

# **Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Israeli President Reuven Rivlin**

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
March 21, 2019

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The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:

Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo met today with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. The Secretary and the President reaffirmed the close relationship between the United States and Israel, including the Administration's unwavering support for Israel's right to defend itself. The Secretary highlighted U.S. efforts to combat anti-Semitism wherever it manifests, including through the recent appointment of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, Elan Carr. The Secretary and the President also discussed shared regional priorities, including countering the Iranian regime's malign influence and expanding economic cooperation with Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus.

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# **Press Releases: Resignation of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan**

# Nazarbayev

Press Statement  
Robert Palladino

Deputy Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
March 21, 2019

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The United States deeply values the contributions of Kazakhstan's first President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in establishing and promoting enduring, dynamic relations between the United States and Kazakhstan. At this historic moment in Kazakhstan, we salute Nazarbayev's role as the father of today's modern, sovereign, and prosperous Kazakhstan, and acknowledge the example he sets for responsible regional and global leadership. We once again applaud his significant efforts in the nonproliferation sphere, his leadership in global denuclearization efforts, his exemplary commitment to the peaceful transition of power, and his contributions to peace and prosperity in Kazakhstan and the region.

Our relationship with Kazakhstan is based in our shared ideals of prosperity, respect for fundamental freedoms, and regional security. We congratulate Kazakhstan's new President Kassym-Zhomart Tokayev and look forward to continue working with him to deepen our enhanced strategic partnership and advance our longstanding mutual interests in economic development, trade and investment, and safeguarding regional and global security.

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# Press Releases: Interview With Melissa Scheffler of KWCH TV Wichita

Interview  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
March 14, 2019

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**QUESTION:** So let's talk about Senator Dole. Who is Bob Dole to you?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Bob's a friend and a legend and a true patriot, a truly great American. When you think about the arc of American history over the last, what, 50 years now, Senator Dole's been at the front of a lot of it, whether it was his time in the service, whether it was his time in Congress, the work he's done back in Kansas all have been for the benefit of Kansans and Americans. And so when I think of Bob, it brings a great joy to my heart. It also inspires me to try and do my job even better every day.

**QUESTION:** His endorsement of you at the Senate confirmation hearing for Secretary of State, he said, President "Trump is lucky to have Pompeo." How important is you – is it to you to have him as an ally?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** It's been important in lots of ways. Personally, he and Elizabeth have both been great friends to Susan and me. We've known them for years and years. We – Susan worked on one of his early campaigns, too long ago now. Wouldn't want to say how long ago. So we've known them for a while. We love and admire them. To have his support means an awful lot. It's also the case that I see him and talk to him with some frequency. I ask him advice about things around the world. I ask his wisdom on the political situation on the ground. Bob will always tell me you need to get out to Wilson County and help someone. He still cares so deeply about Kansas. And so it also brings personal joy to me to get to work alongside such a legendary Kansan.

**QUESTION:** Yeah, I was going to ask you that, if you still get advice from him. What have you learned from him getting that advice? What kind of advice does he give?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** This is a man of incredible deep honor and integrity, and frankly, I think that's the most important thing. He's been around this town in Washington, D.C., an awful long time, and one of the things he told me when I first came here now, goodness, almost a decade ago as a member of

Congress was your reputation you get to do once. Always tell the truth. Always get it right. Always be nice. Be friendly. You can disagree, you can fight – there's been no one who's fought for the things he cared about more passionately than Senator Dole. But when that's done, it's time – it's time to be a good Christian man, work hard, tell the truth. Mike, if you do those things, you – whenever it is you leave Washington, you'll leave with something that's really important: a reputation for the way that we know Kansans all want to be.

**QUESTION:** Speaking of his reputation, what do you think he'll be known best for? Because he has a lot of political achievements. You've got the World War II Memorial, you've got so much. What do you think Kansans will remember him the most for?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Well, it's a long list. The work that he did on the Americans with Disabilities Act was truly changing for lots of lives all around America and, indeed, all around the world. What I'll probably remember most is the times I got to go down and see the veterans who came back to the World War II Memorial. I would go out and greet the honor flights and Senator Dole would often be there as well, and whoever was talking to me at the moment he arrived was no longer talking to me. (Laughter.) They wanted to see – they wanted to see Senator Dole. And I know how much he cared about that. I know how much he cared about those who fought and served on behalf of our nation in World War II. He did each of them honor, and the work that he did to make their lives better I think will be something that they remember forever and that I will too.

