

Press Releases: Interview With Laura Ingraham of The Laura Ingraham Show

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference
October 31, 2018

QUESTION: As the new information coming from Europe where you have these Iranian hit squads roaming about trying to knock off oppositional voices, Denmark, after an assassination plot there foiled, Denmark saying, okay, bring on the sanctions against Iran. And we have a champion in real freedom in the Middle East at our State Department and our White House with President Trump and Mike Pompeo at State, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo joins us now to give us the latest on these threats that we're hearing from Iran about the new round of sanctions, and he joins us now.

Mr. Secretary, good to have you with us.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Hello, Laura. Good to be with you.

QUESTION: So what do you make of that comment from the foreign minister?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So it's not the first time that Mr. Zarif has made these kinds of threats, but the real decision-making there isn't him, it's the ayatollah. That's who our counterparty is. That's who is making all of these decisions. You referred to the assassination attempts all throughout Europe. They're not just the couple from these past months, this has been going on for some time. They're the world's largest state sponsor of terror. We saw that their nuclear program continues to present risk to the United States. That's why the President made the right decision withdrawing from the JCPOA. We ask for one simple thing, right? We want the Islamic Republic of Iran to behave like a normal nation. If they'll do that, we're happy to allow them to enter the community of nations, but we have to continue to apply pressure. On Monday on the week ahead, we will put back in place sanctions that will be very severe on the leadership of Iran, and we hope that that will convince them to change their ways.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you have a cold. I can hear it.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Just a bit.

QUESTION: Oh, you poor guy. Well, you're flying all over creation. (Laughter.) You're flying all over creation.

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'll be just fine. No sympathy needed, Laura, but thank you for your concern.

QUESTION: Oh, no, I know. But as a mother, I worry about all my friends who are sick, so thank you for playing sick here with us.

So right now the Europeans – there's developing persistence, split in opinion on what to do with this Iranian menace. Where is Germany today given the fact that Merkel is out as her party leader? She's in her last term. Clearly, opposition forces in Germany, more populist anti-migration political elements.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Laura, so far the German Government has not changed its position. It still wants to stay inside of the JCPOA, but nearly every German company – folks with real money at risk – made the opposite decision. They have fled. They have left. They have decided they are not going to run through the Iranian sanctions that President Trump will put back in place on Monday. And there are other countries in Europe who are with us, and I am convinced that over time all of the European countries will come to see that Iran is indeed the force creating instability in the Middle East and that we must apply all possible pressure to push back against that to fix it.

QUESTION: So the sanctions go in place on Monday, correct?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, ma'am, Monday.

QUESTION: Okay. And they'll feel them immediately or will it take a little time to settle in?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So, Laura, they're already feeling them. But as the days go on, the pressure will increase. We will substantially drop the amount of crude oil, their primary revenue source, that they can ship around the world. Treasury will put back in place sanctions on financial institutions there. And we hope that the sanctions we put on individuals and in other places will convince the leadership. We want the Iranian people to be successful. We want this to be a successful country. We want to restore democracy there. We think the Iranian people want that same thing. And so our aim is not to harm the Iranian people, but to change the behavior, the malign activity of this regime.

QUESTION: Just going back to Germany, boy, have Merkel's fortunes changed. Obviously, she'll be finishing up her last term, but she's been there for I guess 13 years or so. And she's leaving as head of her party. How will that change our dealings with Germany in the near term, and what do you see as the political climate in Europe with the rise of Salvini and the challenges the EU is facing?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we have many places where the Europeans work alongside us. We clearly have some where we don't share the same view. The President has been direct with respect to the Europeans taking increased responsibility

for their own security. That makes perfect sense. Most European countries understand that. The primary folks who need to defend against the risk that Russia creates reside in Europe not in America. So I'm hopeful as each of these governments evaluate this and sees that America is with them, we're happy to assist them, but they have the primary responsibility. We hope that each of these governments will come to see that in the way that President Trump has so clearly laid out.

