

Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Mattis Host AUSMIN at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University

Notice to the Press
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 19, 2018

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis will host Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop and Minister for Defence Marise Payne for this year's Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California on July 23-24, 2018.□

The camera spray prior to Secretary Pompeo's bilateral meeting with Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Bishop and the closing press availability are open to registered members of the press. All interested press who wish to attend these events in person should RSVP no later than Sunday, July 22nd at 5:00 p.m. (PDT) to Marlon H. Bateman at 650-723-0603 or bateman@stanford.edu. Stanford University will provide information on preset times and media credentials upon receipt of an RSVP.□

The Secretary's remarks will be streamed live on www.state.gov and at <https://www.hoover.org>.

For further information from the Department of State, please contact the Office of Press Relations at (202) 647-2492, or follow @StateDept on Twitter.

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 Hugh Hewitt of the Hugh Hewitt Show

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Telephone
July 19, 2018

QUESTION: Secretary Pompeo, in fact, joins me. Good morning, Mr. Secretary. Good to have you back.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Hugh, it's good to be with you. It's been too long.

QUESTION: Well, I want to talk about religious liberty with you, but a first question. You're just back from Korea, Vietnam, the United Arab Emirates, Brussels, and of course Russia. Last time we talked you stressed that we know everything about everyone who attacks us. And I just want to make sure, for deterrence purposes, is that the case? Are we aware with certainty of the origin of cyber attacks, because it's so essential to deterrence that we do know that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Hugh, it's not always the case every day that we do. But with great frequency, we can do attribution in a way that gives U.S. policymakers an enormous advantage in understanding the threat.

QUESTION: David Sanger has a new book out stressing why we need to be able to pinpoint people and speak about it, because otherwise the whole world will attack us with impunity. Did you take the message to friend and foe that we are watching and we have the tools?

SECRETARY POMPEO: They do know, Hugh. But David's comments are a little bit naive to be honest with you. It's the case that we can't always publicly do what David described. It would be foolish for America to consistently announce everything we know. It would betray how we came to know it; it would share with them information that we don't want them to have about our capabilities and our skillsets. And so, make no mistake about it, we are very clear with our adversaries, when it's in our best interest, to share with them what we're doing.

QUESTION: Now after a major week of events – and I mean, you went through a week that culminated in the Helsinki controversy – then Andrew Brunson does not get released. How hard is it to refocus a department that is convulsed by stories on the ministerial next week and on the individuals like Pastor Brunson? Can you get everyone to get back on the page of focusing on religious liberty next week?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Hugh, thanks for the question. We've got a religious freedom ministerial that is going to have 80-plus delegations. It's historic. It's the first time the State Department has taken on this mission. We believe religious freedom is central to the world and to, frankly, America's place in the world. We make it a real priority. Pastor Brunson in particular has been a priority of mine since even before I had this current role. The entire administration is focused on getting his return.

But one of the reasons we're conducting the ministerial, Hugh, is because not every country shares our same understanding of religious freedom, and our effort in holding this ministerial here, where we have 40-plus foreign minister level visitors coming to attend, is to move each country in the direction where increased religious freedom around the world can thrive.

QUESTION: Now, Secretary Pompeo, for the benefit of the Steelers fans and others, a ministerial is a term they may not be familiar with. You just alluded to what it means. It means people like the Secretary of State of the United States and your counterpart in the United Kingdom and across the world coming to Washington. So what's on that agenda?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's a broad agenda. We're going to talk about how religious freedom fits into a democratic society, how it makes sense for each country, how it can improve economies in the world by having this religious freedom, by allowing all persons of every faith – or those who have no faith – to have the freedom to worship or choose not to in the way that they prefer. We believe that improving respect for religious freedom requires more than just talk, and so we're bringing people together. We'll announce several new initiatives over the course of the two days of the summit. And we're very much looking forward to it. We're hosting a huge gathering here at the State Department that I think will advance the cause of religious freedom around the world in a way that America has not done for too long.

