

# Press Releases: Remarks With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Before Dinner

Remarks

Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Prime Minister Netanyahu's Residence

Jerusalem

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**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Secretary Pompeo, Mike, Susan, Ambassador David Friedman, I'm so excited. And we're so excited, Sara and I, to have you here, but especially on this evening. This is the eve of Purim, and we have a miracle of Purim. We call it *nes Purim*.

President Trump has just made history. I called him. I thanked him on behalf of the people of Israel. He did it again. First he recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moved the U.S. embassy here. Then he pulled out of the disastrous Iran treaty and re-imposed sanctions. But now he did something of equal historic importance. He recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, and he did so at a time when Iran is trying to use Syria as a platform to attack and destroy Israel. And the message that President Trump has given the world is that America stands by Israel.

We are celebrating Purim when, 2,500 years ago, other Persians, led by Haman, tried to destroy the Jewish people. They failed then. And today, 2,500 years later, again Persians, led by Khamenei, are trying to destroy the Jewish people and the Jewish state. They are going to fail again.

We are deeply grateful for the U.S. support. We are deeply grateful for the unbelievable and unmatched support for our security and our right to defend ourselves and everything that you do on behalf of Israel and for the state of Israel in so many forms. So it is a distinct pleasure to welcome you and Susan to our home at any time, but especially today.

And let me add another word about that. We had a moving visit today to the wall. I can't resist repeating this, but I'm going to. I said to the Secretary that the last time Pompeo visited Jerusalem didn't end that well, but this is a different time. Rome and Jerusalem clashed over values. We had

a great tragedy for the Jewish people. But the new Rome, the United States, views itself as a new Jerusalem.

We visited the original city on the hill. We visited the hill. There is no greater friendship than the one between Israel and the United States, and no one represents it better than Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. You and Ambassador Friedman and your delegation are exceptional champions of our lives. I've called you so many times on so many things that this evening I just want to say one word – two actually: Thank you. Thank you, Mike Pompeo. Thank you, President Trump. And thank you, America.

To the people of Israel, I say: (In Hebrew, via translation) We have a miracle of Purim on our hands tonight. President Trump made history. He recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, at a time when Iran is trying to use the Golan Heights as a platform for the destruction of Israel. We are commemorating the miracle of Purim, when, 2,500 years ago, the Jewish people triumphed over the other Persians who tried to exterminate it. They will fail today, as they failed then, amongst other things thanks to the immense support of the United States and a president that is the greatest friend Israel ever had in our entire history. Thank you very much.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you. I'll be very brief tonight. It's been a great visit. Susan and I had a chance to visit some of the Holy Sites today. As a person of faith, it's always inspiring to drive through the winding streets of the Old City. We had a chance to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. And then the incredible privilege to visit the Western Wall with the prime minister of Israel as the American secretary of state was truly moving, important, and I think indicative of the remarkable relationship between our two countries.

As a cadet, I studied the battles of the Golan. There's a famous battle called the Battle of the Valley of Tears, and it was Israeli heroism at its most amazing, saving this great nation at a time of enormous challenge, a threat that came from east of the Golan, from Syria, a tank battle of epic and historic proportion, of amazing Israeli bravery.

Tonight President Trump made the decision to recognize that that hard-fought real estate, that important place, is proper to be a sovereign part of the state of Israel. President Trump made a bold decision to recognize that, an important decision for the people of Israel. It will truly be historic, and the people of Israel should know that the battles they fought, the lives that they lost on that very ground, were worthy and meaningful and important for all time.

We've had the chance on this visit to talk about lots of things. There are many threats to Israel and to the United States that we will work on together in the days and weeks and months ahead. I'll travel tomorrow to Lebanon to talk about the threat that Hizballah presents to the world and to the state of Israel and, frankly, to the people of Lebanon as well. We will redouble our efforts to make sure that we protect all that is important – all that is important to Israel, all that is important to America, and indeed, all that is important to the world. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Thank you, America. Thank you. Thank you.

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