

Press Releases: Interview With Margaret Brennan of CBS Face the Nation

Interview
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
May 13, 2018

QUESTION: We want to welcome Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, our first guest here in the new Face the Nation studio. Mr. Secretary, thank you for joining us.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's great to be with you. Happy Mother's Day. It's a beautiful studio.

QUESTION: Thank you. Thank you. It's been an extraordinary week for you on many fronts. I want to ask you about North Korea. They have, in the past, pledged to dismantle nuclear sites before. They're saying they're going to do it again. Is this latest pledge a theatrical gesture, or is it significant?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, my trip was designed to lay the groundwork to prepare for the President's meeting with Chairman Kim on June 12th, now just 30 days away. We have seen this happen before. We have our eyes wide open with respect to the fact that the North Koreans have not proved worthy of their promises. But we're hopeful that this will be different, that we won't do the traditional model where they do something, and we give them a bunch of money, and then both sides walk away. We're hoping this will be bigger, different, faster. Our ask is complete and total denuclearization of North Korea, and it is the President's intention to achieve that. As he has said, we'll see if that works, but we're setting conditions for a successful meeting between the two leaders.

QUESTION: Have you defined denuclearization?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah. Total, full, complete.

QUESTION: That means full dismantling –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes.

QUESTION: – stopping computer modeling –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah.

QUESTION: – getting rid of the centrifuges –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah.

QUESTION: – stopping all enrichment, getting inspectors on the ground?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, ma'am, the same deal we should have done with Iran.

QUESTION: So for you, you've talked about making it worth North Korea's while financially –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: – if they follow through. John Bolton said today on another network that no one should look to the U.S. for economic aid, including North Korea.

SECRETARY POMPEO: That's right.

QUESTION: How do you reconcile those two things. They seem to be in contrast.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Oh, it's very, very – no, no. Oh, no, ma'am. Very, very consistent. What Chairman Kim will get from America is our finest – our entrepreneurs, our risk-takers, our capital providers, not our taxpayers. They'll get people who –

QUESTION: Private capital?

SECRETARY POMPEO: They will get private capital that comes in. North Korea is desperately in need of energy support, electricity for their people. They are – they're in great need of agricultural equipment and technology, the finest from the Midwest that I come from. We can deliver that. And as I said earlier this week, we can create conditions for real economic prosperity for the North Korean people that will rival that of the South, and that is our expectation. It won't be U.S. taxpayers. It will be American know-how, knowledge, entrepreneurs, and risk-takers working alongside the North Korean people to create a robust economy for their people, too.

QUESTION: That sounds like sanctions relief –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well –

QUESTION: – to make it possible for a company to invest directly in North Korea when we do that –

SECRETARY POMPEO: Ma'am, if we get denuclearization, of course, there will be sanctions relief, certainly. There'll be more than that. There'll be a real – the President has a commitment, and he will make this commitment to Chairman Kim, I am confident, that says if you do the things we need to do so that America is no longer held at risk by your nuclear weapons arsenal, and that you get rid of your CBW program and missiles that threaten the world, we will

ensure that your people have the opportunity for the greatness that I know Chairman Kim wants them to have.

QUESTION: Not many secretaries of state get to say they brought three Americans home in their second week on the job or have even been to North Korea twice in six weeks' time. But I'm wondering, in your interactions with Kim, because you've had them directly, have you assured him that the U.S. isn't trying to oust him from power?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I have told him that what President Trump wants is to see the North Korean regime get rid of its nuclear weapons program in completely and in totality; and in exchange for that, we are prepared to ensure that the North Korean people get the opportunity that they so richly deserve. It's pretty straightforward, and I said earlier this week I think in that sense Chairman Kim shares that same objective. I think he understands that President Trump has put an enormous pressure campaign in place with the aim of achieving a good outcome for North Korea and its people. That's our objective. That's the American goal that President Trump set forward.

QUESTION: So the U.S. no longer believes that Kim Jong-un is holding on to these weapons to secure his place in power? In other words, you are saying no regime change?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Only time will tell how these negotiations will proceed. The President uses the language, says we'll see. We're – there's still a lot of work to do. The American leadership under President Trump has its eyes wide open. It could be that we won't be successful. It's possible; we acknowledge that. We've watched this fail before. But the model that has been employed here is fundamentally different, and we are hopeful that we will get a fundamentally different outcome.