QUESTION: Every year, we put out a list of Countries of Particular Concern, CPCs. At the top of that list every year is Iran, which may be the most anti-Semitic and the most repressive of other religion countries in the world. I don't imagine Iran is sending anyone to this conference. But what can we do to encourage an extremist, fanatical regime like Iran to leave their indigenous other religions alone?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Iran is a huge challenge. They would be a perfect exemplar for the absence of religious freedom inside of a country. There are others too. With respect to Iran, a key component of this is exactly what we're doing at this gathering. We're talking about it; we're raising it. We're raising the awareness. You referenced the report that the State Department puts out. It's just a piece of paper; it's just words, for sure. But calling

it out and trying to articulate the rationale for why it matters and those that are behaving badly, whether it's by anti-Semitism or persecuting Christians, these are incredibly important concerns to the United States and to President Trump. And our mission in holding this gathering is to get the world to unite behind this fundamental concept of religious freedom for every individual.

QUESTION: Now Secretary Pompeo, last week the forces of Daniel Ortega opened fire on a Catholic church. They actually kept up a gun battle aimed at a Catholic church all night long. What do we do in response to that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Nicaragua has got enormous challenges today. The Ortega regime, including his wife, are behaving – it's not just about the attack on the church. Their activities – the violence level has been raised. We are working to bring all of the elements of U.S. power to bear there. The State Department is at the front of trying to convince Ortega that it's time for a democratic process to begin and a solution to be achieved there and that violence is not a mechanism that's going to result in success for either he, his family, or the elites around him.

QUESTION: Well, let me close, Mr. Secretary, by going back to the Helsinki summit. Just a factual question: Were you consulted by the Department of Justice before the indictments were filed?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I can't talk about that, Hugh.

QUESTION: And while – and theoretically, would it be useful for the Department of State to be consulted before such matters as important as that are conducted, on a theoretical basis?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, Hugh. It is common practice that when the Department of Justice is going to take action that has diplomatic implications or foreign policy implications that we would be notified of those actions.

QUESTION: And then back to Pastor Brunson. Do we have any reason to hope, in the week ahead, that he gets out, Secretary Pompeo?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I – as a man of faith, Hugh, I am always of the belief that good things will happen. And you should know that the United States Government is working diligently to ensure the release of Pastor Brunson. And then there are others being held in Turkey too that we're working hard on.

QUESTION: Secretary Pompeo, thank you for joining me. And good luck with the ministerial next week. It's vitally important that people pay attention to it. And I appreciate your taking the time this morning.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Hugh. It's wonderful to be back with you. So long.

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: Vice President Pence Delivers Remarks at First-Ever Ministerial To Advance Religious Freedom

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
July 19, 2018

On July 26, Vice President Mike Pence will deliver remarks at the first-ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC. The Vice President will address government and international organization representatives about the importance of international religious freedom and its role in American foreign policy.

The Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom will take place at the U.S. Department of State, July 24-26, and will convene religious leaders, rights advocates, and members of civil society organizations, government officials, and representatives of international organizations from around the world to discuss the challenges facing religious freedom, identify concrete means to address persecution of and discrimination against religious groups, and promote greater respect for religious freedom for all.

For press inquiries related to the Ministerial, please e-mail IRFMinisterialPress@state.gov and visit www.state.gov/religiousfreedom for information related to the Ministerial. On Twitter, follow along with content about the Ministerial with @IRF_Ambassador and using the hashtag #IRFMinisterial.

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 – July 18, 2018

Heather Nauert
Spokesperson

Department Press Briefing
Washington, DC
July 18, 2018

Index for Today's Briefing

- [NICARAGUA](#)
- [DEPARTMENT](#)
- [RUSSIA/DEPARTMENT](#)
- [DPRK](#)
- [DEPARTMENT](#)
- [DPRK](#)
- [MONTENEGRO/REGION](#)
- [RUSSIA/DEPARTMENT](#)
- [DPRK/DEPARTMENT](#)
- [RUSSIA/DEPARTMENT](#)
- [IRAQ](#)
- [TURKEY](#)
- [AFGHANISTAN](#)
- [RUSSIA/DEPARTMENT](#)

TRANSCRIPT:

3:13 p.m. EDT

MS NAUERT: Hi, everybody. Good afternoon.

