

Press Releases: Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and Chilean Foreign Minister Roberto Ampuero at a Press Availability

Press Availability
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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FOREIGN MINISTER AMPUERO: (Via interpreter) Good afternoon, everyone. This morning, Secretary of State Mr. Michael Pompeo was received by President of the Republic Mr. Sebastian Pinera. After that, we had very fruitful working sessions in the foreign ministry. We've gone over through different topics including bilateral, regional, and global topics. Firstly, I would like to say that our bilateral relationship is going through one of its greatest moments. It is reaffirmed by the visit of Secretary of State and the very ample agenda we have based on a shared view of prosperity, growth, and development in subjects of the future and present.

For Chile, the relationship with the U.S. is a priority. We are strategic partners, longstanding strategic partners. Our friendship is based on shared values, principles like democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, and the value of freedom. These are values that Chile enforces domestically, and we are interested in that they be regionally and universally valid.

With the idea of going deep into high-level meetings, President Pinera has extended a cordial invitation to President Donald Trump for an official visit within the framework of the summit of APEC. Today, President Pinera has reiterated that invitation so as to give a step forward consolidating our bilateral relation.

Mr. Secretary of State, for Chile it's very important that a strategic partner be with us at the summit to help us promote the APEC agenda. Chile's promoting subjects like – future subjects like services and digital economy, connectivity, women, economic growth, all of those subjects. I know Chile and the United States share a common perspective and view. Along those lines,

Chile has its robust commitment with free, fair, and inclusive trade as pillars for growth and development of our countries.

And I reiterate the need of having clear rules internationally in this matter. In the bilateral sphere, the United States is a key partner for Chile in different subjects. We are interested in promoting cooperation in emerging issues in areas of cyber security, climate change, the economic empowerment of women, digital revolution, technological cooperation, innovation, and entrepreneurship, among many, many topics that are part of a positive agenda with lots of potential to continue going deep in the relationship of both countries with our perspective to the future.

The United States continues to be the main investor in Chile and scientific and technological partner. It is a very important relationship we want to strengthen because it is mutually beneficial. Relations are important to produce wealth, employment, and Chile has become an interesting hub in the region through clear, stable, and non-discriminatory rules. Regionally, Chile has been recognized for developing an active role in the defense of democracy and human rights. In this area, an inevitable topic is the very deep political and humanitarian crisis of Venezuela. Here, Chile has a clear position: We condemn dictatorship, and we promote democracy according to standards of foreign policy. Chile actively seeks a peaceful way out of the crisis and the return to democracy in Venezuela through free, transparent elections, and according to international standards.

Next Monday, we will host the second ministerial meeting of the Lima Group, as we have done since its inception. We are working together with the member countries for a clear, robust statement in favor of two key elements – return to democracy in Venezuela through a peaceful outlet by Venezuelans themselves, and the attention to this humanitarian crisis suffered by that country. The United States has been a key player to reinforce diplomatic pressure. We have common views for the Venezuelans to express their true democratic will, and for that we will continue to work with the Government of the United States as well as with other friends, countries of America, and Europe so that international community may have a common approach on this.

Finally, we have informed the Secretary of State Mr. Michael Pompeo about the recent creation of forum for South American integration, *Prosur*, and how Chile, under the leadership of President Sebastian Pinera, has sought to contribute to put an end to an absence of dialogue to – of five years to a light and strong at the same time, mechanism to promote integration in matters like infrastructure, health, or prevention of natural disasters. Thank you very much.

SECRETARY POMPEO: *Buenas tardes.* Good afternoon. Thank you to President Pinera and to Foreign Minister Ampuero, my friend, for hosting me, and to the people of Chile for being such gracious hosts as well. It's the first time that I've been here to Chile as the Secretary of State. I'm only sorry that I can't spend more time enjoying your beautiful country.

I want to begin this afternoon by thanking Chile for being a true leader for the Venezuelan people. The United States is grateful for you to hosting – for

your hosting of close to 290,000 Venezuelans, many of whom arrived here as refugees from Nicolas Maduro's socialist regime. Chile's efforts with the Lima Group, which you just discussed, are especially vital.

I want also to applaud President Pinera for helping isolate Maduro and for showing compassion towards innocent people fleeing the economic and humanitarian crisis in their home country.

In February, Chile contributed significant supplies to Juan Guaido's humanitarian aid coordinator and demanded that Maduro allow that aid to enter Venezuela. I'm going to meet with Venezuela's refugees and see the distribution on Sunday in Cucuta, Colombia. You all have been great, important partners, and your people have been most generous.

The United States and its allies will not quit this fight. Chile, the United States, and our 52 partners will continue to support ordinary Venezuelan people who are courageously standing up for democracy in their home country.

I also want to say a few words about Nicaragua. The United States will continue to work with likeminded partners, with countries like Chile to condemn the violence and repression perpetrated by Ortega and his regime. I want to thank Chile for its leadership role in the OAS working group as well. It's monitoring the situation in Nicaragua and is promoting a more fully-fledged democracy in that country.

Look, as for the United States and Chile and our relations, our economic ties are incredibly robust and growing. We share \$27 billion trade relationship. In January we celebrated the 15th anniversary of the United States-Chile Free Trade Agreement. The agreement's nearly quadrupled our bilateral trade since its inception. That's truly amazing.

Beyond trade, we're proud to work with Chile on helping small business owners create jobs in their local communities. Through the Small Business Network of Americas we've seen dozens of countries in the region create business incubators. Chile now has more than 50 of them. And we look forward to working with Chile to lower barriers to trade and investment in the APEC region as well. You noted that while Chile has host of the APEC Forum, we know that it will be a tremendous success in November of this year.

