

Press Releases: Remarks at the United Against Nuclear Iran Summit

Remarks

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SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you. Thank you, all. Thank you. Thanks. So I'm still – it's going to take me just a minute to recover. I was desperately afraid Senator Lieberman was going to ask me to translate some Latin – (laughter) – and my schoolteachers were going to realize how little I had worked.

It's great to be with you all here. Thanks for that kind welcome. It's the first time my son's ever given me a standing ovation. (Laughter.) That was good too. It's great to see so many friends as well. It's great to see my friend Yossi, director of Mossad.

Good afternoon.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Secretary, Mossad (inaudible). Americans want peace. Iranians want peace. Peace with Iran. We want peace. Americans want peace. Iranians want peace. Peace for the Iranian people.

AUDIENCE: (Boos.)

SECRETARY POMPEO: This is the second time I've had someone interrupt a speech on this topic, and I am –

AUDIENCE MEMBER: We're sick of you killing these Iranians. (Inaudible.)

AUDIENCE: (Boos.)

SECRETARY POMPEO: I reminded them all that it would be wonderful – that it would be a wonderful thing if they could protest like that in their – in the country of Iran, if they had that kind of First Amendment freedom. (Applause.) It was also very – it was very nice of you all to, like, plan seven hours ahead to get here on time, given the traffic this week. Thank you to – for your being so brave and getting out in all of this.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

AUDIENCE: (Boos.)

SECRETARY POMPEO: I am – I'm honored to address you all – I especially do want to say a thank you. I mentioned Senator Lieberman before. Thank you for the invitation, Senator Lieberman. It was most kind of you to include me today. I know too that you'll hear from Ambassador Bolton today. He and I share the President's vision for how to move forward on this incredibly important issue. We will continue to be an uncompromising voice for national security sanity, just as you were, Senator Lieberman, during your time in service to the country.

It's an appropriate but sad irony that we're talking about Iran during the 73rd UN General Assembly. So many times over the years, the UN – during the UN, Iranian regime leaders and diplomats have used this occasion to turn on their charm offensive with foreign governments, obscure what they're really up to at home and abroad. Iranian President Rouhani – who has been tweeting the last hour – Foreign Minister Zarif, and other Iranian figures take this opportunity to present themselves as moderates – as moderate statesmen, indeed. But the world knows the truth, that their polished diplomatic waltz is a transparent trick to take responsible nations and try and make them think that maybe they aren't so bad.

In actuality, these are two of the highest-ranking officials of a regime which brazenly defies the vision of the United Nations, the requirements of international and the principles of national sovereignty. The Iranian regime's track record over the past 40 years has revealed it as among the worst violators of the UN Charter and UN Security Council resolutions – perhaps, indeed, the worst violator. It is truly an outlaw regime.

Let's look at the UN Charter. It calls for our nations to "live together in peace with one another as good neighbors." And where there is a threat to

peace, it requires UN member-states to carry out decisions made by the Security Council as to what must be done to address that threat.

Has Iran lived together with other nations in peace? Has it been a good neighbor? Has it contributed to the maintenance of international peace and security by fully abiding by the decisions of the Security Council? Let's take a little walk around the world, and you'll see the answer is a deafening "no."

Let's start with Europe.

Just a few months ago, authorities across Europe arrested several Iranian operatives – including an Iranian official based in Austria – as part of a plot to plant a bomb at a political rally in France. They grabbed this guy. It happened just as the regime has been putting a full-court press on European countries to stay in the nuclear deal.

As a just response to this support for terrorism, a few weeks ago our ally France indefinitely postponed all non-essential diplomatic travel to Iran. It's a good first step, and I thank France for that, and we hope to see more actions like this from other European nations. We must put pressure on the regime to rein in its destruction and demand that Iran act like a normal country.

Unfortunately, just last night I was disturbed and, indeed, deeply disappointed to hear the remaining parties in the deal announce they're setting up a special payment system to bypass U.S. sanctions. This is one of the most counterproductive measures imaginable for regional and global peace and security. By sustaining revenues to the regime, you are solidifying Iran's ranking as the number one state sponsor of terror, enabling Iran's violent export of revolution, and making the regime even richer while the Iranian people scrape by. I imagine the corrupt ayatollahs and the IRGC were laughing this morning.

This decision is all more – all the more unacceptable, given the litany of Iranian-backed terrorist activity inside of Europe.