QUESTION: What will this summit in Singapore look like? Are you walking into the room with President Trump to sit across from Kim Jong-un?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know.

QUESTION: You don't know yet?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I don't know. We're working on the details, the actual blocking and tackling of the meeting. We have been working on them for weeks. We'll have teams working on them in the days and weeks ahead. We've got now some 30 days, I guess it is, and there will be a great deal of work done between our two countries between now and then to finally set the stage for what we hope will be a very successful visit in Singapore between our two leaders.

QUESTION: So you're still figuring out the protocol, but you spent the most time with Kim Jong-un.

SECRETARY POMPEO: And I've –

QUESTION: What has struck you about him?

SECRETARY POMPEO: What struck me about – me is very knowledgeable in the sense of he knows the files. He's very capable of engaging in complex set of discussions. When I ask him a question about something that's a little off, he answers it. There's no notecards. It is Chairman Kim, in this case, interacting with me directly, having a robust discussion about what the outlines of a successful negotiation between our two countries might ultimately be.

QUESTION: You brought those three Americans home from North Korea. There are still at least four Americans being held in Iran. Their families are concerned that tearing up this diplomacy, exiting the nuclear deal, puts their loved ones at risk. What can you tell them?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Two things. First, everyone should know that this administration is intent on bringing home every American who is held anywhere in the world. We've got Pastor Brunson in Turkey that we desperately need to get back. We have others held in Iran and in Syria. We are working diligently to get each of them back.

With respect to whether the actions of this past week with respect to the JCPOA increased anyone's risk, I think that's ludicrous. The Iranian bad behavior increased, it only increased, during the time of the JCPOA.

QUESTION: Are you willing – are you willing to carry out a prisoner swap with Iran still?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I can't answer that question. We didn't exchange anything for these North Korean detainees. They came back because Chairman Kim thought it was in his best interest to do so, and we are thankful for that. And we are hopeful that Mr. Rouhani, who fancies himself a Westerner, would undertake to release the Iranian detainees as well. He talks about the fact that he wants European business there. The least he could do would be to return all of the people that his country, Mr. Rouhani's country, has hold of.

QUESTION: Fundamentally, a number of our European allies, as you know – I'm sure you've had some difficult conversations in the past few days – have been frustrated that the U.S. cut short the diplomacy, in their view. They said in a conversation with you last Friday you assured them that they had – they were close to this side deal to address the things President Trump was worried about. Why not try it? Why not finish that? Why did the President cut that off?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Oh, Margaret, we did. We did try. The President set out a set of objectives. He tasked me in my first couple weeks to work with the Europeans to try and do it, although the work had been ongoing before I arrived at the State Department. And at no time were we able to reach an agreement. The Europeans simply wouldn't accede to the requirements to fix the deal. And so they had some 90 days to do so. We were –

QUESTION: Mm-hmm. They thought they had another five days and could get there on the sunset clause.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Margaret, we had 90 days to work at it. And you should know we will continue to work. President Trump and President Macron have both said we want to get a deal that's right, a bigger deal. We will be hard at that in the weeks ahead. I hope to be a central part of achieving that. It would be a wonderful thing if we could get the Europeans to do this.

But Margaret, I do want to add this: Fundamentally, what's happened during the time of the JCPOA was that the Iranian wealth creation fueled their malign behavior. The money that they had to go and launch missiles into Riyadh and Israel – putting Americans at risk – was provided by the economic benefits they got from the JCPOA. President Trump wants to starve them of that wealth.

QUESTION: So fundamentally though, are you trying to negotiate a new nuclear deal, or are you trying to put together a coalition to defeat Iran?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We are going to put together a coalition that pushes back against not only Iran's nuclear program – which, by the way, Margaret, they still deny. No Iranian leader has admitted they had a weapons program, and the facts are now public that they did. They ought to at least be honest about that. But it's not going to just be the nuclear file. It will be their missile program. It will be their effort to build Hizballah. It'll be their threats against Israel. It'll be the work that they're doing in Yemen to launch missiles into Saudi Arabia, for goodness sakes.