And I want to take a moment too to thank President Pinera for the work that he did with leading the creation of *Prosur* and get it off the ground. It's terrific to see our partners cooperating on infrastructure, development, health, energy, combating transnational crime, and managing natural disasters. We're here to help if you need us. I know you're well along your way. We should all keep in mind that this is historic, it is important, it has not always been this way, and this will benefit the lives of each of the citizens of each of those countries.

Our bilateral relationship too on military issues is very strong. Chile is an important security partner for the United States of America. That's demonstrated by our military exchanges, by joint exercises, by law enforcement cooperation, and State Department partnership programs as well.

And we've recently launched the U.S.-Chile Council on Science, Technology, and Innovation, a truly unique public-private enterprise that will propel economic growth in each of our two countries.

Under the America Crece Initiative, Chile and the United States have agreed to work together also to create greater energy security for each of our people.

And finally, there's the U.S. Visa Waiver Program. Chile is the only country in Latin America participating in that program, and the number of Chileans traveling to the United States legally has more than doubled. I was reminded about the number of Americans traveling to Chile as well. We're proud of that too.

We should be proud of each of these developments between our two countries. They are tangible signs of nations that have a close relationship and how that relationship is bearing fruit to make lives for each of the citizens of our two countries better. *Gracias*.

MODERATOR: (Via interpreter) We now move on to questions. John Hudson, *Washington Post*.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. A question for both gentlemen.

For Foreign Minister Ampuero, as the stalemate over the fate of Maduro continues, the humanitarian situation worsens, and it threatens to prompt an even graver refugee crisis. If this continues to worsen, will you consider working with the Mexicans, Europeans, and others on potentially opening a diplomatic track with Maduro?

And Secretary Pompeo, did you discuss your concerns about China's influence in Chile? China does twice the business of U.S. companies here, purchases vast amounts of exports, and has contracts with Huawei. How do you view this threat?

And just lastly, *The Guardian* reported today that you have been urging Saudi Crown Prince MBS to cut ties with Saud al-Qahtani for his alleged role in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, yet Qahtani is still actively advising MBS. Are you satisfied with the status quo? Thanks very much.

FOREIGN MINISTER AMPUERO: (Via interpreter) Chile is – belongs to the Lima Group, has worked inside and in full agreement with all the members of the Lima Group. This group was created in order to seek a solution to the profound crisis that Venezuela is going through. The efforts of Chile are within the Lima Group.

At the same time, we – as a country we believe that we need to play a role of diplomatic bridge and thus explore all the spaces for convergence existing with other players of international politics. The important thing is that we share the central view. The objective is restoring democracy in Venezuela as soon as possible, at the shortest period possible, and that none of the actions be used by dictator Maduro to prolong his stay in power. So Chile is understood as a country that really seeks dialogue, seeks alternatives where

it can have dialogue with other international politics, but always within the Lima Group.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you. With respect to China, the topic was discussed, but I didn't have to bring it up. The president brought it up and the foreign minister has raised it as well. I think the Chilean Government and the United States Government both share the same concerns. They are a major trading partner for Chile; China is a major trading partner for the United States of America. We welcome that continued trade. When it's conducted on a fair, free, open, and transparent basis for the benefit of commercial enterprises, the benefit of the Chilean people or the American people, we encourage that trade.

But make no mistake about it: China's trade activities often are deeply connected to their national security mission, their technological goals, their desire to steal intellectual property, to have forced technology transfer, to engage in activity that is not economic. And one of the things we talked about is how we could share information together so that we would know which was which, so that each country could protect its own citizens, so that each country could stay away from occasions where China was acting in malign or nefarious ways while still understanding that trade between our countries is important. It certainly benefits each of our countries. We want the Chinese people to have better lives too. Fair, free open trade is fine. It is not okay to engage in predatory lending practices. It is not okay to engage in transactions which are corrupt. It is not okay to put technology systems in with latent capability to take information from citizens of Chile or any other country and transfer it back to President Xi's government. Those are the conversations that we had today, and I am confident we have a full understanding of both the risks and the opportunities associated with China.

Your last question was about Saud al-Qahtani. We – yesterday or this week earlier we put sanctions on Saud al-Qahtani. That's all I'll say.

MODERATOR: (In Spanish.)

QUESTION: (Via interpreter) Tomas Celedon. Hello, minister. We are Radio Bio Bio. I wanted to ask you about the trip of President Pinera to the China. For example, is there a possible visit to the Huawei company? Is the president, President Pinera, going to visit that company?

And what is Chile's position about a peaceful way out to the Venezuelan situation?

FOREIGN MINISTER AMPUERO: As you know, Chile's position vis-a-vis the profound crisis and tragedy of Venezuela is that the solution is to be a political solution, a constitutional solution, and a peaceful one. That is Chile's position. We have raised it, reiterated, and also it is – we have stated this within the Lima Group. It is a principle and – shared by all the members of the Lima Group.

As to the visit of President Pinera to China, I must say that China is our main trade partner. It is – insofar as investments, it's only 0.26 percent of

foreign investments in Chile. It's marginal. And the United States is our main investor. We have a strategic relationship with the United States. We have a longstanding friendship with the United States. And what's important and I must highlight is that Chile, with a pragmatic policy insofar as foreign trade and seeks new markets, new free trade agreements, yes, but at the same time we clearly know that we belong to a community that shares values, values of democracy promotion and defense; advocacy of democracy, of human rights, individual freedoms, and free trade.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much for your attendance.

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