

Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Call With French Foreign Minister Le Drian

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
March 5, 2019

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Today, Secretary Michael R. Pompeo and French Foreign Minister Le Drian discussed global efforts in the fight to defeat ISIS, especially in Iraq and Syria. Secretary Pompeo also noted France's efforts to counter Iran-backed terrorist activity in Europe and the Middle East.

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Press Releases: State Department Terrorist Designation of Harakat al-Nujaba (HAN) and Akram 'Abbas al-Kabi

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
March 5, 2019

The Department of State has designated the Iranian proxy group Harakat al-Nujaba (HAN) and its leader, Akram 'Abbas al-Kabi, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224. Today's designations seek to deny HAN and al-Kabi the resources to plan and carry out terrorist attacks. Among other consequences, all of their property and interests in property subject to U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in any transactions with them.

Established in 2013 by al-Kabi, HAN is an Iran-backed Iraqi militia funded by but not under the control of the Iraqi government. HAN has openly pledged its loyalties to Iran and Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Al-Kabi has publicly claimed that he would follow any order, including overthrowing the Iraqi government or fighting alongside the Houthis in Yemen, if Ayatollah Khamenei declared it to be a religious duty. Al-Kabi also claimed that Iran supports HAN both militarily and logistically, and stressed HAN's close ties with IRGC-QF Commander Qassem Soleimani and Hizballah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, both SDGTs. The Department of the Treasury designated al-Kabi in 2008 under E.O. 13438 for planning and conducting multiple attacks against Coalition forces, including mortar and rocket launches into the International Zone.

These designations demonstrate the United States' unwavering commitment to isolate and deny funding to the Iranian regime's terrorist proxies. The United States will continue to stand firm against Iran's malign behavior and efforts to undermine Iraq's sovereignty and stability.

Today's actions notify the U.S. public and the international community that HAN and al-Kabi have committed, or poses a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism. Terrorist designations expose and isolate organizations and individuals, and deny them access to the U.S. financial system. Moreover, designations can assist the law enforcement activities of U.S. agencies and other governments.

A list of State Department-designated SDGTs is available here:
<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/index.htm>.

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Press Releases: Gilman Top Producing Institutions

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
March 5, 2019

The U.S. Department of State is pleased to announce the U.S. higher education institutions that sent the most students overseas on its Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program in academic year 2017-2018. For the second year, the State Department is recognizing the institutions that made international study and internships more accessible and inclusive for the largest number of American students of all backgrounds through its Gilman Program.

The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with the Institute of International Education, compiles the list, organized by small, medium, and large four-year institutions, and colleges conferring associate degrees.

Topping this year's list of four-year institutions sending the largest number of Gilman Scholars abroad are Berea College (KY), Emory University (GA), and the University of California, Berkeley (CA). Portland Community College (OR) tops the list of associate's colleges. Grand Valley State University (MI) took the top spot in sending the most veterans on Gilman Scholarships, a category that the Department of State is highlighting this year.

Institutions are also recognized for sending abroad the most first-generation college students, racial or ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, and students studying in STEM fields through the Gilman Program. Institutions that sent Gilman Scholars to the largest number of overseas destinations received recognition for their role in broadening geographical diversity in study abroad. Additionally, institutions that displayed outstanding growth in the number of Gilman awardees as compared to last year are recognized for their role in broadening the student population that studies abroad.

For a full list of higher education institutions that sent Gilman Scholars overseas in 2017-2018, including those with the distinctions mentioned above, please visit the Gilman Scholarship website at www.GilmanScholarship.org.

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, with the support of

the U.S. Congress, is reshaping study abroad to make it more accessible and inclusive for American students. The Gilman Program broadens the U.S. student population studying and interning abroad by providing scholarships to outstanding undergraduates who, due to financial constraints, might not otherwise participate. Since the program's establishment in 2001, over 1,300 U.S. institutions have sent more than 28,000 Gilman scholars to nearly 150 countries around the globe.

Interested media should contact the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at eca-press@state.gov.

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Press Releases: Interview With Scott Thuman of Sinclair Broadcast Group

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
March 2, 2019

QUESTION: Secretary, thank you for the time.

SECRETARY POMPEO: You betcha. Good morning.

QUESTION: Let's start with what the President just said on this. He said: I've asked China to immediately remove all tariffs on our agricultural products. This is very important to me and our great farmers. How critical is it that this end?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the agricultural community is incredibly important to

America and incredibly important to American national security. Every country I travel to I talk to them about how we can sell more American goods there, how we can export our crops, our food products. They're the safest in the world. They're the highest quality in the world. And so when the President talks about getting rid of tariffs and getting rid of barriers, it is certainly deeply in line with what we're trying to do from a national security perspective. A growing farm economy in the United States benefits American national security as well.

