

# Press Releases: United States Is Ready To Provide Urgent Humanitarian Aid to the People of Venezuela

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
January 24, 2019

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Today, Secretary of State Pompeo announced that the United States is ready to provide more than \$20 million in initial humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela as they struggle to cope with severe food and medicine shortages and the other dire impacts of their country's political and economic crisis caused by the illegitimate Maduro regime.

Venezuela's National Assembly has stressed the need for immediate international humanitarian assistance. In response, the United States is ready to provide emergency aid throughout Venezuela to help meet the increasingly urgent humanitarian needs of Venezuelans affected by this crisis.

The United States also continues to provide robust support for response efforts throughout the region as the growing impacts of Maduro's crisis spill into neighboring countries. Since Fiscal Year 2017, the United States has provided more than \$140 million in humanitarian and development assistance to support affected countries' emergency efforts and build their long-term capacity to host the more than three million people who have fled repression and chaos in Venezuela since 2014.

We call on appropriate Venezuelan authorities to immediately implement the critical economic and political reforms necessary to end the hyperinflation, supply shortages, and corruption at the heart of this crisis.

The United States stands with the people of Venezuela and the communities throughout the region that have generously taken in their neighbors during this time of crisis. We commend the contributions of regional governments and all international donors, and encourage additional contributions from the international community to meet growing needs in Venezuela and the region.

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## **Press Releases: Remarks at the Organization of American States**

Remarks

Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Organization of American States

Washington, DC

January 24, 2019

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**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you very much. The United States is a friend of Venezuela and of the Venezuelan people. We have watched Venezuelans suffer for far too long. We know what they know, that the tyranny of the now defunct

Maduro regime has far too long – for far too long choked the country and its citizens.

Yesterday, in solidarity with the Venezuelan people, and out of respect for Venezuelan democracy, the United States proudly recognized National Assembly President Juan Guaido as the interim president of Venezuela. You've seen the statements from President Trump and from myself.

Many other countries, including a number of OAS states, have also recognized the interim president. We thank them for their support.

It's now time for the OAS as an institution as a whole to do the same. All OAS member states must align themselves with democracy and respect for the rule of law. All member states who have committed to uphold the Inter-American Democratic Charter must now recognize the interim president.

The time for debate is done. The regime of former president Nicolas Maduro is illegitimate. His regime is morally bankrupt, it's economically incompetent, and it is profoundly corrupt. It is undemocratic to the core. I repeat: The regime of former president Nicolas Maduro is illegitimate. We, therefore, consider all of its declarations and actions illegitimate and invalid.

In light of these facts, we call on Venezuelan security forces to ensure the protection of interim President Guaido's physical integrity and his safety. We've seen reports that a number of protesters were killed yesterday and that more than one hundred were arrested, so I reiterate our warning about any decision by remnant elements of the Maduro regime to use violence to repress the peaceful democratic transition.

The United States did not arrive at this conclusion overnight. We came to this conclusion after a long and bitter experience and following a considered assessment of the facts. And we're not alone. The OAS General Assembly has itself agreed to these facts. In June of last year, the OAS General Assembly declared the re-election of former president Maduro an invalid sham. This past January 10th, the OAS Permanent Council declared former president Maduro's second term illegitimate.

Venezuela's National Assembly became the only legitimate, duly and democratically elected body in the country. On January 23rd, National Assembly President Juan Guaido declared himself the interim president of Venezuela, pursuant to Article 333 and 350 of Venezuela's constitution. He made this declaration with the full support of the National Assembly and, most importantly, of the Venezuelan people.

In his public address, interim President Guaido also outlined the steps he plans to take to restore democracy to his country, including free, fair, transparent, and truly democratic elections.

The United States stands solidly behind him. We stand ready to support the efforts of the National Assembly, the Venezuelan people, and the interim president to restore democracy and respect for the rule of law in Venezuela.

We also stand ready to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of

Venezuela as soon as logistically possible. Today, I am announcing that the United States is ready to provide more than \$20 million in humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela. These funds are to help them cope with the severe food and medicine shortages and other dire impacts of their country's political and economic crisis. Our announcement of aid is in response to a request from the National Assembly, led by the interim president.

As a friend of the Venezuelan people, we stand ready to help them even more, to help them begin the process of rebuilding their country and their economy from the destruction wrought by the criminally incompetent and illegitimate Maduro regime.