**QUESTION:** Kansans are sure proud of you, and they're sure proud of Bob Dole. What do you think Bob Dole means to Kansas?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I don't think you should use our names in the same sentence. This is an amazing man. He embodies the best of Kansas. As Susan and I think about what Kansas delivers for us every day, the values that we bring here, Bob was here long before me, working on these same things. He's earnest, he's witty, he's funny, he works hard, he cares deeply about every single person and treats them with dignity and respect. Those are Kansas values that Bob brought here to Washington and they never left him.

**QUESTION:** He thinks the world of you. We were over there interviewing him and we told him who else we were speaking to. He could not say enough good things about you. He sees a lot for your future. What is it – how does it make you feel that someone like Bob Dole sees a great and bright, brilliant future for you?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** It's humbling. There's a good story. When I was nominated to be the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, I called Senator Dole, and on the phone came both he and Elizabeth, and they were so happy.

**QUESTION:** You feel like their kid.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** "It's so great that we have a Kansan, and you'll do a wonderful job, Mike. Tell me what I can do to help you." I still had the

confirmation battle yet ahead. "Tell me the things we can do to help. You'll be great." They were so kind, so generous, so willing to step out. This is a man who's accomplished so much. They were still so willing to engage. It was enormously humbling and gave me confidence in what I was about to undertake.

**QUESTION:** Can you share some personal stories? Since you guys go back so far, with your wife working for him, is there anything that kind of comes to your memory when you think of Bob Dole and just him being a human being? Because for so many people, he's up on there on that pedestal.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Yeah. Boy, the list is pretty long. I remember he called me – it's not been too many years ago – I was a member of Congress. And he said, "Mike, I'm going to go to the state fair. I'm going to Hutch. I want you to come sit with me at the state fair. I'm going to shake a few hands in the way that I have done for decades," and I – of course it was an honor, and we literally sat at the booth at the Kansas fair, and there were lines of hundreds of people, each of whom had their own story. Their mother had known him from a campaign, their grandma had seen him or known him, their cousin knew them from his days in Russell, Kansas. Every one of them wanted to thank him for his service.

And what I remember so much is Bob was always so humble. He was always – "I remember," and he has a great memory. "I remember so and so, and he, she was fantastic, and these are the things that that person did for me. Please, please thank them." It was something to really behold, to watch the lines of people from all across the state of Kansas want to just shake his hand and tell him a little part of their history with Bob Dole.

**QUESTION:** I talked to him in December when he saluted the casket of President George H.W. Bush, and that resonated throughout the country. I mean, that moment people were talking about, and I called him and I said, "Why did you do that?" And he said it just felt right, that moment where he stood up and did that. Part of the Greatest Generation, and we're losing the Greatest Generation. His impact and his role in this country, in the state of Kansas – I don't think you see that so much anymore.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Yeah, they don't make them like Senator Dole very often. The work that he did – look, we all know the history. He and President Bush had their moments for sure, but this was a man who had profound respect for our country and for its leaders and for service to the nation. I think that's what drove Senator Dole that day. He knew too that this was one of the last of the great American leaders from that generation in the same way that he is, and what you saw too was the respect for both of those individuals – certainly for the president, but for Senator Dole as well.

**QUESTION:** Moving forward and that advice that you get from Senator Dole still to this day, anything else you want to just continue to suck out of that guy? (Laughter.) Anything – any of that knowledge base that you still want to learn from him?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** So many things. He still has lots of wisdom. One of the things he always does is he tells me when I get it wrong too.

**QUESTION:** He does?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Sure. “Mike, I think you got the wrong end of the stick on this one.”