QUESTION: CNBC reported yesterday, Mr. Secretary, that North Korea is reportedly preparing nuclear and missile sites for international inspectors. What can you tell us about – I know you are going to go meet with your North Korean counterpart in just a matter of days, but what's the latest from North Korea?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I can't say much about what's taking place on the ground, but I can make clear that when I was with Chairman Kim, now three, three and a half weeks ago, he committed to allowing American inspectors to come look at two significant sites. We hope to get them there before too long. It's one of the things I'll speak with my counterpart next week about. And then we do have the intention of President Trump and Chairman Kim getting together before too long, hopefully early in the next year, where we can make a substantial breakthrough in taking down the nuclear threat from North Korea. I'm – we're still happy that they haven't conducted a nuclear test in an awfully long time and they haven't launched a missile in an awfully long time, but there's a lot of work which remains, and Chairman Kim has made clear to me – just as plain as I'm speaking to you, Laura – that he has the intention to denuclearize and we'll do everything we can to assist him in following through on that commitment.

QUESTION: I want to move to China, Mr. Secretary, because we've seen in recent weeks nothing that's surprising to you or me, because we've been following this issue of Chinese stealing our intellectual property and bribing, attempting to bribe foreign officials, including here at different times in the United States – business officials, excuse me – to gain access to technology, critical technology in manufacturing, aviation, and so forth. Now we have this chipmaker ban in place that garnered a lot of attention, and it's trying to – I guess we're trying to target that state-owned chipmaker in China over national security concerns. How is that going to fit in to our overall aggressive stance against this expansive Chinese behemoth?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Laura, China is probably, over the long term, the biggest challenge, national security challenge that faces our country. You saw the indictments of 10 Chinese persons for the alleged theft of intellectual property, aviation-related intellectual property. This is a story that's been going on for years. This is the first administration that has been prepared to push back against China, and we're doing so on all fronts. So where the semiconductor piece fits in is it's part of a mosaic of our strategic effort to push back against this continued Chinese effort. It begins with trade. We want, the President has demanded fair and reciprocal trade with China. We've demanded that they not steal our intellectual property. We talk with some frequency about the enormous violation of religious freedom that's taking place against the Uighurs in China. We're very worried that China will put

the people in many countries around the world, in Africa and Central America and Latin America, in a debt trap that will cause those countries decades of pain.

It is a multipronged effort on behalf of all of the United States Government, at the President's direction, to convince China to behave like a normal nation on commerce and with respect to the rules of international law.

QUESTION: Yeah. I mean, I know you have to go, Mr. Secretary, but just so people understand this. Our trade policy with China has had a real effect inside China. They already have structural weaknesses within China at large, but they had the weakest manufacturing growth in more than two years in China, and the yuan has slid, manufacturing stalled, and their ambitions as a result have been affected. But they're still lofty, and we do finally have an administration who's seeing this with eyes wide open.

Mr. Secretary, we really appreciate your joining us and best of luck –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Laura.

QUESTION: – on that next meeting with your North Korean counterpart, and get better, get well, okay?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Laura. So long.

QUESTION: All right, you take care.

SECRETARY POMPEO: (Inaudible)

QUESTION: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on your healthy radio addiction.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Interview With Brian Kilmeade of The Brian Kilmeade Show](#)

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State

Via Teleconference
October 31, 2018

QUESTION: And of course, when it comes to Governor Scott, he wants to be the next senator. With us right now, a man who used to do politics for a living, Congressman Mike Pompeo, now has turned into – from CIA Director Mike Pompeo to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Mr. Secretary, welcome to the Brian Kilmeade Show.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Good morning, Brian. How are you today?

QUESTION: Man, your resume's getting better and better. This is obviously with a most challenging job. Today is an important day in U.S.-Iranian relations. Tell us why.

