

Press Releases: Remarks on Iran Atomic Archive

Remarks
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

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SECRETARY POMPEO: Everybody ready to get home?

QUESTION: Very much so.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, me too. Well, look, you all had a chance to see what the prime minister said today. You've seen the statement that I've released with some of the President – what was said in our response to the question at the joint press conference he held. I'm happy to ask any – answer any questions to clarify anything about this new material that the prime minister released today.

QUESTION: How long have you known about that?

QUESTION: Did you go over it when you were with him in their meeting? I mean, how much of the meeting was that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we have – we've known about this material for a while. And yes, we certainly discussed the material yesterday when we were together.

QUESTION: Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: But it's been something that's been in the works for a while. I know there are people talking about these documents not being authentic. I can confirm for you that these documents are real; they're authentic.

QUESTION: Senator Corker says you've known about this for years.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, that's partly true. The existence of the AMAD program that ended roughly December of 2003, January of 2004, it is accurate to say that the knowledge of that has been known for – the fact of that had been known for quite some time. But there are thousands of new documents and new information. We're still going through it. There's still a lot of work to do

to figure out precisely the scope and scale of it. But it is the case – it – there is new information about that program.

QUESTION: Does it matter for the Iran nuclear deal, I mean, given that it looks like they abandoned the program some time ago?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, this is – this will, I think, spell out the scope and scale of the program that they undertook there, and I think makes – I think makes very clear that, at the very least, the Iranians have continued to lie to their own people. So while you say everyone knew, the Iranians have consistently taken the position that they've never had a program like this. This will – this will belie any notion that there wasn't a program like this.

QUESTION: Is there anything in there that suggests there's an actual violation of the 2016 agreement?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We'll leave that to lawyers. I'll leave that to lawyers to sort of make – and the President will ultimately have to make a determination about that too. You should remember there are still many, many documents that we've not had the opportunity to go through yet. It's complex, a lot of translation work. There's just a – it's just a significant undertaking.

QUESTION: Does this suggest that the IAEA was wrong when it closed the book on the PMDs as part of the – part of the JCPOA?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know the answer to that.

QUESTION: Well, do these documents – are they contemporaneous with the negotiations that were going on or the (inaudible)?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We haven't gone through all the documents yet. We're still scratching the surface of what we're going through.

QUESTION: Did the prime minister choose to release this now in order to influence the President's decision or to support it?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know. I don't know why they chose that timing.

QUESTION: It sounds like you have not drawn any conclusions on it yet.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, yes and no. I mean, it depends what you mean. Yes, we've drawn conclusions. We know more about the AMAD program than we knew before, and we have a whole lot more material to go through. We now know that they continued to store this material in an orderly fashion for some purpose – right? They kept the documents for a reason, and one can speculate as to why. If you said you were never – right? – the JCPOA says you'll never, ever have a nuclear weapons program – right? Or maybe not with a not a never ever. You won't ever have a nuclear weapons program. But you chose to store in secret and hide these documents?

QUESTION: Historical record? You're not willing to give them the benefit of the doubt that they don't want to destroy their history or –

SECRETARY POMPEO: The world can decide if this was for the Iranian museum that they – that they decided to hang onto it. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: How much have you guys (inaudible)?

QUESTION: Secretary, what happens now? Do you (inaudible) urgent meeting of the E3? What happens now?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the Israelis will now, I think – I think the prime minister said publicly they are going to go provide expert briefings to the Germans and the French (inaudible). They'll do the same thing for the Brits as well, and I think he indicated he was going to do it for the other members of the P5 also. And I think that's important. I don't think the Israelis – the Israelis haven't asked us to take their word for it; they provided us the material to review. I am confident they will do the same for the other partners of the P5.

QUESTION: If you –

MODERATOR: Okay, guys. The Secretary has to go.

QUESTION: How much will it damage European relations? I mean, they obviously want to stay very much in the deal. If you pull out, are you afraid that relations with Europe will be damaged?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'd say two things. One, we're working diligently to fix this thing. I mean, on the plane we've been working to try and get language right that will address President Trump's concerns. So we're still working our way there.

And then a second thing I'd say is we've had lots of conversations with the Europeans. We know what it is they're hoping to achieve. We share the same end goal to keep the Iranians from ever having a nuclear weapon. I am confident that we will continue to have good relations with our European partners should the President choose to pull out of this. This will be one issue among many of the important, critical issues that we all work on together.

MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, you guys.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you all.

QUESTION: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

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