

# Press Releases: Interview With Clay Masters of Morning Edition, Iowa Public Radio

Interview  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference  
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**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Good morning. This is Mike speaking.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, hi, Secretary Pompeo. Clay Masters, Iowa Public Radio.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Hi, Clay. How are you this morning?

**QUESTION:** Doing well. Just interested first just to kind of have you explain what you're going to be doing in Iowa today.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Yeah, so I'm actually here with Ambassador Branstad. It was kind of his idea for me to come out. And we want to do three things really. First, we want to talk about what the State Department does for American citizens, right. They're our first client, and I think sometimes we've not done a good job explaining what American diplomats do, why they do it, how it matters to the people of America, and we – and Iowa is a perfect example of us – of the work that we do. And in that context we'll talk about Iowa ag and how it is the Trump administration, including the State Department, are working on behalf of Iowa farmers. I'll get a chance to be with some young farmers at the FFA, and then over at the World Food Prize facility later in the afternoon.

And then finally, I want to make sure that we have a diverse workforce at the State Department, and one of those things is to make sure we have people from all across America. So I want to introduce Iowans to the opportunity to serve as a diplomat for the greatest nation in the history of civilization. It's a noble calling; it's a lot of fun. We need talented, bright, young people to take the Foreign Service test and join the diplomatic corps, and I want to open up the eyes for some Iowans about that opportunity.

**QUESTION:** So Secretary, I'm curious here just speaking on Chinese trade tariffs and concerns over trade here in Iowa. Iowa State University's Center

for Agricultural Rural Development found overall losses in Iowa's gross state product are calculated to be at a loss about \$1-2 billion. Big hits for the soybean industry, upwards of \$891 million. I mean, pretty alarming impacts. Do you think these calculations are correct and do they concern you?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I'm always concerned when an American industry, an important American industry like the agricultural industry, isn't doing top drawer, right, not excelling and growing. Frankly, this is the result of long neglect. The Chinese have been stealing our intellectual property, they've been denying Iowa agriculture farmers the chance to compete with tariffs, non-tariff barriers too, saying our food wasn't safe. It's the safest food in the world. President Trump has taken this on in a way previous administrations simply refused to do. These are difficult challenges.

But if we get this right, if we stop the Chinese from stealing tens of billions of dollars a year worth of Iowa intellectual property, if we stop the Chinese from preventing Iowa farmers from selling the products into this enormous and growing market, then that next generation, a generation I'm going to get to spend some time with today, will have these farms. They'll have the opportunity. They'll be able to compete on a free and fair basis, and I'm confident that when Iowa farmers get a chance to compete on that basis, a free, level playing field, they'll crush it.

**QUESTION:** Also curious here too, in a tweet, the President said he'd asked China to immediately remove tariffs on U.S. agriculture, citing progress in talks between the two nations. And he's refrained from increasing U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods to 25 percent, as he said he would. Does this public disclosing of dealings with China hinder negotiations for you at the State Department? I mean, is he doing too much of this on Twitter? Would you prefer he limit that?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** No, not at all. Frankly, this administration has been very effective at negotiating with the Chinese. We're the first administration to take this on. It's a difficult problem, but there was no other path to success for Iowa farmers but to take on this challenge. And so on Friday of last week, there had been some progress made in the negotiations and the President asked China if they would take these tariffs off. While we don't have the deal done yet, he thought it appropriate to make that ask. I hope that they will. We've not heard back from them, or at least hadn't the last time I checked in. We've got to get this right. We have to fix this unfair trade situation. It has to be even and reciprocal. And President Trump's determined to achieve that.

**QUESTION:** What kind of a relationship have you had with Ambassador Branstad, and what has he brought to the role since he's become U.S. Ambassador to China?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Yeah, so your former governor is a great man, a great leader. He – by the way, he knew China from his time here as governor, and I'm sure has learned a great deal more now during his service in Beijing. He's actually with me here today in Iowa. We'll be traveling together talking to Iowans about all the things that the State Department is doing for the

people of Iowa. He's been a great representative for the United States in China, in Beijing. He's been a great representative for the people of Iowa there, and I've enjoyed working with him.

**QUESTION:** Secretary Pompeo, I know your time is limited. Anything else that you feel it's important to stress about this visit here to Iowa?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Yes. I want to make sure every Iowan understands that the State Department is out working for them. There are – they're literally our primary focus. We want to keep every Iowan safe. That's our primary focus is American national security. And so whether it's challenges in Africa or Asia or Europe, the State Department is on to be working to make sure that Iowans are safe and secure, and that Iowans have a chance to compete. Not just farmers but manufacturers, every business ought to have the chance to sell their products all around the world, and the State Department plays an important role in achieving that.

**QUESTION:** All right. Secretary Pompeo, safe travels. I appreciate the time.

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

**QUESTION:** All right, take care, bye.

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