**QUESTION:** And does he persuade you?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** He makes his argument, right. He makes the case and he – he’s a keen observer, still to this day a keen observer of the American political movement, Kansas. He knows all of the tales. He’ll tell me, “Mike, oh, Smitty’s not doing too good out there.” He loves that – he’s passionate and he wants to make other people’s lives better. Even at this stage of his life, he’s still so committed to public service. And so I take heed when Senator Dole picks up the phone and says, “Hey, Mike, you ought to think about this one more time.”

**QUESTION:** Mr. Secretary, we’re wrapping up here, so my last question for you. Anything else you want to add if you’re speaking directly to the senator and the impact he’s made on your life, your political career, and anything in the future?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Oh, goodness. If I was talking to Senator Dole directly, I’d just tell him I love him, that Susan and I admire him, appreciate him. We wish him all the best in the coming days, and we’d tell both he and Elizabeth how much we enjoy being around them and we are so thankful they’ve been part of our lives.

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## [\*\*Press Releases: Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad Hosts Counterparts for Dialogue on Afghan Peace Process\*\*](#)

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
March 20, 2019

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Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad will host his counterparts Presidential Special Representative Ambassador Zamir Kabulov of Russia, Special Envoy Ambassador Deng Xijun of China, and Special Envoy Ambassador Roland Kobia of the European Union at the Department of State for talks on March 21 and 22. Discussion topics include: international support for the Afghan peace process, the role each party can play in bringing an end to the war, and progress to date in peace talks.

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## **[Press Releases: Remarks With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#)**

Remarks  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Prime Minister's Office  
Jerusalem  
March 20, 2019

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**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Secretary Pompeo, Mike, it's good to see you –

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** It's good to be with you

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** – in Jerusalem, back in Jerusalem. I have to say that we meet in every holiday. We met on Hanukkah and now we meet in Purim, and these are all celebrations of our history, and part of it is the tremendous alliance between Israel and the United States. And I know you've been an extraordinary champion of the U.S.-Israel alliance, and I want to thank you and President Trump for everything that you've been doing to support this partnership which I think is exceptional.

First of all, I think it's supported by the broad swath of the American people. We appreciate that, the fact that we have a broad base of support in the United States, but we also know that our alliance in recent years has never been stronger. It's an unbreakable bond that's based on shared values of liberty and democracy and shared interest to fight the enemies of democracy, the enemies of our way of life, the terrorists that plague – that prowl our airspace and prowl our countries. And I think that working together, we've been able to achieve an enormous amount.

Under President Trump, that alliance has also brought a historic recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the moving of the American embassy to Jerusalem. David doesn't have to travel up a – the traffic jams from Tel Aviv, which we're trying to un-loose – loosen up anyway. But I think also the unequivocal commitment to Israel's security, the support that you give us in international forums, all of that is deeply appreciated.

I think that no less historic is the President's decision to walk away from the disastrous nuclear deal with Iran. He said he would do it; he did. And he said that he would reimpose tough sanctions on Iran, and he did. And what we



see is that this pressure is working. We need to increase it; we need to expand it. And together, the United States and Israel are working in close coordination to roll back Iranian aggression in the region and around the world. Secretary and I just spent the first part of our meetings discussing exactly how to do that, and I think there are ways that will intensify the pressure even more. Rolling back Iran is in the interest of peace and security and stability for Israel, for our neighbors, and for the world.

I also appreciate the fact that the United States gives Israel the full backing to defend ourselves against Iranian aggression. I want to use this opportunity and say that we will continue to take action as needed against the attempts of Iran to entrench itself militarily with dangerous weapons in Syria. There is no limitation to our freedom of action, and we appreciate very much the fact that the United States backs up our actions as we do them.

Just last week, we uncovered efforts by Hizballah, an Iranian proxy, to build a terror network in Syria on the Golan Heights. And I can say that all of you can imagine what would have happened if Israel were not in the Golan. We would have Iran on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. I think – for this reason, and for many more – I think it's time that the international community recognize Israel's stay in the Golan, the fact that the Golan will always remain part of the state of Israel.

