

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

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference
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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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