I were in Hanoi last week, we still have a path forward there.

QUESTION: Is North Korea – are we paying too much attention to it? Is there – is there a real true threat?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the – any time you have a nation that has nuclear weapons and the capacity to either sell those weapons to those that would want to present risk to the United States or the capacity to use a missile

system for delivery, there's a threat to the United States. Nuclear weapons are unique and especially risky, as you all well know, so I think it's important, important that we get this right, important that we take down that threat to the United States.

QUESTION: A different kind of threat in South America with Venezuela that I know has your attention as well.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It does. Last night we made the decision that we would withdraw the last of our diplomats from Caracas, so they'll all be coming home. The calamity, the chaos that is engulfing Venezuela today is a direct result of socialism, of the Maduro regime and the Cubans and the Russians all destroying a once proud economy. The United States, the neighboring regions in South America, Central America, they want to have a better life, democracy restored in Venezuela. And America is prepared to play its part, an important part I believe, in helping that happen.

QUESTION: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is with us. What keeps you up at night?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Oh goodness. Lots of things to focus on in the world, but just like you all, right, you just keep focused, you set priorities. I work for a President that understands the incredible importance of American national security, and you get up each day, put your helmet on, and get to work.

QUESTION: Just so you'll know, I voted for Donald Trump, so I'll ask you this: Fill in the blank. I wish the President would stop –

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm not going to answer that one for you this morning. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: How about this one then: I wish the President would start –

SECRETARY POMPEO: (Laughter.) You're not going to draw me into that.

QUESTION: Okay.

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think –

QUESTION: That's why –

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think we're getting it right most days.

QUESTION: That's why I said I voted for him, and I didn't mind asking those questions, so – well, thanks for playing along.

QUESTION: Yeah, and your timing is perfect. You're there for the last week of the Houston radio – rodeo. The Kings of Leon are playing tonight. Enjoy the concert.

SECRETARY POMPEO: I would love to get to that, and Susan and I – my wife – we're from Kansas. We love rodeo too.

QUESTION: Yeah. Mike Pompeo –

QUESTION: There you go.

QUESTION: – the Secretary of State, thanks for the time today.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much. You all have a good day.

QUESTION: Yeah, you too.

QUESTION: And keep up the good work by the way, too.

QUESTION: Yeah.

QUESTION: Thanks for serving us.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much. Very nice, thank you.

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[Press Releases: Ethiopian Airlines Flight ET302](#)

Press Statement
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC
March 10, 2019

The U.S. Department of State extends our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those killed in the tragic crash of Ethiopian Airlines flight ET302. We can confirm that at least eight U.S. citizens were among the

victims. Our embassies in Addis Ababa and Nairobi, in coordination with the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, are working with the Government of Ethiopia and Ethiopian Airlines to offer all possible assistance. Our teams in Addis Ababa, Nairobi, and Washington, DC are working tirelessly to provide all appropriate consular assistance to families of the victims at this difficult time.

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Press Releases: Morocco's Repatriation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters From Syria

Press Statement
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC
March 10, 2019

The United States commends the Kingdom of Morocco for repatriating eight Moroccan foreign terrorist fighters from Syria. Morocco is a highly capable partner in the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, and we appreciate its commitment to countering terrorism. Morocco's actions should encourage other nations to repatriate and prosecute their citizens who have traveled to fight for ISIS. Repatriating foreign terrorist fighters to their countries of origin is the best solution to prevent them from returning to the battlefield.

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Press Releases: Deputy Secretary John J. Sullivan and USAID Administrator Mark Green On-Camera Briefing on the President's FY 2020 Budget Request

Notice to the Press
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
March 8, 2019

There will be an On-Camera, On-the-Record Press Briefing with Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan and USAID Administrator Mark Green on the President's FY 2020 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of State and USAID on Monday, March 11 at 2:00 p.m. in the Press Briefing Room at the Department of State.

They will be joined by Douglas Pitkin, Director, Bureau of Budget and Planning, Department of State; Eric Ueland, Director, Office of U.S. Foreign Assistance, Department of State; and Tricia Schmitt, Director, Office of Budget and Resource Management, USAID.

This event is open press coverage. Journalists who plan to cover this event in person must be seated in the Press Briefing Room by 1:45 p.m.

Media representatives may attend this event upon presentation of one of the following: (1) a U.S. Government-issued photo media credential (e.g., Department of State, White House, Congress, Department of Defense or Foreign Press Center), or (2) an official photo identification card issued by their news organization, or (3) a letter from their employer on official letterhead verifying their current employment as a journalist. Additionally, they must present an official government photo identification card (i.e., U.S. driver's license or passport).

Instructions for embargoed access to the FY2020 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ) will be sent to members of the press only, on Monday, March 11, in the morning. The CBJ is EMBARGOED until 12:00 p.m.

The event will be streamed live on www.state.gov.

For further information, please contact the Office of Press Relations at (202) 647-2492 or PAPressDuty@state.gov.

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