

Press Releases: Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo And Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi At a Press Availability

Remarks

Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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FOREIGN MINISTER SAFADI: (In Arabic.) It is a tremendous pleasure – (in Arabic) – it’s a tremendous pleasure to welcome my dear friend, the Secretary, here in Jordan. If I may, I’ll speak in Arabic, and there is going to be translation.

(In Arabic.)

(Via interpreter) Welcome, Mike, to Jordan, which comes at a very important time, your visit, not to mention a deep conversation on important pivotal regional aspects to achieve prosperity in the region. You have already conducted fruitful conversations on informing – enforcing our mutual relationship on all aspects – security, defense, et cetera. Not to mention we're adamant to reinforce this cooperation with the USA, which is an ally and a friend. We appreciate their support, not to mention or particularly the five-year program and the first to be endorsed by the Trump administration that participated to a great extent in helping us to face our economic (inaudible) support.

There is a huge expanse, or we are going to focus on the Palestinian aspects, not to mention attaining the comprehensive peace, and freezing the process is a very grievance. We have to have horizons of cooperation, meaning the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's going to go on its cooperation with international cooperation and the USA to achieve a comprehensive resolution with two states, independent Palestinian states, as per the resolution with the Eastern Jerusalem as a capital and to live in peace vis-a-vis the Israeli country and in peace and understanding.

I have conducted also political relationships in the Syrian crisis, not to mention we have a thorough conversation on future coordination in light of the U.S. decision to withdraw U.S. forces from Syria bilaterally and through the small group. We will continue to consult on how to achieve progress towards a political solution on the basis of UNC – United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254, that preserves territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria, that Syria accepts and that restores to Syria its security, stability that leads to the departure of all the foreign forces from Syria and allows for the return of the refugees. In light of the U.S. decision to withdraw troops from Syria, we discussed the area of Tanf, and with a view of ensuring arrangement that that will ensure security of the border and deal with the Rukban* encampments, which we believe must be de-established.

Trilateral Jordanian-U.S.-Russian agreements is necessary to achieve these objectives. The enduring defeat of Daesh in Syria is a key common objective. The U.S.-led coalition has made great progress towards defeating the evil. Jordan and the U.S. have fought side-by-side against terrorism, not to mention we've strengthened this partnership. His Majesty King Abdullah II had repeatedly emphasized the need for a holistic approach against terrorists and their ideology of hate, which is outside our common humanity and has nothing to do with our Islamic faith and its values of peace and respect for the other. This is a strategy to which we remain committed.

Mr. Secretary, we look forward to continuing to work together as solid allies and partners in pursuit of a Middle East free from crises and full of opportunities where peace and cooperation prevail and where regional relations are based on non-interference in the international affairs of others, and are in conformity with international law. Once again, I welcome you to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Welcome to you, and the floor is yours, sir.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Foreign Minister. Thank you, Foreign Minister

Safadi. It's an honor to meet with you today. I'm looking forward to meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah in just a little bit. I'm very pleased to be back here in Jordan, especially as our countries celebrate our 70th anniversary this year of diplomatic relations. I was here – I was here in this room on my very first trip as Secretary of State. I came here before I went to my office in Washington.

FOREIGN MINISTER SAFADI: That's true.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Indeed. It's an indication, too, as my first stop on a multi-country trip, of the importance of the relationship between our two countries. Jordan is one of the United States' enduring strategic partners in the region. It's one of the many reasons we're proud to help support you through the five-year foreign assistance MOU, of which you spoke. It's worth over \$6 billion, and it will be an important part of strengthening our relationship for the years ahead. Your nation plays a critical role in regional security and stability, including through its efforts to peacefully resolve the Syrian conflict, fight the spread of radical Islamic terrorism, and countering the Iranian regime's malign activities in the region and the world.

We had a good conversation today. I reaffirmed our commitment under President Trump to working with King Abdullah's government on many of our shared priorities. The United States remains firmly committed to Jordan's domestic stability and security, and we will undertake that work in a true spirit of partnership. Just last year, our nations unveiled a new counterterrorism training center less than 50 miles south of where we stand even as I speak. The State Department, too, was proud to fund and construct that facility through our Antiterrorism Assistance Program. It is sharpening our terror-fighting tools and helping Jordan build its already strong capacity to fight terrorism.

We also look forward to working continually to counter Tehran's malign influence in the region. Jordan made a powerful statement by recalling its ambassador to Tehran last year in protest of the Iranian regime's flagrant transgressions of security and sovereignty. I also want to thank the Government of Jordan for its helping in – help to combat Iran's attempt to evade sanctions.

And finally, I also expressed today my deep gratitude for King Abdullah's leadership. He has continued to establish Jordan as a durable partner and leader in the region. We're pleased to see your prime minister recently visit Iraq, as well as Iraqi President Salih's visit to Jordan in November. We welcome this kind of engagement between nations of the region and we hope to see it replicated elsewhere.

His majesty the king is also undertaking important domestic initiatives, including economic reforms and protection of religious rights. And we know Jordan is also hosting over 650,000 thousand Syrian refugees, and we thank you and your people for their generosity.

On behalf of President Trump, we look forward to maintaining our joint

efforts here in the Middle East, and I want to thank you again for hosting me here today. It's great to be back.