In 2012, four Qods Force operatives entered Turkey to attack Israeli targets, but the attack was thankfully disrupted by Turkish authorities. That same year, Lebanese Hizballah – one of the regime's most loyal proxies – bombed a bus in Bulgaria carrying six Israeli tourists. Six were killed, including a driver, and at least 32 were wounded. In 1992, Iran provided logistical support to Lebanese Hizballah operatives who assassinated four Iranian Kurdish dissidents at a cafe in Berlin.

But Iran's state-supported, lawless terror is not confined to Europe. It's all over. Our journey continues to Africa. In 2013, three Iranian operatives were arrested in Nigeria for planning attacks against USAID offices, an Israeli business, a Jewish cultural center, and hotels frequented by Israelis and Americans. In 2012, two Qods Force operatives were arrested in Nairobi, Kenya for planning bomb attacks against Western interests; 33 pounds of explosive materials were found.

How about South America? In Uruguay in 2015, a senior Iranian diplomat was expelled for planning an attack near the Israeli embassy. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, Iran provided logistical support for two suicide vehicle attacks – one in 1992 and then again in 1994. These attacks killed a total of 114 people and wounded nearly 500, with the 1994 bombing being the deadliest terror attack in the history of Argentina.

The next stop on the tour is Asia. In Kathmandu in 2013, an Iranian traveling on a fake Israeli passport was arrested for conducting surveillance of the Israeli embassy. In New Delhi in 2012, the Qods Force directed a bomb attack targeted at an Israeli diplomat. In Karachi in 2011, Iranian operatives assassinated a Saudi diplomat. Since 2006, Iran has provided the Taliban with a broad range of arms, including rocket-propelled grenades, mortar rounds, rockets, and plastic explosives.

Iran has tried to pull the same stunts right here on our continent. In 2011, the Qods Force supported a plan to assassinate the Saudi ambassador in the United States. This past August, the United States arrested two alleged agents of Iran for conducting covert surveillance and intelligence collection activities against Israeli and American targets here in the United States.

In cyberspace, Iran has exploited the internet to inflame the fault lines of public opinion and to turn Americans against one another. Last month, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube collectively removed thousands of accounts originating from Iran for coordinating disinformation.

In Australia, hackers linked to the IRGC have tried to steal sensitive research from universities.

And of course, the Iranian regime has directed an array of violent and destructive activities to its neighbors in the Middle East.

It provides Lebanese Hizballah, a terrorist organization, with \$700 million each year. Hizballah is responsible for some of the most lethal terrorist attacks against Americans abroad in the Middle East. We all remember 1983. With the approval and financing of the Iranian regime, Lebanese Hizballah bombed the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, killing 63, including 17 Americans.

And then again, in 1996, Hizballah bombed the Khobar Towers complex in Saudi Arabia, killing 19 U.S. Air Force personnel.

This regime – this regime led by Rouhani and Zarif – provides over \$100 million each year to terrorist groups like Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The most hypocritical part about this is that the ayatollah claims he cares about Palestinians. But from 2008 to 2017, Iran gave a total of \$20,000 to the UN's relief agency for Palestinian refugees. Meanwhile, the United States nearly – gave nearly \$3 billion over the same period, 150,000 [times] more money to support the Palestinians than the terror regime in Iran.

The regime also recruits impoverished youth in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. It peddles a seductive vision of martyrdom to them and then ships them off to Syria to fight at the direction of Qasem Soleimani and his

Qods Force. The regime has enticed Afghan children as young as 14 to take on the fight in Syria.

Today, Iranian vessels harass ships in international waterways based on maritime claims made in defiance of international law. No, if the Iranian regime thinks the Strait of Hormuz belongs solely to them, you can bet your last rial that the United States will never stand for that. (Applause.) And at about 170,000 rials to the dollar, you can be sure we are focused on making sure that international waterways continue to remain open for trade.

Just a few weeks ago, Iranian-supported militias in Iraq launched life-threatening rocket attacks against the U.S. embassy compound in Baghdad and at the U.S. consulate in Basra. Iran did not stop these attacks, which were carried out by proxies it has supported and funded and trained, and with which – and militias with which it has provided weapons.

The United States will hold the regime in Tehran accountable for any attack that results in injury to our personnel or damage to our facilities. America will respond swiftly and decisively in [defense of] American lives, and we will respond against the source of the attack on American interests. (Applause.)