This is the activity that the Iranian regime has undertaken during the JCPOA. We're going to make a shift. We're going to deny them the benefit of the economic wealth that has been created and put real pressure, so that they'll stop the full scale of the sponsorship of terrorism with which they've been engaged in these past years.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, thank you for coming on Face the Nation.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much, Margaret. Happy Mother's Day to you.

QUESTION: Thank you.

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Press Releases: Interview With Chris Wallace of Fox News Sunday

Interview
Mike Pompeo

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Washington, DC
May 13, 2018

QUESTION: And joining us now, the new and very busy Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Mr. Secretary, welcome back to Fox News Sunday.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Good morning, Chris. It's great to be with you.

QUESTION: Let's start with breaking news. First of all, that savage attack last night in Paris, a Chechen knifing killing one person, wounding four others. What can you tell us about a possible link to terror?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, we don't know much more. We know that the caliphate ISIS has claimed responsibility. They said he was one of their soldiers. We can't verify that yet. The French authorities, with all the intelligence help the United States can provide, we'll do our best to unpack this in the coming hours.

QUESTION: Okay, let's talk about some other breaking news. The North Koreans announced yesterday that they are going to blow up their nuclear site in 10 to 12 days. How big a development is this, and is that, do we believe, their only nuclear test site?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Chris, it's good news. Every single site that the North Koreans have that can inflict risk upon the American people that is destroyed, eliminated, dismantled is good news for the American people and for the world. And so this is one step along the way. I had a good set of meetings this past week aimed at heading in exactly this direction.

QUESTION: I want to go back to the comment – and Kevin just played it – your comment on Friday that if Kim chooses the, quote, “right path,” the U.S. is prepared to work with North Korea to, quote, “achieve prosperity.” What does that mean in terms of direct U.S. investment in North Korea? And are we, as part of this, willing, in effect, to guarantee Kim's security, that regime change will be off the table?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Chris, here's what this will look like. This will be Americans coming in – private sector Americans, not the U.S. taxpayer – private sector Americans coming in to help build out the energy grid – they need enormous amounts of electricity in North Korea; to work with them to develop infrastructure, all the things that the North Korean people need, the capacity for American agriculture to support North Korea so they can eat meat and have healthy lives. Those are the kind of things that, if we get what it is the President has demanded – the complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of North Korea – that the American people will offer in spades.

QUESTION: And as part of that, are we, in effect, saying to Kim, “If you give us what we want, you can stay on in power?”

SECRETARY POMPEO: We will have to provide security assurances to be sure. This has been a tradeoff that has been pending for 25 years. No president has ever put America in a position where the North Korean leadership thought that this was truly possible, that the Americans would actually do this, would lead to the place where America was no longer held at risk by the North Korean regime. That's the objectives. When I said earlier this week that I think Chairman Kim shares the objectives with the American people, I am convinced of that. Now the task is for President Trump and he to meet to validate the process by which this would go forward, to set out those markers so that we can negotiate this outcome.

QUESTION: Do you have any problem, given Kim's history and the history of his family as an oppressive regime, any problems with the idea of the U.S., even if we get our deal, in effect, giving a security guarantee to the Kim regime?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Look, we'll have to see how the negotiations proceed, but make no mistake about it: America's interest here is preventing the risk that North Korea will launch a nuclear weapon into LA or Denver or into the very place we're sitting here this morning, Chris. That's our objective, that's the end state the President has laid out, and that's the mission that he sent me on this past week to put us on the trajectory to go achieve that.