QUESTION: We're seeing Chapter 12 bankruptcies as high as we've seen in more than a decade – in the circuit that oversees your state Kansas, some 59 percent over the last 10 years. What's your message to the farmers who are feeling this crunch because of this fight between the administration and China?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, that's not the reason. Remember there's a long history of China not treating our farmers well – frankly, many countries in the world, Europe, too, who put in place barriers that made no sense, right? They used food safety as an excuse not to take our products to protect their own domestic agriculture industry. The State Department, for frankly the first time in a long time, has taken a serious effort at cracking these markets open, and sometimes it's tough. Sometimes you got to go break a little glass to get to the right outcome, and that's what President Trump intends to do. We're going to reduce these barriers. We're going to let our farmers compete all across the world. And when these competitions take place against the backdrop of free markets and technology and quality, the things that American farmers do really well, I'm very confident that the future for American farmers will be great, but we've got – we've got to go through this. We have to get access to these markets for our – for our farmers.

QUESTION: Well, I know there are many factors involved, but I'm sure you have to hear it from farmers. They say they feel they're caught in the middle between the U.S. and China and that they're suffering as a result.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's not a conflict with China. We want China to succeed too, but this has to be fair. You hear – you hear discussions about intellectual property and forced technology transfer, the Chinese are stealing our stuff, and often people think of that in the high-tech world, things that would affect Silicon Valley or maybe New York, but the truth is they're stealing our farm tech too. They're stealing our high-end technology the farmers are using. I'm from Kansas. I know that people think of farmers sometimes, they think of a simple production farm. These are scientists. These are engineers. These are technologists delivering this high-yield product, safe and affordable and high quality, and we can't let the Chinese steal that. If they do, these farmers who care so much about the next generation and the generation after that on their family farm – there's a farm in my family that's a century farm, over 100 years old, in Winfield, Kansas. We have to protect this industry for decades to come, and the Trump administration is determined to achieve that.

QUESTION: Will the President walk away from a China deal if it's not a perfect deal?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes. You saw us this past weekend in Hanoi. The President's determined to make sure that he protects his first client, his first obligation to the American people – in this case, the American farmer. This has to work for America. If it doesn't work, we'll keep banging away at it. We're going to get to the right outcome. I'm confident that we will. And I've been around these trade talks with China, things are looking good. I think things are in a good place, but it's got to be right, and we may have to make sure it truly provides a lasting benefit to American farmers.

QUESTION: Some have said that the relationship is near rock bottom with China. Is that fair?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't think it's fair. It is the case that for the first time in a long time you have an administration that's standing up for America, that's not letting China walk in and take our stuff, not letting China walk in and put technology in place that will steal the privacy of American citizens. We are serious at protecting the American people, and sometimes that creates tension. And I think the Chinese have seen that, I think they actually respect it, and I think that's what you see in the trade negotiations, a newfound respect for America standing up for itself.

(Break.)

QUESTION: Regarding the State Department Foreign Service, I know you're also on a bit of a recruiting mission right now to some degree. We've seen applications at the lowest levels since 2008. Why is this happening? Some people believe it may be a morale issue, it may be apprehension about this administration. Why are you seeing these low levels?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, I think they're coming back. I think the applications are going to start coming back in droves. We've – we've really reenergized the place, and I'm excited about that. And I want to go tell this story – I'm going to head to Iowa. I want to tell this story in places other than in the salons of Washington and in New York and on the West Coast. We need a diverse workforce, so we need people that – from Drake and from the University of Northern Iowa and from Kansas University, places that don't often consider careers as professional Foreign Service officers. We want them to be part of the team. Representing America requires a diverse set of people working on behalf of America, and I hope to go out and open up some eyes about what a great life it is to be a diplomat for the United States of America. I think we'll be fine, and I think we'll have the workforce that America so richly deserves.

QUESTION: Secretary Pompeo, thank you very much.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much.

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[Press Releases: Interview With Peter Zampa of Gray Television](#)

Interview

Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC

March 2, 2019

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, you could have picked many places for this agriculture discussion. Why Iowa?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Peter, we decided on Iowa because, first of all, it's the heartland of American agriculture. I'm from Kansas. That is too. But we chose Iowa because it has such an important element of what we're trying to do. We can talk about the importance of American technology and agriculture, the importance of American innovation in agriculture, and then I'm going to have Ambassador Branstad, the ambassador – United States ambassador to China, who, of course, was the governor of Iowa. We want to go to Iowa and talk to them about U.S. trade policy and how it impacts security and how we know the first client for the United States State Department is the people of the – are the people of the United States of America, including those in the heartland. So we wanted to get out there and talk to them about what it is the State Department does for them.

