

# Press Releases: Opening Remarks Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Testimony  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
July 25, 2018

---

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Good afternoon, Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, and distinguished members. Thank you for the opportunity to be with you today.

During my confirmation hearing you asked me to work on a host of world problems, and for 12 weeks I've been doing just that. I hope we'll get a chance to talk about each of those today. For the last few weeks I've been engaged in three areas of particular interest to this committee: North Korea, NATO, and Russia.

On the subject of Russia, I want to bring something to your attention right off the bat today. Today, the Trump administration is releasing what we're

calling the Crimea Declaration. I won't read the whole thing. I will submit it for the record. It's been publicly released as well. But one part reads as follows: "The United States calls on Russia to respect the principles to which it has long claimed to adhere and to end its occupation of Crimea." End of quote.

I want to assure this committee that the United States does not and will not recognize the Kremlin's purported annexation of Crimea. We stand together with allies, partners, and the international community in our commitment to Ukraine and its territorial integrity. There will be no relief of Crimea-related sanctions until Russia returns control of the Crimean Peninsula to Ukraine. This Crimea Declaration formalizes United States policy of nonrecognition.

There's another indicator of diplomatic progress I want to mention. This morning, Pastor Andrew Brunson, who was imprisoned in Turkey for nearly two years, has been let out of jail at Buca. He's still under house arrest, so our work is not done, but it's welcome progress – one that many of you have been engaged in and something the State Department has been working on diligently as well. We will continue to work for the speedy return of all Americans unjustly held captive abroad. President Trump will never forget about our own.

Our diplomacy on these issues is advancing the goals of President Trump's National Security Strategy, which laid down guiding principles for American foreign policy in December. In late April, I started executing on the strategy as Secretary of State. And today, on July 1st – excuse me, today here we are, and I want to present you some progress.

The National Security Strategy established "Protecting the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life" as the pillars of our national security. On July 17th, President Trump stated his firm conviction that "diplomacy and engagement are preferable to conflict and hostility." These principles have guided our actions on North Korea. President Trump's diplomacy de-escalated a situation in which the prospect for conflict was rising daily. Americans are safer because of his actions.

As far as the Trump administration's goals on North Korea are concerned, nothing has changed. Our objective remains the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea, as agreed to by Chairman Kim Jong-un.

As a follow-up to the President's successful summit with Chairman Kim, on July 5th I traveled to North Korea to make progress on the commitments that were made in Singapore. We are engaged in patient diplomacy, but we will not let this drag out to no end. I emphasized this position in the productive discussions I had with Vice Chairman Kim Yong-chol.

President Trump remains upbeat about the prospects for North Korean denuclearization. Progress is happening. We need Chairman Kim Jong-un to follow through on his commitments that he made in Singapore. Until North Korea eliminates its weapons of mass destruction, our sanctions, and those at the United Nations will remain – United Nations – will remain in effect.

Multiple UN Security Council resolutions require North Korea to eliminate all of its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs. Those resolutions were passed unanimously, and they remain binding. We absolutely need every single nation to maintain the enforcement of those sanctions to which every nation is committed. The path ahead is not easy, but our hopes for a safer world and a brighter future for North Korea endure.

The National Security Strategy also calls for "Peace through Strength." President Trump's engagement on NATO has resulted in greater burden sharing that will strengthen the entire alliance against myriad conventional and unconventional threats. Allies have spent more than \$40 billion in increased defense spending since 2016, and there will be hundreds of millions of – billions of dollars more in the years ahead.

Last year's \$14.4 billion in new spending was a 5.1 percent increase. It was the largest in a generation. Eight allies will meet the 2 percent this year; 18 are on track to do so by '24. The Trump administration is demanding that every country make its own commitment.

NATO will remain an indispensable pillar of American national security. We know weakness provokes our enemies, but strength and cohesion protect us. The more every NATO member contributes, the better the alliance can fulfill its mission of deterring threats to each of our nations. This is the increased commitment that the President wants.

From the outset of this administration, the National Defense Strategy and the Russia Integrated Strategy, our approach has been the same: to steadily raise the costs of aggression until Vladimir Putin chooses a less confrontational foreign policy, while keeping the door open for dialogue in our national interest. Between our two nations, the United States and Russia possess over 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons. President Trump believes that two great nuclear powers should not have a contentious relationship. This is not just in our interest but in the interest of the whole world. He strongly believes that now is the time for direct communication in our relationship in order to make clear to President Putin that there is the possibility, however remote it might be, to reverse the negative course of our relationship. Otherwise, the administration will continue imposing tough actions against Russia in response to its malign activities.

We can't make progress on issues of mutual concern unless we are talking about them. I've heard many of you on this panel say that for years and years. I'm referring to key issues like stopping terrorism, obtaining peace in Ukraine, stopping the civil war in Syria and delivering humanitarian assistance, ensuring security for Israel, and shutting down all of Iran's malign activity.

And on the subject of Iran, President Trump has said that "Iran is not the same country it was five months ago." That's because our campaign of financial pressure, our withdrawal from the nuclear deal, and our full-throated support for the Iranian people, which I articulated in a speech this past Sunday, are having an impact.

In Helsinki, we sought to explore whether Russia was interested in improving our relationship but made clear that the ball is in Russia's court. We defended America's fundamental strategic interests in Syria and Ukraine, and I personally made clear to the Russians there will be severe consequences for interference in our democratic processes.

I would also add that President Trump is well aware of the challenges that Russia poses to the United States and our partners and allies. He's taken a staggering number of actions to protect our interests. As just a few pieces of proof, I'd like to cite the following: 213 sanctions on Russian entities and individuals in the Trump administration; 60 Russian spies expelled from the United States of America and the closure of Russia's consulate in Seattle in response to Russia's chemical weapons use in the United Kingdom; the closure of Russia's consulate in San Francisco, cutting U.S. diplomatic staffing by Russia by almost 70 percent; 150 military exercises have been led or participated in Europe this year alone; more than 11 billion have been put forward for the European Defense<sup>[1]</sup> Initiative; we made defensive weapons available to Ukraine and to Georgia; and just last week the Department of Defense – this is after Helsinki – added an additional \$200 million in security cooperation funds to Ukraine. None of this happened for the eight years that preceded President Trump.

If it's not enough for you, there's a long list. I'm happy to go through that, and I'm guessing sometime today I'll get that opportunity. I look forward to it.

Finally, I want you to know President Trump has stated that he accepts our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia meddled in the 2016 election. He has a complete and proper understanding of what happened. I know; I briefed him on it for over a year. This is perfectly clear to me personally. I am also certain he deeply respects the difficult and dangerous work that our patriots in the intelligence community do every single day, and I know that he feels the same way about the amazing people that work at the United States Department of State.

Thank you, Chairman Corker.

---

<sup>[1]</sup> Deterrence