Mr. Secretary, you're a stalwart defender of the truth, and I appreciate your important statement last week regarding the International Criminal Court. We share the concern of the U.S. and many other states that this court has lost its way. Instead of dealing with mass atrocities, the court engages in unwarranted and politicized efforts to target the states that are committed to the rule of law and that have not joined the court. It's exact opposite of what it should be doing. And therefore, the fact that you spoke out against this, I think, is – against this, I think, is of stellar importance. I thank the United States for taking the moral and necessary steps to protect the citizens of both our countries against this outrageous distortion of international law.

Israel has no greater friend than the United States, and the United States has no greater friend than Israel. I look forward to our discussions, and I look forward to my visit next week to Washington, where I will meet with President Trump. And I believe that we can carry this relationship even stronger – it's getting stronger and stronger and stronger, and may we continue to do so. Thank you.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. You know that Israel has no greater friend than the United States of America. The Israeli people can have confidence that President Trump will maintain this close bond. I know that you and the President have an outstanding working relationship. He sent me here to build upon that and to represent him here. Israel has a special place in my heart as well. My very first trip as Secretary of State included a visit here. I'm proud to be here again not only as America's top diplomat, but also as a man of faith that is always newly inspired when I get the chance to travel to

Israel.

Now to the business at hand. In just a few minutes, the prime minister and I will participate in a meeting with Greece and Cyprus to promote energy security and diversification in the Eastern Med. I will also discuss our efforts to counter Iran, Russia, and China. We had a chance to talk about those a few minutes ago as well.

This meeting is part of our effort to continue to build out the regional alliances. Last month, representatives of more than 60 countries met in Warsaw and had a historic conference, which the prime minister attended. Arab and Israeli leaders discussed ways to end the war in Yemen, to manage refugee crises, to confront radical Islamic terrorism, and to stop Iran's regional rampage. We're working to build the Middle East Strategic Alliance and to enhance cooperation on economic, energy, and security matters.

It's fundamentally our view that this region needs a candid dialogue and open exchanges of ideas, especially as we seek to make progress towards a comprehensive and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Mr. Kushner and Mr. Greenblatt recently met with regional leaders to find ways to provide economic opportunity for those regions.

I know today that at sundown, right about now, the Jewish people will begin the celebration of Purim, a commemoration of when Queen Esther saved the Jewish people from destruction centuries ago. I wish the prime minister and all who are celebrating a happy Purim.

Of course, I remember when he addressed the joint session of Congress right before Purim. I was there sitting in the auditorium almost exactly four years ago. On that day, you spoke about the grave threat that the Jewish people face, the threat from the Islamic Republic of Iran, which seeks the absolute destruction and annihilation of Israel. The ayatollahs have spent four decades spewing hatred, supporting terrorist violence, and pursuing nuclear weapons for a war against a neighbor that wishes nothing more than to live in peace. The ayatollah has declared that the annihilation and destruction of Israel is his primary goal.

With such threats, a daily reality of Israeli life, we maintain our unparalleled commitment to Israel's security and firmly support your right to defend yourself. Under the 10-year MOU that we signed in 2016, we provide \$3.8 billion annually for security assistance to Israel. And with Israel threatened by rockets and missiles from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere, we are proud to deploy the THAAD anti-missile batteries here.

The Trump administration, too, is dedicated to monitoring and combatting anti-Semitism. Our Special Envoy Elan Carr was recently here to discuss how we could deepen our commitment to battle this odious prejudice and all other forms of intolerance. With the dark wave of anti-Semitism rising in Europe and in the United States, all nations, especially those in the West, must go to the barricades against bigotry. Our challenge is especially urgent as the hot rhetoric of prejudice cloaks itself in the language of the academy or of diplomacy or public policy. Sadly, we in the United States have seen anti-

Semitic language uttered even in the great halls of our own Capitol. This should not be.

Tomorrow, my wife Susan and I will take a full day of activities to get a deeper sense of Israel and its storied history. We'll visit our new embassy in Jerusalem, which we were proud to open last year. I'm eager to see more of the timeless country, and I thank the prime minister and the people of Israel for what I know will be a productive and memorable visit. Thank you.

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Thank you, Mike. Welcome.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you.

**PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU:** Thank you.

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