QUESTION: Hello.

MS NAUERT: Hope everyone's doing well. Let me start out with a couple of announcements this afternoon. By the way, it's a little chilly in here. I can see that.

QUESTION: Noticed.

MS NAUERT: I know. I see you all have your blankets on and everything. Okay.

First, I'd like to start off talking about Nicaragua, and yesterday the Ortega government sent police and government-aligned armed groups to the town of Masaya in a deadly attack on its own citizens. Reports suggest that at least three people have been killed and dozens have been wounded. The Ortega government's brutal campaign of violence against their own people must stop immediately. Yesterday's assault on Masaya is another glaring example of Ortega's efforts to cling to power no matter the cost to the people of Nicaragua. Since April, attacks on university students, journalists, clergy, have killed hundreds and the international community is uniting in its condemnation of the heinous act.

We welcome recent statements by the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and well over 100 – excuse me, well over a dozen countries condemning the government-sponsored violence. We urge others to join the international call for peace. We continue to support the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua's efforts to advance negotiations to resolve the current conflict, restore respect for human rights, and achieve a better, more democratic future for all Nicaraguans. We appreciate the church's critical role as a mediator. However, we are

concerned that those officials seeking to bring an end to the crisis are coming under physical and reputational attack by the Ortega government and its supporters. The path to peace for the Ortega government remains through early, free, fair, and transparent elections. We urge the Ortega government to take concrete actions now and to negotiate in good faith.

Next, I'd like to mention that today, USAID Administrator Mark Green is wrapping up his visit to Colombia, and that's where he met with President Santos and President-elect Duque, as well as members of the Colombian congress, to reaffirm our strong partnership with the people and the Government of Colombia. Administrator Green also visited the Colombia-Venezuela border during his trip to the region to meet with some of the more than two million Venezuelans who have fled the crisis in their home country, which was created by the Maduro regime. While there, Administrator Green announced an additional \$6 million in U.S. funding to provide food and health assistance to the thousands of Venezuelan migrants crossing the border every day, and for the Colombian communities that are hosting them.

Lastly, I'd like to announce that Secretary Pompeo will travel to New York on Friday, July the 20th, to meet with Ambassador Nikki Haley and members of the United Nations Security Council, the Republic of Korea Foreign Minister Kang, and Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations Koro Bessho, to discuss the latest on North Korea. The Secretary will also meet with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to discuss a range of issues, including preparations for the UN General Assembly high-level week in September and also UN reform.

The Secretary will then travel to Simi Valley, California, on Sunday, July the 22nd, to deliver remarks on supporting Iranian voices at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Center for Public Affairs as part of his visit with members of the Iranian-American community in the United States. Secretary Pompeo will travel to Simi – from Simi Valley to Palo Alto, California, where he and Secretary of Defense James Mattis will host the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop and also the Minister for Defense Marise Payne for this year's Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations, otherwise known as AUSMIN. That takes place at the Hoover Institution at Stanford on July 23rd and 24th. This AUSMIN celebrates 100 years of mateship. It marks the U.S. and Australian forces fighting side by side in a battle for the first time. It's been 100 years.

QUESTION: I think you have to say mateship with an Australian accent.

MS NAUERT: (Laughter.) I don't think I could pull that off very well. That dialogue will focus on deepening our strategic alliance and developing initiatives to promote our shared vision of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The United States and Australia have held strategic talks annually since 1985.

And with that, I would be happy to take your questions.

QUESTION: Thanks, Heather. I want to start with some stuff that comes out of Helsinki.

MS NAUERT: Okay.