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we are now just a handful of days from all of the sanctions that the previous administration had relieved against Iran snapping back, coming back into effect, and it's having a real impact on the Iranian leadership. This is important. The Iranians are – just yesterday or the day before, Denmark announced that Iran had plotted an assassination attack in their country. Same has happened in France and Albania. They are the world's largest state sponsor of terror and they are squandering the people's money, the Iranian people's money, on these silly malign activities. And our effort is to get them to change that behavior.

QUESTION: Well, I mean, let's talk about what you just glazed over, an assassination attempt inside Denmark and now the Danes are asking for the European Union to take action. Could you tell us more about this?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So that's right. So an Iranian intelligence officer was in Denmark seeking to conduct an assassination attempt inside of Europe on the EU's soil. This is the third effort of just recent times. There's a long history of this. We talk about assassinations around the world. The Iranians are the leading actor conducting these assassination attempts in Europe and that kind of behavior needs to stop, and we have offered our support and effort to help the Europeans in preventing these kinds of assassination attempts from taking place.

QUESTION: So back to what led to the JCPOA, which is an agreement the President promised to rip up that you didn't like when you were congressman and now it's gone. Now, there was no obvious breach of this agreement according to the United Nations by the Iranians, but this time it's harder for you because the deal was done, the Russians were on board with the sanctions, as were the Chinese, as was the European Union. But now once they signed onto this, they're reluctant to sign off of this. How hard a job has it been to try to get, number one, our allies of the EU to step away with us?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So, so far, Brian, the Europeans have stayed in the deal. They've taken a fundamentally different position than ours. But we talk to them nearly every day. We're working with them to explain things like what just happened in Denmark yesterday and why we have to have a completely different policy with respect to Iran. The problems – and the President has talked about this at great length – the challenge of the worst deal ever was that it didn't address Iranian missile programs, it didn't address Iranian terror, it did none of those things. And you can see the fruits of that today where Iran is running rampant in Syria and in Iraq and in other places in the Middle East. That's the reason that the JCPOA made no sense and the reason President Trump made the bold decision to withdraw from it.

QUESTION: So the Iranian foreign minister was on CBS, Mohammad Zarif, and he's got a problem with this – with the Trump administration and you. Cut one.

(An audio clip was played)

QUESTION: So what do you think he's talking about?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Boy, it's difficult to know. We know this: This is not the first time that Mr. Zarif has made threats against the United States. President Trump has been unambiguous that we will defend American interests all around the world, and that what we're looking for is Iran to become a normal nation. We're not asking for much, Brian, right? We're asking the same thing of Iran that we ask for every nation. Don't cause trouble, don't commit terror acts around the world, don't engage in this kind of malign activity.

We are hopeful that Zarif's boss, the ayatollah, the man who actually makes all the decisions – it's not Mr. Zarif, it's the ayatollah – that the ayatollah will see the error of his ways and will come to understand that it's in Iran's best interest to change the nature of the activities that Iran is conducting all around the world and become a normal nation.

When they do, President Trump's made very clear we're happy to talk with the Iranians and bring them back into the community of nations, but they've got to do about a dozen things, simple things like stop launching missiles into airports in the Middle East, before such things – such a thing can take place.

QUESTION: Any indication – have they reached out to you guys at all that they might be willing to talk at any level?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We've seen no indications of any change in their behavior, Brian. None at all.

QUESTION: A lot of focus on Saudi Arabia, their archenemy in the region. You're either in the Iranian camp or the Saudi camp, and that camp has gotten really muddy and murky. MBS, as commonly known, the crown prince, a 33-year-old, you met with him, you talked to the king about the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. Now everyone admits what we were able to figure out almost immediately and Bob Corker said the day it happened, that he was brutally

murdered by a hit squad. Is there any doubt in your mind the prince knew?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Look, the death of Jamal Khashoggi is tragic. It's an awful thing that took place. The killing, the murder of Jamal Khashoggi in the consulate in Turkey violates the norms of international law. That much is very, very clear. What we've asked the Saudis to do and the Turks to do, the place which the murder took place, is to help us continue to develop the facts, that there are still many unanswered questions about precisely how this came to be. We are working diligently, our team, to get the facts, the facts that the Americans can learn. We won't rely on others; we'll take their information, we'll make sure and develop our fact pattern.