Our support for Venezuela's democratic hopes and dreams is in sharp contrast to the authoritarian regimes across the globe who have lined up to prop up former President Maduro. And there is no regime which has aided and abetted Maduro's tyranny like the one in Havana. Maduro's illegitimate rule was for years sustained by an influx of Cuban security and intelligence officials. They schooled Venezuela's secret police in the dark arts of torture, repression, and citizen control. Maduro was a fine student at the Cuban academy of oppression.

We call on the OAS and all its member states to act on basic, decent, democratic principles and the incontrovertible facts on the ground.

Each of us – each of us – must live up to our calling to promote and defend democracy, as expressed in the tenets of the Inter-American Democratic Charter, to which everyone in this chamber is a signatory.

And we call on all our partners and responsible OAS member states to show leadership and pledge support for Venezuela's democratic transition and for interim President Guaido's pivotal role in that.

We look forward to welcoming Venezuela back into the fold of responsible democratic nations and remaining in our inter-American community. We look forward to welcoming representation of the interim Venezuelan Government to the OAS at the earliest possible opportunity. And we look forward to working with all responsible OAS member states, with the Venezuelan people, our inter-American system, and with the interim government of President Guaido to restore democracy in Venezuela.

We – we each – have a critical opportunity to help the Venezuelan people live free once again. I ask my colleagues to reconvene a meeting of foreign ministers to continue our conversation on the peaceful democratic transition for Venezuela. History will remember whether we help them or not. The United States calls on all nations of the OAS to make the right choice and make that right choice right now. Thank you.

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## [Press Releases: Interview With Martha MacCallum of Fox News](#)

Interview  
Michael R. Pompeo  
  
Secretary of State

State Department  
Washington, DC  
January 23, 2019

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**QUESTION:** You said new winds are blowing in the world and they're positive. You pointed to the Brexit example and also to President Trump. Nations matter, borders matter. One headline said, "Mike Pompeo drops an anti-globalist stink bomb ... with a smile."

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** (Laughter.) Well, I did smile. Martha, it's good to be with you. What I did was try to explain to those who were sitting there in Davos why it is that America has been an enormous force for good over these two years of the Trump administration, how our policies make not only America safer but the whole world, and contribute to economic growth and wealth creation and freedom all around the world. Those were the things I talked about – the importance of the nation-state as the fundamental building block for national security and, frankly, for stability in regions as well.

It can sometimes seem disruptive. It can sometimes seem like America is acting in ways that are causing trouble, but these fundamental premises that the – that were built out over 70 years ago need to be relooked, and that's what President Trump is driving.

**QUESTION:** That, obviously, brings to mind NATO and a report the other day that the President had said to top national security officials that he didn't necessarily see the point anymore of NATO. Do you agree?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** This administration has done more good for NATO than the

previous several administrations combined. The increased resources available for Secretary General Stoltenberg and for NATO partners around the world are significantly greater, approaching now \$100 billion greater than they would have been absent the pressure that President Trump put on. He did that for American national security. That is, we want NATO to be stronger to protect America. But importantly, European nations now are more firmly protected as well.

**QUESTION:** So it sounds like you think it was a waste of time that the House yesterday went through the process of passing a bill that would reject any effort that the President might make to withdraw from NATO.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Yeah. That's silly.

**QUESTION:** You look at people like General Mattis and Brett McGurk, who on their way out really made an effort to point out their concerns about the President's adherence to alliances or his confidence in these alliances going forward. And you talk about how the dynamic needs to change – 70 years later, we're in a different world.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** President Trump knows that America can't go it alone. We need partners. We've built out coalitions of dozens and dozens of countries to defeat ISIS. We've built an enormous coalition to put pressure on North Korea, to protect not only the United States but Japan, South Korea, and the whole region.

President Trump understands that strong nations will have alliances that work on behalf of their countries and all countries, and so that's what we're trying to do not only with NATO but with every organization around the world. Is it working? Is it delivering security for the American people? If it is, we'll reinforce, and where it's not we'll work to make it better.

This President is committed to ensuring that we have security for the American people, and by that we'll also make sure that the world is safer as well.

**QUESTION:** But there are some people who ask the question about Article 5. If Montenegro is attacked, should young men and women from the United States fight to defend Montenegro? What's the answer to that?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** The answer is coalitions can work when every member of the coalition is doing their fair share. That's how these relationships have worked for an awfully long time. And unfortunately, some countries took a vacation for 20 years and thought that the threats from Russia or from Asia or from all the places in the Middle East and terrorism – they weren't doing what they needed to do to protect their countries. Our urging is this: every country needs to make sure it's contributing enough to make sure that their country is secure, and when they do, America will be with them to support their efforts.

