

# [Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Meeting With Czech Foreign Minister Tomas Petricek](#)

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 22, 2019

---

The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Secretary Michael R. Pompeo met with Czech Foreign Minister Tomas Petricek today. The Secretary thanked Foreign Minister Petricek for the Czechs' service as U.S. Protecting Power in Syria and for continued Czech support in Afghanistan and Iraq. They reaffirmed the importance and strength of U.S.-Czech bilateral relations and cooperation worldwide, the mutual benefits of the Czech Republic's plans to modernize its military, and the need to view energy security and cyber security as integral parts of national security. They also discussed regional and global security challenges including Russia, Iran, and North Korea.

*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: Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs](#)

# Kimberly Breier Travels to Brazil and Paraguay

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 22, 2019

---

Assistant Secretary Kimberly Breier will travel to Brazil and Paraguay February 24 through March 2 to promote regional prosperity, security, democracy, and human rights.

From February 24 to 28, Assistant Secretary Breier will travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, and Sao Paulo to deepen U.S.-Brazil cooperation in support of democracy in the Western Hemisphere, especially in Venezuela, and our shared economic prosperity and security. She will meet with senior government officials including Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo, Minister of Justice Sergio Moro, Secretary for Trade and International Affairs Marcos Troyjo, International Affairs Advisor Filipe Martins, and Federal Deputy for Sao Paulo Eduardo Bolsonaro. Assistant Secretary Breier also will meet with business leaders, students, and members of civil society. Furthermore, she will meet with UNHCR representatives, ambassadors from Lima Group countries, and Venezuelan migrants.

On March 1, Assistant Secretary Breier will travel to Paraguay. She will meet with President Mario Abdo Benitez, Finance Minister Benigno Lopez Benítez, Deputy Foreign Minister Hugo Saguier Caballero, Attorney General Sandra Quinonez Astigarraga, and SEPRELAD Minister Maria Epifania Gonzalez de Rodríguez. They will discuss bilateral and regional issues, including security cooperation, support for Venezuela, economic prosperity, and our shared commitment to democracy. She will also engage with civil society leaders, including anti-corruption activists.

For trip updates, please follow @WHAAsstSecty. For press inquiries, please email [WHAPress@state.gov](mailto:WHAPress@state.gov).

*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: United States-Israel Diplomatic Efforts Underpin First Israeli Spacecraft Landing on the Moon**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 22, 2019

---

The United States congratulates the Government of Israel and our respective commercial space industries for the historic SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launch of [SpaceIL's Lunar Lander](#) named Beresheet. The mission [launched yesterday from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station](#), Florida, at 8:45 p.m. EST and will land on the Moon in about two months. The non-profit organization [SpaceIL](#) and Israel Aerospace Industries, with technical support from the Israel Space Agency, funded and built this lander. The mission required governmental authorization and continuing supervision, consistent with obligations set out in the [Outer Space Treaty](#), to which both Israel and the United States are party. The U.S. government, as a responsible space-faring nation and launching state, also commends the U.S. commercial space sector for providing affordable launch services to another closely allied spacefaring nation. In fact, the Google X prize was the primary incentive that persuaded SpaceIL to embark on this endeavor.

We look forward to expanding our partnership in space with Israel as the nation takes on greater responsibilities in the international community of spacefaring nations (as in its recent assumption of the 2nd Vice Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space). Israel is fostering its own innovative commercial space industry to produce a mission that will make Israel one of only four nations (United States, the former Soviet Union, China, and Israel) to reach the surface of the Moon through a controlled landing. This mission has fostered a partnership between [NASA](#) and the Israel Space Agency and both agencies will share the resulting discoveries with the global scientific community. NASA will contribute to the mission with communications support and observations from its Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter spacecraft and by providing a laser retroreflector

that will fly onboard the Israeli lander.

For further information, contact [OES-PA-DG@state.gov](mailto:OES-PA-DG@state.gov). For more information about outer space diplomacy, please visit [the website for the U.S. Department of State's Office of Space and Advanced Technology](#).

*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: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations Announces the Construction Award for the U.S. Chancery Major Rehabilitation in Copenhagen, Denmark](#)**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 22, 2019

---

The Department of State has awarded the construction contract for a major rehabilitation of the U.S. Embassy Chancery in Copenhagen, Denmark to Facilities Development Corporation of Reston, Virginia. The architect is Beyer Blinder Belle of Washington, DC.

OBO's mission is to provide safe, secure, and functional facilities that represent the U.S. government to host nations and support our staff in achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives. These facilities represent U.S. values and the best in U.S. architecture, engineering, technology, sustainability, art, culture, construction execution, and resiliency.

For further information, please contact Christine Foushee at [FousheeCT@state.gov](mailto:FousheeCT@state.gov), or visit [www.state.gov/obo](http://www.state.gov/obo).

*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: Public Designation of, and Visa Restrictions Placed on, Multiple Officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Due to Involvement in Significant Corruption, Human Rights Violations or Abuses, or Undermining of Democracy**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
February 22, 2019

---

The United States stands with the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.) following that country's historic transfer of power. The elections reflect the desire of the people of the D.R.C. for change and accountable government institutions. However, there are legitimate concerns over the conduct and transparency of the electoral process.

The Secretary of State is publicly designating, due to their involvement in significant corruption relating to the electoral process, the following individuals: Mr. Corneille Nangaa, President of the Democratic Republic of

the Congo's (D.R.C.) National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI); Mr. Norbert Basengezi Katintima, Vice President of CENI; Mr. Marcellin Mukolo Basengezi, Advisor to the President of CENI; Mr. Aubin Minaku Ndjalandjoko, President of the D.R.C.'s National Assembly; and Mr. Benoit Lwamba Bindu, President of the D.R.C.'s Constitutional Court. This public designation is being made under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2019, (Div. F, P.L. 116-6-).

Section 7031(c) provides that, in cases where the Secretary of State has credible information that officials of foreign governments have been involved in significant corruption or a gross violation of human rights, those individuals and their immediate family members are ineligible for entry into the United States.

The Secretary of State is also imposing visa restrictions on election officials as well as military and government officials believed to be responsible for, complicit in, or to have engaged in human rights violations or abuses or undermining of the democratic process in the D.R.C.

These individuals enriched themselves through corruption, or directed or oversaw violence against people exercising their rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. They operated with impunity at the expense of the Congolese people and showed a blatant disregard for democratic principles and human rights.

The Department of State emphasizes that the actions announced today are specific to certain officials and not directed at the Congolese people or the newly elected government. This decision reflects the Department of State's commitment to working with the new D.R.C. government to realize its expressed commitment to end corruption and strengthen democracy and accountability, and respect for human rights.

For more information, please contact [AF-Press@state.gov](mailto:AF-Press@state.gov).

*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.*