You know we are here for big meetings at the UN. Each one of these defies the spirit of the UN Charter. But what about the letter of the UN Security Council Resolutions? A tally confirms that Iran is truly an outlaw regime. The list is long.

Resolution 1373 requires all member-states to refrain from providing any form of support to entities involved in terrorist acts.

Resolution 1701 requires all UN member-states to prevent the direct or indirect supply by its nationals from its territory of weapons to Lebanon, with just a handful of exceptions. But neither of these exceptions has stopped Iran from arming Lebanese Hizballah.

Exports of arms from Iran are prohibited by UN Security Council Resolution 2231, and yet arms for the Houthis move in violation of that command from the United Nations.

From 2006 to 2010, the UN Security Council passed six different resolutions governing Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. But from 20[07] to 2015, the IAEA Board of Governors issued less than – no less than 33 reports outlining Iran's noncompliance with each of those resolutions.

UN Security Council Resolution 1929 stated that, "Iran shall not undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons." But Iran conducted multiple ballistic missile launches between 2010 and 2015, every one of them in flagrant violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

And even when, in connection with the JCPOA sanctions relief, the Security Council superseded this provision in UN Security Council Resolution 2231 with a call upon Iran not to undertake any activity related to such missiles,

Iran's pace of missile activity, missile launches, and tests did not diminish. Iran has conducted multiple ballistic missile launches since January 2016, when the deal was first implemented. Today Iran has the largest ballistic missile force in the Middle East, each of those ballistic missiles costing more than a million dollars.

And that leads me to wonder how the struggling people of Iran feel about a missile program that drains their public treasury and causes economic sanctions that constrict their prosperity.

Recently, the UN Working Group on the Arbitrary Detention – on Arbitrary Detention has concluded that the Government of Iran has no legal basis for the arrest and detention of the American graduate student Wang Xiyue.

Last year, the UN working group called for the immediate release of another American, Siamak Namazi, who was arbitrarily arrested in 2015 while visiting his parents in Iran. In 2016, the working group also concluded that Bob Levinson, who has been missing in Iran for more than 11 years now, was arrested without legal grounds and should be immediately released.

We continue to press Iran to uphold its commitment to assist the United States in locating Bob so he can return to his family. All these Americans and the others wrongly detained must come home. (Applause.)

I talked about Mr. Rouhani's tweets. They're wasting a lot of time these days trying to discredit the United States over our lawful and justified decision to leave the JCPOA. But Iran's own track record of violating international law is among the worst in the world. It has no regard for international law, borders, or lives.

I don't think I need to offer much more evidence than I have laid out here today. These are destructive activities undertaken by Iran in a global scope. It is therefore incumbent on every country to join our efforts to change the regime's lawless behavior. The ongoing, multi-national, multi-continental nature of Iranian malign activity leaves no room for indecision.

The United States will continue to coalesce international efforts to change Iranian behavior through pressure, deterrence, and support for the Iranian people. We want every single country on board. This is among the President's top diplomatic priorities.

The consensus – the consensus that already exists – on Iran nonnuclear activities is reflected in Security Council resolutions, the ones I just mentioned.

But enforcement of those resolutions should be the bare minimum we ask of every nation.

In the wake of President Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the nuclear deal, countries are now facing a choice on whether to keep doing business in Iran. Reimposing sanctions and discouraging international business with Iran is not something we're doing out of spite. This is a necessary security measure. The regime must no longer be allowed to get its

hands on billions of dollars that it's already proven it will spread around the world to its client states, rebel groups, and terrorists. Doing business in Iran only pours money into a regime that hoards it for itself and misuses it for violent ends. This all happened, of course, during the JCPOA.

For decades, the world has sought to achieve the elusive goal of a stable Middle East. What better way – what better way to proceed toward it than denying the resources toward the regime most responsible for instability in the region? We must do whatever we can to stop the funding of the IRGC and the ministry of intelligence so that their agents cannot sustain terrorism and subversion on every continent. Make no mistake: These sanctions and our economic pressure are directed at the regime and its malign proxies, not at the Iranian people.

That is why we have humanitarian exemptions to all of our statutory sanctions that are being reimposed and have a range of authorizations in place to allow for certain activities that actually benefit the Iranian people.

If the world wants to see for itself the full extent of the Iranian regime's malign activity, the United States has just released a booklet chronicling the destructive activities that the outlaw regime has perpetrated over the years.