QUESTION: Let's talk about denuclearization, the objective. Two weeks ago, National Security Advisor John Bolton sat in this very seat, and he told me that the U.S. negotiating position going in is that Kim has to ship out, has to dismantle and take out of the country all of his nuclear weapons, all of his nuclear infrastructure, all of his long-range missiles before the U.S. will grant any concessions. On the other hand, this week, Kim met with Chinese President Xi and he called for, quote, “phased and synchronous measures,” in other words, action for action. Have you and Kim agreed what the sequencing is? Is it all of the actions by him first, or is it step by step? And is that something, as I say, that you've agreed with, or is it something that Kim and the President will have to work out at the summit?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Chris, we've had discussions on how this would proceed. There's still a great deal of detail to be worked on, and in the coming weeks we will continue to work on that so that we can be in a good spot on June 12th in Singapore for President Trump. But make no mistake about it: We've

done this before, right? We've done trade for trade, moment for moment; you give me X, I give you Y; and it has failed repeatedly. I think Chairman Kim understands that. I think he appreciates the fact that this is going to have to be different and big and special, and something that has never been undertaken before. If we're going to get to this historic outcome, both sides have to be prepared to take truly historic measures to achieve it.

QUESTION: And how confident are you? Because you're going to be putting the President of the United States in a room with Kim in Singapore with the whole world watching. How confident are you that not only he understands it, but that he's going to have to – that he's going to deliver on our expectations?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, to quote President Trump, we'll see, right? We are not to the place yet where we should be remotely close to declaring that we have achieved what it is we want. There's a great deal of work that remains. Our eyes are wide open with respect to the risks. But it is our fervent hope that Chairman Kim wants to make a strategic change, a strategic change in the direction for his country and his people; and if he's prepared to do that, President Trump is prepared to assure that this could be a successful transition.

QUESTION: All right, I want to talk about that. You've said that we understand, and John Bolton talked about that nobody in the administration is starry-eyed. The President has been raising expectations for the summit, saying he thinks that they're going to make a great deal – his phrase. Your predecessor at the CIA, John Brennan, says he thinks that's playing into Kim's hands. Take a look:

PRESIDENT TRUMP: "I think that we're going to have a success. I think this will be a very big success."

MR BRENNAN: "I think he has been masterful in how he has manipulated perceptions and how he has manipulated and, quite frankly, duped Mr. Trump."

QUESTION: Is it a mistake for the President to predict a, quote, "great success"?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think Former Director Brennan's remarks are silly on their face. We're going to enter into a set of discussions with two nations doing their best to achieve outcomes for their own people that are consistent with their objectives and goals. I think we now understand that there is the potential that there are shared objectives, and our mission is to prepare the groundwork. And we're pretty far along the way in doing so, and we'll continue to work in the days ahead – 30 left – to prepare for June 12th so the President can have a successful outcome, that the two of them can meet and see if there is sufficient overlap so that we can achieve the ultimate objective for the American people.

QUESTION: After you brought the American hostages home and the whole world celebrated that, President Trump praised Kim for releasing them. And that praise – not the release of the hostages, but that praise – upset some

critics. Take a look at this:

PRESIDENT TRUMP: "Kim Jong-un did a great service to himself, to his country, by doing this."

SENATOR SCHUMER: "We can't be fooled into giving the North Korean regime credit for returning Americans that never should have been detained in the first place."

QUESTION: According to your State Department's latest report, North Korea still holds at least 80,000 political prisoners in its labor camps and other facilities. Is human rights an issue in this summit, or is this just going to be about the nuclear issue?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, Chris, this administration is always concerned about human rights. It's the case not only are there political prisoners that remain in North Korea, there are Americans held around the world by other rogue regimes too. I can assure you this administration – I saw it in my role as director of the CIA and I've seen it now in my first two and a half weeks as Secretary of State – is intently focused on achieving the return of each of those as well. We had a success this week. We're happy for those families and for America that those three Americans returned home, but we recognize there's much work to do. We still have Americans held and we're working diligently on behalf of each and every one of them.

QUESTION: When people found out that you were going to be on the program today they all had the same question. I must say I did. What is Kim like? With the possible exception of Dennis Rodman, you have spent more time with him than any other Westerner, at least two and a half hours the way I figure it. What is he like? Give us any kind of personal insight. How aware is he of what President Trump has been saying? Was there any mention of Little Rocket Man?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, I've got a lot fewer rebounds than Dennis Rodman, but I did get to spend a great deal of time with Chairman Kim. The conversations are professional. He knows – he knows his brief. He knows what the – what he is trying to achieve for the North Korean people. He is able to deal with complexity when the conversation requires it.