**QUESTION:** So yes, American soldiers would go to defend Montenegro, if needed?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I'm not going to get into hypotheticals about what might

happen or how a certain scenario might unfold, but make no mistake about it: America has always been there when there were important American and global interests at stake.

**QUESTION:** With regard to the decision to leave Syria – and it's a gradual decision, is what we're seeing play out – two new attacks over the – one attempted and four killed last week in Syria. How long is the commitment there?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I was with the President over– when our Americans were returned on this past Saturday. It's always difficult to be with those families. These are patriots. These are great Americans who sacrificed their life to help keep America safe. President Trump understands that and respects that commitment. And so in Syria, President Trump has made a tactical decision. We're going to withdraw our 2,000 uniformed military personnel from that country, but make no mistake about it: the defeat of the caliphate, the ISIS caliphate in Syria, is almost complete. We're going to stay there till it's done. This threat from radical Islamic terrorism is a global threat, and America will posture itself in a way to ensure that we're doing all that we can to protect the American people from that threat.

**QUESTION:** So not on the ground, bombing from a distance – is that the way you see it in the future?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I think what President Trump will do is he'll – we'll look at each situation and make the best decision on how to approach it. If it requires American forces to be someplace, we'll do that. President Trump very much wants to end these long, drawn-out – 17 years now in Afghanistan. He says let's find a way to achieve the ends to protect Americans from the threat from radical Islamic terrorism, but let's see if we can do it in a way that is sustainable and makes sense.

**QUESTION:** What do you say to those like Brett McGurk, who I mentioned before, who say that no one's happier than Russia and Iran when they hear the news that the United States is pulling out of Syria, and likely in the near-term future out of Afghanistan as well?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** It's a great question. Let's talk about happiness in Iran and Russia. What is Russia seeing from the Trump administration? Hundreds of sanctions, an enormous military buildup by the United States of America, a missile posture – a missile defense review that makes sure that America will be capable of defending itself not only next year but 20 years from now. I assure you that none of these things sat well with Vladimir Putin.

Let's talk about Iran. Do you think they're happy that the largest set of sanctions ever emplaced on an economy – that is likely to fall into recession by the spring of this year – makes the Iranians happy? To see the global coalition against Iran that has been put in place – not only Arab countries, but countries from Asia and Africa will join us in February in Warsaw for a ministerial that will address Middle East stability and Iran.

I don't think for one moment those two countries believe they're in a better

place today with the Trump administration than they were with Barack Obama and John Kerry in charge of this country.

**QUESTION:** So John Kerry, former Secretary of State, was in Davos. He was asked what advice he would give to President Trump.

[A video was played.]

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I must tell you, we don't pay much attention to the advice that Secretary Kerry's providing to our administration. We're doing our best to clean up the failures that occurred on his watch.

**QUESTION:** With regard to pulling out of Syria and Afghanistan – that's the plan as well, right, to pull out of Afghanistan?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I'm not going to comment on the future plans and intentions in any of those places. The President will make those announcements when the time is right.

**QUESTION:** So what do you say to those who look back at Bush doctrine, that it's better to fight them there than fight them here? That was the post-9/11 –

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Well, Martha, we are. But we are. We are. We took down a caliphate that grew in the previous administration. You remember, Martha. You remember the pictures of people kneeling on beaches and people in cages on fire. This is the space, this is the real estate that ISIS built out prior to the time that the Trump administration came into office. And we literally are in the last set of square kilometers in Syria. We're done in Iraq with the real estate; we took back Mosul. We still have work to do. ISIS and the threat from terrorism remains, to be sure. But we made enormous progress, and we did it there.

**QUESTION:** You're a former military man. What do you say to those who look at the Kurds who fought alongside us, who don't want to be abandoned there and who feel very vulnerable if we leave their side?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I think the President was very clear about his expectation with how the Kurds will need to be treated after the time that the U.S. military personnel depart. We understand the work that they did alongside of us. It was enormously important and good work, and we're going to ensure that the Kurds have a proper place in Syria after our departure.

**QUESTION:** And you think that Turkey will abide by that?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I've had lots of conversations. I think we have a way forward.