Please go online, take a look. It has a great and detailed list. It is a great resource too for anyone who wants to see what revolutionary priorities are like, what the regime really is all about.

Indeed – I've talked a lot today. I've talked a lot today about the regime's broken promises to UN member-states. It's important, as we meet here, to talk about the relationship between Iran and its commitments to the United Nations. But the other constituency can put no – that can put no faith in the words of Iran's leader are of course the Iranian people themselves.

In 1978, before he returned from exile, the Ayatollah Khomeini gave an interview touting the glorious things to come for the Iranian people under the tenets of the Islamic Republic. Among other things, he promised the eradication of poverty, the improvement of condition of the life of the majority of the people who'd been oppressed in various manners, and all kinds of other good things that would come to the country.

How's that working out? There are psychic hotlines with more accurate predictions. (Laughter.)

The president of Iran, Hassan Rouhani himself, has said many people have lost their faith in the future of the Islamic Republic and are in doubt about its power. This attitude, of course, is understandable with one-third of Iranian youth unemployed, while government parking garages are filled with Range Rovers and BMWs.

Thanks to the regime's failed policies, the Iranian people are battling drastic water shortages and environmental crises throughout their nation.

Last year, Iran's own energy minister said that 295 cities are facing

droughts and water shortages. Meanwhile, the regime has spent untold billions of dollars on a nuclear program that has extended now over years. The Iranian regime is more concerned with heavy water than drinking water.

In terms of improving the condition of those who have been oppressed, Iran still throws its citizens in prison. They bring up charges like "anti-revolutionary behavior," "corruption on earth," "siding with global arrogance," and "crimes against Islam." Regime vans cruise around the streets of major cities to round up women not obeying the restrictive hijab laws. As part of a larger persecution of the Sunni minority, last year one court sentenced four Sunnis to five years of imprisonment for the crime of jogging.

The law prohibits Muslim citizens from changing or renouncing their religious beliefs, even the teaching of music. Music is discouraged in the schools.

If nations are not moved by this evidence to change their policies towards Iran, that's their choice. That is their prerogative. But how can any nation that claims to sympathize with the people of Iran keep sustaining trade relationships with lawless and oppressive Ayatollahs?

The United States says this to the people of Iran: Our pledges of support do not end with our words. The United States hears you; the United States supports you. The United States is with you. We support your rights to live as a free people under a government that exercises accountability and treats you with respect.

You deserve better than the fruitless revolution, a revolution that has been imposed on you by corrupt leaders.

And our message is consistent. It's consistent with what the protesters on the streets of Iran themselves are crying out for and what millions of Iranians in the world of – the worldwide diaspora have said for nearly 40 years. The United States seeks a better way forward with the Middle East.

As President Trump and I have said many times, a new agreement is possible. Indeed, he said it even today. But change must come in the 12 areas I outlined in May, as well in – as with Iran's human rights record.

This week, our new special representative for Iran, Brian Hook, will meet the members of the Iranian diaspora here in New York. They will share their personal stories about what they and their family and friends have experienced and endured. Be sure, all Iranians who long for a normal government in Iran should be heard. We will continue these conversations to let the Iranian regime know unambiguously whose side we are on. (Applause.)

I want to close with a quote from a great American who often crossed party lines to stand up for the truth, much like our good friend Senator Lieberman did. His name is Daniel Patrick Moynihan, also from this great state. Served 24 years as a senator from New York. He was also the United States ambassador to the United Nations under President Ford.

He once said that, "The United Nations Charter imposes two obligations on members. The first, which is well-known, is to be law-abiding in their

relations with other nations: not to attack them, not to subvert them, and so on. But there is a second obligation, which" is – "very simply is to be law-abiding in the treatment of one's own citizens" as well.

Iran has failed on both obligations.

Ambassador Moynihan also once said "everyone is entitled to his opinions but not to his own facts."

The fact is that Iran's charm offensive behind closed doors cannot cover up its string of broken promises in the Security Council chamber.

The fact is that the Iranian regime robs its own people to pay for death and destruction abroad.

The fact is that the outlaw Iranian regime has sabotaged the ability of the people on every continent to live in peace and dignity, including its own country.

The United States asks every nation to come to term with these facts and hold Iran accountable in ways that it has not been held accountable to date.

Only then – only then – can we take new and true steps towards greater security for our own peace-loving people and greater liberty for those inside of Iran.

Thank you. God bless you all. (Applause.)

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