

Press Releases: Interview With Brian Grimmatt of KMWU Wichita Public Radio

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference
December 20, 2018

QUESTION: Good morning, Secretary. How are you?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm very good.

QUESTION: I'll just jump right in, since our time is limited.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: My first question is kind of a two-part question. And the first part of it is, what is it – from your perspective as Secretary of State and what you do working with other countries' leaders, what is kind of the goal of the tariffs with China? And is achieving that goal worth the cost to farmers and manufacturers here in the United States?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the President's mission with respect to trade in China is very, very clear. I saw this when I ran a small business in Kansas. The trade relationship with China is fundamentally unfair. They charge huge tariffs for the products that we try and sell there; they steal our intellectual property when we move our businesses there. That is unacceptable. It hurts Kansas workers.

And so the President's mission in his dealings with China on trade is to create a fair and reciprocal relationship. If they would get rid of their tariffs and they would stop stealing our intellectual property and – those are the simple things he's asking for. It's only fair to Kansas workers to do that, and it's the mission set that the President's engaged in with the tariffs. It is – his aim is to create a fair and reciprocal trade relationship so that American workers can produce products and sell them on an equal footing into the Chinese market, in the same way China has been able to do in the United States for decades.

QUESTION: Do you believe that you're making headwind in that area – or headway, sorry, not headwind. Do you believe that you're making some movement

there in trying to prevent some of that intellectual property theft through the use of these tariffs?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, but it's difficult. The Chinese have this as a method which they have used with great intent over the years. And they're – they don't want to give that up easily, and so it is a real challenge. It takes hard-fought negotiating, hard-fought diplomacy, hard-fought trade and discussions with Department of Treasury in the United States. But we are determined to do this.

It is fundamentally unfair to allow the United States to continue to have the Chinese have forced technology transfer, force American companies who want to operate in China to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their own workers' best interest. And President Trump is the first president in an awfully long time to take this threat to American workers, Kansas farmers seriously.

QUESTION: Moving away a little bit from the trade issues, what would you have to say to some of the U.S. allies who are upset or surprised by President Trump's announcement that he's removing ground troops from Syria?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Oh, goodness. The U.S. efforts under President Trump in Syria have had extraordinary success. We've taken away more than 90 percent of the ISIS caliphate. You'll remember, they were holding people in cages and lighting them on fire. We've eliminated over 90 percent of the actual real estate the caliphate held. We've had a very successful effort there. We will continue to keep the homeland safe from the threat from ISIS.

But it no longer makes sense for there to be 2,000 soldiers stationed there. We can accomplish this mission in a different way. And the President's made a decision to do that. Our allies know the United States will always be the world's leader in fighting against terrorism around the world. We've done it for decades, and we will continue to be alongside them, making sure that not only is America safe, but the threat from terrorism around the world is diminished.

QUESTION: Just lastly, because our time is running short, what are the next steps in talks or plans for talks with North Korea? And do you think that they are living up to some of the agreements that President Trump made the last time that he met with Kim Jong-un?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I never talk about the actual discussions we're having, because they're private conversations on how to work our pathway forward toward the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We're very hopeful that we can make a significant step. The next public objective is that Chairman Kim and President Trump have both indicated that they want to have a summit, and I am hopeful that not too long after the first of the year we can get the two of them together and make another substantial step along the way towards creating a reduced threat to the United States from North Korea's nuclear weapons arsenal.

QUESTION: Excellent. Thank you so much for your time. And I know you're

extremely busy, and I appreciate you giving me a moment.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much, sir. You have a great day and a Merry Christmas.

QUESTION: You too. Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: You bet. So long.

QUESTION: Bye-bye.

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