But Brian, I want to remind your listeners there are long – since FDR, long, strategic relationships with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Military, commercial ties, important relationships with the United States of America. And it's very important for us to keep that in mind as we continue to ensure that accountability is had for all those who were involved in committing this murder.

QUESTION: Right. If you look at what he's done with the prime minister of Lebanon, if you look at what he did at the Ritz-Carlton, jailing the family until they did exactly what he wanted, they say the haphazard way in which they're conducting the war in Yemen and the way they have isolated Qatar – a lot of people say this is a type of leadership under this 33-year-old prince that – irresponsible, that we really can't get behind.

In fact, General Michael Hayden says this: "The only way to salvage [this] relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia is to curtail the relationship with Mohammed bin Salman. America obviously does not get to pick [their] future Saudi kings, but we do get to choose how we relate to one."

Are you going to re-evaluate, if not – you just told me you're not going to break, but are you going to re-evaluate that relationship because of his recent actions?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Brian, we've got to see where the facts ultimately lead us. We truly have a responsibility to America, to the American people, to ensure that we have a good relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To General Hayden's point, the people of Saudi Arabia are an important partner for the United States, and we're working to make sure we have the right – the facts right. I've spoken to the king a couple of times, I've spoken with MBS, I've spoken with their foreign minister, my direct counterpart, al-Jubeir, on numerous occasions. I think the Saudis share our view. They understand that they've got to get these facts out, and that time is not on their side in doing so.

QUESTION: Now let's switch, if we can. I know we have a couple more minutes. The Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, with us. It's hard to imagine, on more levels, America confronting China. The backlash is building around the world in China because they come in with a lot of money and they basically build up certain things, lend money to countries, and they become hostage to them. An example now: Pakistan's beginning to push back on the debt trap, so to speak.

Brazil, the same thing. Now we understand the – one of their ships got within 45 yards of one of ours, and China's leader, President Xi, reportedly put his military advisors overseeing operations in the South China Sea on high alert last week. He says it's necessary to strengthen the mission and concentrate preparations for fighting a war.

I mean, we have two superpowers staring each other down. Where is this heading, Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I think President Trump and our National Security Strategy are spot on. I think we've got it just right. We are in a competition with China. You identified a handful of things. Just this week our Department of Justice indicted 10 folks from China for having stolen intellectual property related to the aviation industry. This is a behavior that is inappropriate, it's not consistent with being a superpower or a leader in the world. Stealing another country's intellectual property, something China's been engaged in to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars, is just something China has to figure out a way to stop. And President Trump is the first president in some time who was prepared to say we're going to have fair and reciprocal trade, we're going to continue to build our military so that there is no challenge that we can't meet, and we're not going to allow China to continue to steal our intellectual property.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, I know you have to run. My last question is: Do you expect any progress in the G20 to start healing the rift between these nations? Or are we not at the point where talking would even help?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm very hopeful that there'll be good, constructive – to your point – healing conversations at the G20 at the end of November. I'm looking forward to it; I know President Trump is very much looking forward to being there and being with his counterparts from each of those countries.

QUESTION: He is – the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo gave us a few minutes. Thanks, Mr. Secretary. Best of luck.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Brian, thank you. Good luck to you, too. Have a great day.

QUESTION: All right. The 70th U.S. Secretary of State.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Federated States of Micronesia National Day](#)

Press Statement
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
October 31, 2018

On behalf of the Government of the United States of America, we would like to congratulate the Federated States of Micronesia on your 32nd anniversary of independence on November 3.