**QUESTION:** North Korea. Some look at North Korea and remember the meeting, the first meeting that the President had with Kim Jong-un – shaking hands, President came back, he said no doubt in his mind that the denuclearization process was underway and that it would absolutely happen. Now there are reports that there's a new top-secret missile base, and perhaps 19 new



missiles that we can't identify the locations of. Is that progress?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Let me start by saying the American people should be – should rest assured that the United States understands deeply what's taking place in North Korea. Sometimes things pop in press reports and folks act like it's news. The American people should understand that the United States Intelligence Community and our security apparatus knows full well what activities are taking place and, frankly, which ones aren't.

With respect to the negotiation –

**QUESTION:** Are you saying that those are not taking place?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I just want the American people to understand that the United States Intelligence Community is fully aware of what's going on in North Korea and those things which are not. I don't comment on U.S. intelligence substantively.

Second, with respect to the negotiations, President Trump and I have both, for the – from the very beginning, from the first time I went to North Korea as the CIA director, understand that this is going to be a process that is going to take some time. First step: stopping their testing of their missile program. Second step: stopping their nuclear tests. Those still continue. There's been real progress made. There are many conversations going on. Chairman Kim continues to assure the President of the United States he is intent on denuclearization, and I hope that at the end of February, when the two leaders get together, we can make a substantial step along the way.

**QUESTION:** Quick question for you on Kansas politics. A lot of speculation out there that you might consider running for Pat Roberts' seat. There were reports that you spent some time over the weekend with Republican strategist Ward Baker to discuss that possibility, and that Mitch McConnell is urging you to run.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Lots of folks have reached out to me and suggested I ought to do that. I have suggested to them that I have a very full plate as Secretary of State, and I intend to keep doing this so long as President Trump will commit to it.

**QUESTION:** So no intention to get involved in the Senate race in Kansas?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Martha, every day I'm trying to make sure that I'm doing what President Trump wants me to do to keep America safe. That's my singular focus.

**QUESTION:** Is Mitch McConnell trying to change your mind about that? I know that Kris Kobach, who lost the governor's race there, is considered a possibility to run for that seat.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** I spoke to Senator McConnell once. He asked me if I'd think about it, and I told him I appreciated the phone call.

**QUESTION:** Would you support Kris Kobach if he decides to run in that seat?

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Martha, I'm so far out of politics. I think it might even be a federal violation if I answered that question, so I'm going to just say I appreciate your interest.

**QUESTION:** Secretary Pompeo, thank you very much.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Thank you, Martha.

**QUESTION:** Great to be with you today.

**SECRETARY POMPEO:** Wonderful to be with you as well.

**QUESTION:** Thanks for your time.

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## [Press Releases: Deputy Secretary Sullivan's Meeting With Foreign Minister Carl Greenidge of Guyana](#)

Readout  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
January 23, 2019

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The below is attributable to Deputy Spokesperson Robert Palladino:□

Deputy Secretary of State John J. Sullivan met today with Guyanese Foreign Minister Carl Greenidge in Washington, D.C. Both leaders commended the strength of the U.S.-Guyana partnership, and Deputy Secretary Sullivan affirmed Guyana's sovereign rights and jurisdiction within its Exclusive Economic Zone. They also discussed preparations for Guyana's upcoming

national elections as well as the importance of U.S.-Guyana cooperation for Guyana's safety and security in light of instability in neighboring Venezuela.

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## **Press Releases: Continuing U.S. Diplomatic Presence in Venezuela**

Press Statement  
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
January 23, 2019

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The United States stands with interim President Juan Guaido, the democratically elected National Assembly, and the people of Venezuela as they peacefully restore constitutional order to their country. We stand ready to support interim President Guaido as he establishes a transitional government and carries out his constitutional duties as interim President, including determining the status of diplomatic representatives in the United States and other countries.

We welcome interim President Guaido's directive to all diplomatic missions in Venezuela that Venezuela intends to maintain diplomatic relations with all countries. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with Venezuela and will conduct our relations with Venezuela through the government of interim President Guaido, who has invited our mission to remain in Venezuela. The United States does not recognize the Maduro regime as the government of Venezuela. Accordingly the United States does not consider former president Nicolas Maduro to have the legal authority to break diplomatic relations with

the United States or to declare our diplomats persona non grata.

We call on the Venezuelan military and security forces to continue protecting the welfare and well-being of all Venezuelan citizens, as well as U.S. and other foreign citizens in Venezuela. We call on all parties to refrain from measures that are inconsistent with the privileges and immunities enjoyed by members of the diplomatic community. The United States will take appropriate actions to hold accountable anyone who endangers the safety and security of our mission and its personnel.

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