FOREIGN MINISTER SAFADI: Thank you, Mike. It's a pleasure to have you. We have a very short time, as the Secretary and I are heading for a meeting with his majesty, so we'll take two questions. The first question is to Amar Rajah from Jordan TV. Amar.

QUESTION: (Via interpreter) Amar Rajah from the Jordan Television. You spoke about the importance of deriving at a political solution to the Syrian crisis. What are the necessary steps to achieve that?

FOREIGN MINISTER SAFADI: (Via interpreter) As I said, to resolve the Syrian crisis is a strategic goal on which we both agree. Undoubtedly, we need a political solution, which calls for working jointly. We – I spoke about an international role, not to mention coordination. We are also coordinating with the Russia and the international community. Undoubtedly, there has to be an Arab role to participate in the solution deriving (inaudible) of the area within an Arab matrix.

As for Rukban, we discussed it at length with His Excellency the Secretary, not to mention the importance of ensuring the security of those areas, Tanf and Rukban, not to mention the return of their citizens in order to ensure appropriate administration at the border. We are (inaudible) with our allies, the U.S., not to mention coordinating with Russia, deriving at tri-parted discussions (inaudible).

Next question, *LA Times*.

QUESTION: Yes, hi, thank you. You both have spoken here about Syria, and so I'd like to ask a little bit about how we see that crisis, that situation continuing in the weeks and months to come. Minister – Secretary Pompeo, how do you intend – think you can – or intend to maintain the anti-Iran coalition with your allies here in the region, even as these same allies are welcoming Syria back into the fold, back into the Arab League and such? And at the same time, you are receiving pretty significant pushback from Turkey, which is another key player in this.

And Mr. – Minister Safadi, you spoke a little bit about the role of Jordan that you see in here, as the Americans leave. How do you see that? Are you worried about their departure? Is it premature? Do you see Jordanian troops having a role in this?

And then separately, you spoke about the Palestinian peace process. You mentioned the – East Jerusalem as a capital and a two-state solution, neither of which this administration has very wholeheartedly embraced. So now the – all eyes turn to the Golan Heights, where Bibi Netanyahu is asking for U.S. recognition of their sovereignty over that. What do you think should happen with the Golan Heights? Thanks.

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm going to try to take the first question first if that's okay. The counter-Iran revolution is – our coalition is as effective today as

it was yesterday, and I'm very hopeful it will continue to be effective and even more effective tomorrow. This is not just about a particular tactic that we take amongst the coalition. This is about a combined understanding that the most significant threat to the region is Daesh and the Islamist revolution, and their revolutionary efforts in the region. There is – I won't speak for Foreign Minister Safadi, but there is enormous agreement on the risk that that poses to Jordan and to other countries in the neighborhood, and that battle continues.

Our – the President's decision to withdraw folks from Syria in no way impacts our capacity to deliver on that, and you'll see in the coming days and weeks, we are – are we doubling not only our diplomatic but our commercial efforts to put real pressure on Iran to achieve what it is we set out for them back in May. And these are simple asks we ask of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to behave like a normal nation, and the coalition is just as committed to it today as it was yesterday.

FOREIGN MINISTER SAFADI: Thank you, Secretary.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Go ahead.

FOREIGN MINISTER SAFADI: You're done?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, go ahead.

FOREIGN MINISTER SAFADI: Let me just say something on Iran. We all have problems with Iran's expansionist policies in the region. We all want to make sure that whatever threat there is mitigated. All Arab countries, and I think the United States too, would want healthy relations based on the principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of the other, and respecting the sovereignty of other countries. If that is achieved, if everybody abides by international norms of behavior, then there'll be no problem. So far as long as there are policies that are counter to these principles, then we will continue to have issues with their policy.

On the withdrawal, I just have to say that the United States and Jordan have always been strong allies. We've always coordinated and we trust that we'll continue to coordinate, and our security is something that has always been taken into account by our allies in Washington, and we trust that we'll be – we'll continue to have this kind of relationship.

This is a solid partnership, particularly when it comes to defense and security against Daesh, against ISIS. We (inaudible) side by side, we'll continue to do that, and we're fully confident that our allies and us will be able to address whatever new developments in a way that is mutually beneficial for both of us.

On the peace process, look, I mean, Jordan has been consistent all through. His majesty has been more than clear that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the key conflict in the region, and its resolution is the only path to comprehensive peace, which we all want. All Arab states, Jordan included, have said we wanted comprehensive and lasting peace with Israel, but we also

said in order for that to happen, the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, but particularly their right to statehood and freedom on June 4, 1967, with East Jerusalem as capital, is a must. So we're going to continue to do that, and again, as friends, as allies, we might have agreements and disagreements, but you can count on us always having frank and open and thorough discussion too as to see how we can overcome differences and move collectively in an effective manner towards our common goal of global peace and stability.

The Golan Heights is in occupied Syrian territory. International law is clear on that. It has to be treated as such, and therefore our position is that Israel needs to withdraw from that territory, again, within the framework of a peace agreement that will deliver the comprehensive peace that we want. The Arab Peace Initiative has been on the table since 2002 as an offer, as an invitation for Israel to come and sit on the table with a view to reaching a comprehensive peace that will also address Israel's rights to security and acceptance and normal ties with the Arab world. This is our position and we continue to stand by it because we believe it's the only way to achieve the comprehensive peace that we all want.

I want to thank you so much. We've got to run. We have a meeting with his majesty now, so thank you all and (ends in progress).

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