

Press Releases: Interview With Norah O'Donnell of CBS News

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

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QUESTION: Good morning, Gayle, and Secretary Pompeo, thank you so much for joining us live on CBS This Morning. I know you have a very busy day.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's great to be with you, Norah.

QUESTION: Lots to talk about. Let's start first with North Korea. President Trump and the South Korean president said there is going to be another summit and that it will be soon. When will that happen and where?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So there will be another summit. The location and date have not been set yet, but we're working diligently to make sure we get the conditions right so that we can accomplish as much as possible during this summit, but we hope it'll be soon. I'll personally be traveling to Pyongyang before too long to continue the work that's ongoing even today to try and deliver on that.

QUESTION: You're going to be going in the next couple of days?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know when it'll be exactly. It'll be very soon.

QUESTION: Do you expect that that summit will happen in October?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know when the summit will take place. We – it may happen in October, but more likely sometime after that. It takes a little while to put these together, and we want to make sure we've got the conditions just right so the two leaders can be successful.

QUESTION: South Korean President Moon Jae-in said that he was going to deliver a secret message from Kim Jong-un, the North Korean leader, to President Trump. What was in that message?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the messages that we've been receiving from Chairman Kim

have been very consistent. They are that he is intent on denuclearizing, he understands that, he understands the scope of that and what that means. He's been very consistent in his commitment to delivering on that promise. We need to find our way forward to achieve that for the world. It's great. I'm here at the UN this week. These are UN Security Council resolutions that are being enforced.

QUESTION: But it's a lot of words at this point and I know you have been clear. You have set key demands. I mean, has the North declared their stockpile yet? No, right? I mean, have they set a timetable to give up these weapons? No. Have they agreed to inspectors? What steps have they taken to show proof that they are going to denuclearize?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Norah, I've been pretty consistent. I've also been consistent about the other item, which is I'm not going to talk about the conversations, the negotiations each day, the twists and turns. What we're going to do is we're going to continue the good work we have. We're going to make sure there's no more missile tests, no more nuclear tests. We're going to continue to work on getting American remains back, we're going to continue to work towards denuclearization, and it will take a while. There will be a process to this. President Trump's been clear about that and clear-eyed about that since the very beginning.

QUESTION: The South Korean president gave an interview to Fox News's Bret Baier, and in that he said that the North Korean leader will allow in inspectors, would be willing to verification. Is that true?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes.

QUESTION: And have any U.S. or international inspectors been inside North Korea?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we're working our way towards making sure that this verification that we have talked about since the beginning – and many have been skeptical, Norah – we've talked about this verification from the beginning. We're not going to buy a pig in a poke. We're going to get this right, we're going to deliver on this commitment that Chairman Kim has made to the world, and then there's going to be a brighter future for the North Korean people, and there'll be a more peaceful world. That's what the President talked about yesterday in his UN speech and there will be a wonderful outcome if we can get that.

QUESTION: And do you envision at this next summit with the North Korean leader that there could be an opportunity to sign a declaration to the end of the Korean War?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's hard to know. I don't want to prejudge precisely where we'll end up, but make no mistake about it, there is real progress being made and we're going to continue to work at it until the point in time where, as the President says – we could be wrong, it may not happen – but until such time as we conclude we can't get this done, we're going to continue to drive to achieve the – continue the progress which we've already made.

QUESTION: Let's talk about Iran. I know there was some talk that perhaps a meeting would happen between President Trump and Iran President Rouhani. Rouhani yesterday, before the UN, said that President Trump has tendencies resembling a Nazi disposition and that America's First strategy is a symptom of weakness of intellect. How do you sit down with someone like that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, there's not going to be a meeting. President Trump has said when the Iranians are prepared to talk about fundamentally changing their behavior, then he is of course prepared to talk to them. Those statements yesterday indicate that they're not in that place, and it is outrageous for him to say such a thing. For a Holocaust-denying country that is threatening Israel to compare the United States or its leader to Nazis is among the most outrageous things I have heard – and I will tell you, in diplomacy you hear a lot of them – the most outrageous things I have ever heard.

QUESTION: And yet you are ramping up sanctions on Iran and then the news that Europe, China and Russia are all going to create this backchannel so that they can keep economic relationships with Iran despite these U.S. sanctions. I mean, what does that say about our relationship with those countries and the fact that they've created this backchannel?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Look, I hosted a dinner with them last night. There are lots of places we're working with our transatlantic partners in fundamentally important ways, on chemical weapons – lots of places where we have great overlap. They've taken a different path with respect to the JCPOA. That's been clear for some time.

Here's what I'd say about their decision yesterday: To continue to create mechanisms to fund the world's largest state sponsor of terror is disastrous policy and I hope they will reconsider it. But most importantly, European businesses are voting with their checkbooks. They are leaving Iran in droves. These sanctions will be effective, they are effective, and come November 4th, they'll be even more effective.

QUESTION: Isn't it a lot more effective, though, when the world enforces the sanctions than just U.S. sanctions?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We're going to be incredibly effective. You can see it. Today, the rial trades at over 150,000 rial to the dollar. The economy is collapsing. There are two reasons for that. One is certainly the pressure that's put in place, but most importantly, it's the total chaos created by the Islamic Republic, Iran's government. They treat their people horribly, they spend billions of dollars committing terror acts around the world, and they don't take care of their people. And you see the protests, you see the anger on the streets of Tehran and in the rural areas. That's a result of terrible government and the Iranian people aren't going to stand for it, and the American people are going to stand with the Iranian people.

QUESTION: I know your time is short, want to quickly ask you about Russia, we – Russia. We are just 40 days from the midterm elections here in the United States. Is Russia trying to meddle in our elections again?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I have no doubt that the Russians have every intention of making life difficult for every American. This has been going on for decades, so please know, the American people should know, that the U.S. Government is actively engaged in efforts to ensure that the Russians, the Chinese, the Iranians, the North Koreans, all of those with malintent for America will not have the capacity to have substantial interference in the American elections. We are diligently working on this and I'm confident that we can achieve it.

QUESTION: So you're confident that our elections will be safe in November?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes.

QUESTION: No question?

SECRETARY POMPEO: No question.

QUESTION: You're pushing back hard on Russia?

SECRETARY POMPEO: No question. This administration has pushed back harder against Russia than any administration since the Cold War.

QUESTION: All right. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, we appreciate your time

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SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Norah.

QUESTION: – as you're here on the world stage meeting with world leaders. Thank you very much.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Norah. Have a good day.

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