

Press Releases: Remarks at a Press Stakeout

Remarks

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SECRETARY POMPEO: Good morning. The United States is very proud that we had a long overdue meeting here of the UN Security Council today and we are equally proud to stand with the Venezuelan people as they protest and restore democracy in their nation. Former President Maduro's socialist experiment has ruined a once proud nation, as I said earlier, and we're – we stand with the Venezuelan people to restore democracy and return that country to its rightful condition. Got a whole nation starving, massive malnutrition, refugees fleeing. This is an international crisis to be sure. And nations like Cuba and Russia and China have shamefully cast their lot in support of the former president. They don't have the best interests of the Venezuelan people at heart.

We hope that every nation will join us in recognizing interim president Juan Guaido. We hope too that each of those nations will ensure that they disconnect their financial systems from the Maduro regime and allow the assets that belong to the Venezuelan people to go to the rightful governors of that state.

We hope too that this peaceful transition can continue. We must stand for the rule of law and support the leader who the Venezuelan people have affirmed through their constitution as the interim president of their country.

Happy to take a couple questions.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MR PALLADINO: Reuters, Michelle Nichols.

QUESTION: Hi. Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Hi.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Michelle Nichols from Reuters. Couple of questions. First of all, in there the Russian ambassador had a very direct question for you about the U.S. taking military action. If you'd like to answer that here, feel free.

What economic measures does the U.S. plan to impose on Venezuela? And do you think the Venezuelan opposition should assume the UN seat here, and does the U.S. plan to draft a General Assembly resolution to make that happen?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Michelle, let me take two of those three questions. First, this is the first step of what we hope will be real progress here at the United Nations. We think every member of the United Nations ought to join in support of Venezuelan people, so we will continue to work to get more and more support. We're already a great deal along the way and we do think that there will be appropriate resolutions when the time is right, and we'll certainly support those. They won't come just from us, they'll come from other nations who care deeply about the Venezuelan people as well.

The other two questions involve what the United States will do next. I'm not going to speculate or hypothesize. I know only this: we're determined to support the Venezuelan people so that they can ultimately have the democratic institutions they deserve and they can return this once vibrant, wealthy, wonderful nation to its rightful place.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary –

MR PALLADINO: Voice of America. Voice of America, Celia Mendoza.

QUESTION: Thank you. Thank you, Secretary. So what exactly are you prepared to do for the Venezuelan people? You had announced the \$20 million in humanitarian aid, and also today you said something in your speech: it is "time for every nation to pick a side." Will the U.S. consider secondary sanctions against countries who recognize the Maduro regime, like Washington

did in Iran?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the United States has already done a great deal for the Venezuelan people. We will continue to do that. You mentioned the initial monies, \$20 million, to ensure that food and medicine and we can get some level of order to begin to be restored. There'll be much more to do. We'll call upon other nations. We will join with them to create development and humanitarian assistance projects that actually deliver for the Venezuelan people. Those are all part of what will come when we get the democratic changes that we're working towards achieving.

You had a second question too?

QUESTION: About secondary sanctions possibly for nations –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, again, I'm not going to speculate on what other processes the United States might undertake, but know that we think now that the National Assembly is the rightful governing body. They've chose interim President Juan Guaido to represent them and so we think that the resources that belong to the Venezuelan people ought to go to the leaders that they have under their constitution duly elected.

Anybody else?

QUESTION: Sanction anybody that will do business with them?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm not going to speculate on what we're going to do next.

MR PALLADINO: (Inaudible) final question. Associated Press, Edith Lederer, please. Edith?

I'm sorry.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MR PALLADINO: (Inaudible) CBS right here. (Inaudible.)

QUESTION: Okay, thank you. Thank you. Mr. Secretary – Mr. Secretary, it's Pamela Falk from CBS. How concerned are you about the military-to-military contact between Russia and the deliveries of equipment last month to Venezuela, and have you had any contact with the military of Venezuela? Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I spoke this morning about Cuban security and Russian influence, Russian interference. We want the Venezuelan people to have their say. And so the Russians have chosen to support the Maduro regime, I hope they'll change their way, I hope they will come to see that the rightful people to run this country are those that the Venezuelan people chose. And so we'll have conversations with every country, including the Russians. We'll talk with the Chinese, we'll talk with everyone. We think the whole world ought to get behind what it is that the Venezuelan people have demanded for their country.

Thank you. Thank you all.

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