

Press Releases: Remarks at Welcome Reception

Remarks

Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Children's Mercy Park Stadium

Kansas City, KS

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SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you. Thanks, Pat. I'm always reminded when I'm introduced as the 70th Secretary of State that President Trump is number 45. And so the turnover in my gig's a lot higher than in his, and so I'm enjoying every single minute. These days, I spend a lot of time in Washington and around the world, but truth be told, it brought a lot of joy to Susan and me to come back to the heartland, come back to Kansas. It's truly home for us. We love it; we miss it. And one fine day, I hope we find a way to make our way back here.

I especially love talking to the business community here, very special people. As I explained in my keynote today, I used to be one of you. I used to be a risk taker with my own money, now I'm spending yours again, and doing my best to be a good steward of that.

Right now, we're standing in a true monument to entrepreneurship, what it can do for the strength of American communities. Children's Mercy Park started as a dream of local business owners whose business happens to be soccer. That's football – I know we have Dutch friends here – that's football. I know our football, real football hasn't caught on in your country yet, but we're going to keep trying. Robb Heineman, the CEO of Sporting KC, broke ground on this stadium almost 10 years ago in 2010. It was recognized that year as one of the biggest deals in all of North America, and since then it's become a true community hub, a boon for the economy and frankly for the spirit of this city as well. I know the mayor's here. Where you at, mayor? Where – someplace. Thank you, too, for being – good to see you, Mayor – good for you. Thanks for being here with us.

I was doing a little research myself – just had my phone when they let me have it – and I saw – I remember – I saw this morning KC won the U.S. Open two years ago, but this year it didn't go quite as well. But I'm hoping that our Dutch friends bring a little of their European football luck with them.

We're hosting the Road to the Global Entrepreneurship Summit here in the heartland. It's to celebrate entrepreneurs; it's to talk about the State Department's role there and how American innovation is dependent on an environment, free enterprise environment, a system that we have so deeply held as the very roots of what we are here in America. Every state in the union has entrepreneurs with great ideas and investments to scale up, and I want to make sure that everyone knows that that's just as true here in places like Kansas and Missouri and in Iowa as it is for California, New York, and Massachusetts. That's why the Department of State has investors from all across the world. We want to make sure that you all have the ability to connect and to sell and to create your ideas and attract investment from all across the world. It is a fundamental mission of the State Department to assist you in achieving that.

Also today, you'll see – and they're sprinkled around the room – they've got a little State Department pin. You'll see them. They're staff members from our economic bureau. Where is Manisha Singh who runs the bureau? Right back here. Please say hi to them. I hope you get a chance to meet them, to learn about how we do this. We have 1,500 officers at embassies all across the world trying to help you all deliver value to your shareholders and your businesses, and to make America's economy even stronger. And for all the American entrepreneurs here, I encourage you to talk to the team, to learn about these programs and the way it is you can connect up, so that we can help you as you try and grow your business internationally.

I'm not complaining, but the State Department doesn't often get credit for the role we play in American prosperity. If you heard my keynote address from a little earlier this afternoon, you will have seen that those officers have a real task and are on mission. This is what they do. It is not their secondary mission. It is their primary goal to open markets for Americans all across the world and to connect investors who want to come invest through foreign direct investment here in our country, and to make sure that we have a level playing field, that American companies get a fair shake each time they compete for business across the world.

I'm going to get a chance in the first week of June to travel to the Hague. We'll get a chance to tell the American story there. We'll be bringing 400 of America's best and brightest entrepreneurs to the Netherlands as part of our delegation. It should be fun, but more importantly I think it will deliver great value to the United States, and I hope great value to our European partners as well.

I wanted to – two things before I close. I gave a shout-out to Mayor Riordan who's done remarkable work here. I can't say enough about your willingness to help. The Kansas Chamber's willingness to cohost this event – Kansas City Chamber of Commerce's willingness to cohost this event, thank you for that. I think this is important.

And then finally, having founded a company here in Kansas, I know that the important work happens where you all are, on the ground, and that the hard work that you do, the risks that you take, are the things that make success for your communities. I know local chambers bring people together. This event

is certainly exhibit A. Frankly, I wish I'd have taken advantage of opportunities like this 20 years ago.

So I hope you will do that. I hope you'll shake some hands, trade some business cards. It looks like there might be a cocktail or two. That's actually not in the script, but I hope there might be – I hope there might be a cocktail or two. And try to enjoy this special evening where folks from all across the state and people from all across the world have come together with the aim of building better economies and better businesses. Thank you. I look forward to seeing a whole bunch of you in the Netherlands in June. Have a great and wonderful evening. Thanks. (Applause.)

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