

# [Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Kurdistan Regional Government Security Council Chancellor Masrour Barzani](#)

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
January 9, 2019

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The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met today with Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Security Council Chancellor Masrour Barzani and congratulated him on his nomination to serve as the KRG's prime minister. The Secretary voiced strong U.S. support for continued dialogue between the KRG and the central government and continued progress on both security and economic reforms. The Secretary reiterated the importance of Washington's strategic partnership with Iraq and our longstanding friendship with the KRG.

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# [Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Kurdistan Regional](#)

# Government Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
January 9, 2019

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The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino: □

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met today with Iraqi Kurdistan Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and congratulated him on his nomination to serve as the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The Secretary emphasized strong U.S. support for continued dialogue between the KRG and the central government in Baghdad. He also discussed the recent territorial defeat of ISIS in Syria. Secretary Pompeo underscored the value of our strategic relationship with Iraq and our longstanding friendship with the IKR, which is vital for ensuring mutual security and regional stability.

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## Press Releases: Strengthening the U.S.-Egypt Partnership

Fact Sheet  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
January 9, 2019

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*“The deep commercial, security, and people-to-people relationships between our two countries are rooted in mutual interest and respect, as well as our shared commitment to combatting terrorism and fostering the conditions for prosperity.” – Secretary Michael R. Pompeo, July 23, 2018*

#### REINFORCING OUR STRONG RELATIONSHIP

- Egypt is one of the United States’ longest-standing strategic partners in the Middle East.
- Egypt plays a vital role in regional security and stability through its counterterrorism efforts, support for the UN-facilitated political process in Libya, efforts to counter the Iranian regime’s malicious activities, and the maintenance of the Egypt-Israel Treaty of Peace, which will see its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this March.
- The U.S. and Egypt share many security interests and enjoy a strong security partnership, which includes cooperation on overflight requests and Suez Canal transit, and an unwavering commitment to the defeat of ISIS. Egypt also works to counter the flow of foreign fighters, material, and financial support to terrorists.
- President Sisi has been a steadfast partner in the anti-terror fight, and a courageous voice in denouncing the radical Islamist ideology that fuels it.

#### ENCOURAGING PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

- The United States seeks broadened and deepened cooperation with Egypt, including on issues of human rights and civil society. We believe nation-states progress when all citizens enjoy basic freedoms.
- As we seek a stronger partnership, we encourage President Sisi to unleash the creative energies of the Egyptian people, unfetter the economy, and promote a free and open exchange of ideas.
- The United States welcomes the acquittal of the employees of U.S. NGOs who were wrongly convicted of improperly operating in Egypt. We strongly support President Sisi’s initiative to amend Egyptian law to prevent future miscarriages of justice.
- The United States applauds President Sisi’s efforts to promote religious freedom, which stand as an example for all leaders and peoples of the Middle East. The Secretary is eager to discuss how the United States can help support President al-Sisi’s efforts to reform religious discourse and promote interfaith tolerance, as evidenced by the recent opening of the new Coptic Cathedral and the Al-Fattah al-Alim Mosque.

#### PROMOTING JOINT ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH A STABLE, PROSPEROUS EGYPTIAN ECONOMY

- Egypt has one of the most diversified economies in the Middle East.
- Under President Sisi's leadership, Egypt is undertaking many important initiatives, including on the economic and energy fronts. The United States encourages a greater role for the private sector in the Egyptian economy.
- Total bilateral trade in goods between the United States and Egypt was \$5.0 billion in 2016. Egypt and the United States signed a Bilateral Investment Treaty in 1982 to promote and facilitate investment between our countries.
- America's Trade and Investment Framework Agreement with Egypt helps support freer trade and increased investment flows, helping to advance both countries' economic interests.
- With U.S. support, the IMF's \$12 billion Extended Fund Facility program has supported Egypt's homegrown economic reforms and prospects for strong growth and employment generation.
- OPIC's recent provision of \$430 million in political risk insurance for oil and gas projects supports Egyptian goals of improved energy self-sufficiency and job creation, and will help create a better integrated regional energy market.

#### U.S. ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT ADVANCES SHARED MILITARY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS

- U.S. assistance to Egypt has helped bolster regional stability.
- Since 1980, the United States has provided Egypt with more than \$40 billion in military and \$30 billion in economic assistance to advance shared interests between the U.S., Egypt and the region.
- This military assistance supports Egypt's maritime and border security, as well as its counterterrorism fight.
- Economic assistance has brought improved education, clean water, better health, economic growth, antiquities and heritage preservation, and numerous other benefits to the Egyptian people.

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# Press Releases: Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale Travel to Romania, Germany, and Lebanon

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
January 8, 2019

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Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale will travel to Romania, Germany, and Lebanon January 9-15.

On January 9, Under Secretary Hale will arrive in Cluj, Romania where he will meet with EU political directors. While in Romania, the Under Secretary will also meet with senior Romanian officials in Bucharest to discuss ways to deepen transatlantic cooperation, balance U.S.-EU trade, and safeguard European energy security during Romania's presidency of the Council of the European Union.

On January 11 in Berlin, Germany, Under Secretary Hale will reaffirm the importance of the U.S.-German relationship with senior German officials and discuss a range of issues including Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, energy security, Iran's malign influence throughout Europe and the Middle East, and the need to promote peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

From January 13-14 in Beirut, Lebanon, Under Secretary Hale will underscore strong U.S. support for the Lebanese state and legitimate security institutions, and reiterate the need for all Lebanese actors to uphold Lebanon's policy of disassociation from regional conflicts and avoid escalating tensions along the Blue Line boundary with Israel.

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# Press Releases: Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad Travel

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
January 8, 2019

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Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad will lead an interagency delegation to India, China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan from January 8 – 21. He will meet with senior government officials in each country to facilitate an intra-Afghan political settlement. The United States supports the desire of the Afghan people and the international community for a political settlement that ends the 40-year conflict and ensures Afghanistan never again serves as a platform for international terrorism. Special Representative Khalilzad will meet with Afghan government officials and other interested parties to support and facilitate an inclusive peace process in Afghanistan, empowering the Afghan people to chart a shared course for their nation's future.

Special Representative Khalilzad continues to coordinate his efforts with President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah, and other Afghan stakeholders to ensure an intra-Afghan peace process. The U.S. goal is to promote dialogue among Afghans about how to end the conflict, and to encourage the parties to come together at the negotiating table to reach a political settlement where every Afghan citizen enjoys equal rights and responsibilities under the rule of law. During his last trip in December, Special Representative Khalilzad reiterated that the only solution to the conflict is for all parties to sit together and reach an agreement on the political future of Afghanistan with mutual respect and acceptance.

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