QUESTION: Yeah. No, farmers across the country, including those in Iowa, are waiting on a new trade deal with China. Some folks have been losing business because of these trade disputes. As our nation's chief diplomat, what is your message to these farmers?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We've got to get through this. I'm very confident that we'll get a trade agreement put together. And when we do, it'll turn the lights on. It will create a historic change, a historic set of opportunities for farmers, farmers in Iowa and all across the United States of America.

Peter, for an awfully long time, American farmers have been at an enormous disadvantage. Countries around the world, China included, have just denied access to our farm products – the highest quality, the highest yield, the most affordable products in the world – and these countries have just said no to protect their domestic industries. And so our companies didn't have a chance. Our agriculture companies didn't have a chance to sell their products around the world. The Trump administration is going to change that.

QUESTION: Part of the reason for this Iowa trip is recruiting. You're trying to get folks of all ages interested in working at the State Department. Why should Iowans get involved?

SECRETARY POMPEO: There's no job as great as being able to represent America as a diplomat in every corner of the world. You get a chance to see the world, but most importantly you get a true opportunity to represent the greatest nation in the history of civilization. And, Peter, it's often the case that diplomats come from the east coast. We recruit a lot of people out of Washington, D.C., and Boston and New York. I want a diverse workforce at the State Department, and so I want to make sure that the tremendous opportunity, the incredible privilege of representing America as a diplomat working at the Department of State is something that people in the heartland know about as well.

QUESTION: You're speaking to some Future Farmers of America. What's your message going to be to them to get involved?

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's going to be a great day out in Iowa. We're going to be in Des Moines. We'll have a chance to spend a little bit of time with the governor. We'll talk to some farmers. We're going to talk to Corteva, a business out there.

My message is this: The Trump administration is dedicated to making sure that their kids – and these will be young people; they won't be thinking so much about this – but their kids, the next generation, will have all the same opportunities that their father and their mother and their grandfather and their grandmother all had in agriculture. We're determined to protect these businesses and make sure they can sell to growing populations all around the world.

QUESTION: Now, at the same time you're in Iowa, the attorney for the family of Hoda Muthana, the woman who left Birmingham, Alabama to join ISIS, then she eventually fled the terror group, will be meeting with your counsel in District Court in Washington. Her family is suing you after you decided she's not allowed back in the U.S. What's the case your team is going to make?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So this woman who worked so hard to put American lives at risk – U.S. soldiers, U.S. service members, frankly civilians as well by becoming a terrorist – isn't coming back to the United States of America. She has no right to come back to the United States of America. She is not a U.S. citizen. She has no claim for U.S. citizenship. That's what we'll be telling the court because that's the truth.

QUESTION: Folks who want to see her go through the legal process here in the States, what's your response to them, rather than letting her live at large elsewhere?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, this woman should not come back to the United States. It presents an enormous risk to the United States of America if she returns and those like her return – and President Trump has made very, very clear. If we've got to prosecute terrorists here in the United States, we're completely prepared to do that, but in this instance it makes no sense.

QUESTION: Now, you've only had a few hours to rest before jet-setting off to Des Moines again, just returning from the important trip to Vietnam, the second summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. The President said he takes Kim Jong-un at his word that he didn't know about the treatment of the University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier that led to his death. Do you believe Kim Jong-un?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So you know I've had a chance to spend a fair amount of time with the Warmbier family. They are great people, truly wonderful people who suffered a horrific loss, and the President said that again yesterday too. The President also said that he understands who is responsible for his death. It's the regime in North Korea. He holds them responsible.

Most folks who are asking this question really are trying to get at why would we engage, why did we have those discussions in Hanoi, why have I been negotiating with a country that has horrible human rights abuses. And the answer is those were going on for an awfully long time. The previous administration took an approach of strategic patience. You can see, you can see, that that didn't work. We're trying to fix it. We're trying to correct. We're trying to get North Korea to course correct so there'll never be another suffering like the Warmbier family has gone through.

We also had the good fortune – I personally had the good fortune – of bringing three Americans home. I wish we could have brought Otto home in a condition that was better and this tragedy had not taken place. We are determined to get Americans back. We got another American back from Yemen just this past week. The Trump administration is serious about American safety abroad, and what happened in North Korea was absolutely outrageous, and President Trump knows that.

QUESTION: Do you believe Kim Jong-un when he says he didn't know about the treatment that led to his death?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We take very seriously the North Korean human rights violations, and we know exactly who's responsible for the death of Otto Warmbier. The North Korean regime is responsible for the death of Otto Warmbier.

QUESTION: So Kim –

SECRETARY POMPEO: There's no doubt about that.

QUESTION: So Kim Jong-un?

SECRETARY POMPEO: The North Korean regime is responsible for the death of Otto Warmbier, end of story.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for taking this time.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

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