The United States values deeply our strong partnership with the Federated States of Micronesia under the Compact of Free Association. Our close cooperation and engagement at the United Nations demonstrates our commitment to shared democratic values and enhancing economic growth and development. We recognize and appreciate the continued service of Micronesia's citizens in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The United States sends its best wishes to the people of the Federated States of Micronesia as you celebrate this special day.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

[Press Releases: Ending the Conflict in](#)

Yemen

Press Statement
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
October 30, 2018

The United States calls on all parties to support UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen based on the agreed references.

The time is now for the cessation of hostilities, including missile and UAV strikes from Houthi-controlled areas into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Subsequently, Coalition air strikes must cease in all populated areas in Yemen.

Substantive consultations under the UN Special Envoy must commence this November in a third country to implement confidence-building measures to address the underlying issues of the conflict, the demilitarization of borders, and the concentration of all large weapons under international observation.

A cessation of hostilities and vigorous resumption of a political track will help ease the humanitarian crisis as well.

It is time to end this conflict, replace conflict with compromise, and allow the Yemeni people to heal through peace and reconstruction.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.

Press Releases: Department Press Briefing – October 30, 2018

Robert Palladino
Deputy Spokesperson

Department Press Briefing
Washington, DC
October 30, 2018

Index for Today's Briefing

- [DEPARTMENT](#)
- [ISRAEL/OMAN](#)
- [GREECE](#)
- [DEPARTMENT](#)
- [SRI LANKA](#)
- [NORTH KOREA/SOUTH KOREA](#)
- [IRAN/IRAQ/SOUTH KOREA](#)
- [MIDDLE EAST PEACE](#)
- [SAUDI ARABIA/TURKEY](#)
- [CAMEROON](#)
- [MEXICO](#)

TRANSCRIPT:

Today's briefing was held off-camera, so no video is available.

2:15 p.m. EDT

MR PALLADINO: Hi, guys. A couple things for the top. We have an update on – for you all on the Global Engagement Center and their efforts to counter foreign disinformation. At the end of September, the Global Engagement Center obligated 40 million to support initiatives to counter disinformation and propaganda spread by foreign countries abroad. That funding included an extra 20 million provided to the Global Engagement Center by Congress in the Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus spending bill and 20 million from the Department of Defense transferred to the State Department.

This funding will support a variety of efforts to counter Russian, Iranian, and Chinese disinformation and propaganda directed to foreign audiences. These initiatives include deploying technology to provide early warnings of foreign disinformation, analyzing those foreign audiences that are most susceptible to disinformation, developing

partnerships with key local social media influencers to produce content to reach critical audiences, and building the technical skills of civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, local influencers, and journalists to shed light on the spread of disinformation.

The Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act extends the Department of Defense's authority to transfer funding to the State Department for these efforts through fiscal year 2020. This will allow the Departments of State and Defense to continue developing new joint initiatives to counter foreign disinformation.

Second, happy birthday. Combatting international crime, including drug trafficking, transnational gang activity, and corruption is one of the key ways that the State Department keeps America safe, and the bureau here at the State Department that leads these efforts is the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Bureau, or as we call it, INL. And they are celebrating their 40th anniversary this month. After an initial focus on halting cocaine trafficked from the Andes – that was back in the 1990s – or that was back – in the 1990s, INL expanded to what we have today, and that is global diplomacy and foreign assistance platform to fight crime and strengthen justice sectors at every level.

In 2018 stopping the flow of opioids into the United States is INL's highest drug control priority, and last month at the United Nations President Trump launched a global call to action on the world drug problem, with 130 countries joining that effort. The State Department, via our INL Bureau, is at the forefront of such work, including diplomacy to increase international restrictions on synthetic opioids and supporting Mexico's ability to eradicate poppy and take down clandestine labs. INL will continue to fight to keep Americans safe into the future, meeting new drug and crime threats as they emerge.