He does follow the Western press. He'll probably watch this show at some point. He's paying attention to things that the world is saying. He too is preparing for June 12th. He and his team will be working with them to put our two leaders in a position where it's just possible we might pull off a historic undertaking.

QUESTION: Was there any mention of the exchange of insults back and forth?

SECRETARY POMPEO: No, we didn't cover that, Chris.

QUESTION: That's probably wise. (Laughter.) I want to turn to – there's a lot on your brief. Iran and Israel got into an armed conflict across the Syrian border this week after President Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal with Tehran. Do you think that there's any connection that Iran feels less

constrained now that the U.S. no longer is part of this deal about Iran nukes?

SECRETARY POMPEO: That's ludicrous. That's ludicrous to suggest that Iran feels less constrained when during the JCPOA they have now fired missiles into an airport where Americans travel each day in Riyadh, they've now fired missiles into Israel; to suggest that somehow the withdrawal from the JCPOA is driving the Iranian conduct that's taken place during the JCPOA in Yemen, the rise of Hizballah – all of those things took place during the JCPOA. Indeed, I would argue that they felt they could act with impunity. They watched. They watched Europe put exactly zero sanctions on their missile program during the JCPOA. I think Rouhani and Zarif need to explain why it's the case that while this agreement was in place Iran continued its march across the Middle East.

QUESTION: President Trump made it clear that he's not only going after Iran but he's also prepared to sanction European companies that continue to do business in Tehran. Here is the President: "We will be instituting the highest level of economic sanction. Any nation that helps Iran in its quest for nuclear weapons could also be strongly sanctioned by the United States."

But the leaders of France, of Germany, of Britain all say that they're going to stay in the deal and they're going to look for a way to protect European companies that continue to do business. The question is: How hard is the Trump administration prepared to go after European companies that ignore the U.S. pulling out?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Two things, Chris. First, the wealth that was created in Iran as a result of the JCPOA drove Iranian malign activity. It fueled Qasem Soleimani. It fueled the IRGC. It provided resources for their work in Syria and Iraq. President Trump's withdrawal is aimed at denying them that wealth, denying them the resources to continue their bad behavior, to take the money away from them.

The withdrawal wasn't aimed at the Europeans. I worked hard over the short time I've been the Secretary of State to try and fix the deal. We couldn't reach agreement with our E3 partners. I am hopeful in the days and weeks ahead we can come up with a deal that really works, that really protects the world from Iranian bad behavior, not just their nuclear program but their missiles and their malign behavior as well.

QUESTION: But what about –

SECRETARY POMPEO: And I'll be working closely with the Europeans to try and achieve that, Chris.

QUESTION: But what about if the European companies and the European countries say look, there's not going to be a renegotiation any more than there's going to be a renegotiation of the Paris Climate Accord? Is the U.S. prepared to go after companies in our allies like Britain, France, and Germany, if they try to continue to do business?

SECRETARY POMPEO: The sanctions regime that is now in place is very clear about what the requirements are. My mission that I've been given by President Trump is to work to strike a deal that achieves the outcomes that protect America. That's what we're going to do, and I'll be hard at it with the Europeans in the next several days.

QUESTION: A couple of final questions. Israel. The U.S. opens its embassy in Jerusalem tomorrow. The Palestinians are talking about a day of rage, violent mass protests, and the PLO won't even talk to the U.S. anymore as an interlocutor in terms of the Middle East. Is the peace process dead? And given the threat of violence, what are you as the Secretary of State saying to Americans in the Middle East in those parts of the world over the next few days?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So the peace process is most decidedly not dead. We're hard at work on it. We hope we can achieve a successful outcome there as well. With respect to security, we are aware of the situation on the ground. The United States Government has taken a number of actions to ensure that not only our governmental interests but the American people in that region are secure as well, and we're comfortable we've taken action that reduces that risk.

QUESTION: Finally – and it's pretty remarkable given all that's happened, all that's on your brief – you have been Secretary of State for barely two weeks now. What's your vision for the State Department?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, first, Chris, I hope I haven't peaked in my first two weeks. (Laughter.) But it's pretty clear: We've got to go put the diplomatic team on the playing field. It should be the United States State Department that is at the front of American foreign policy, delivering solutions to solve America's problems without resort to military force. And so I'm going to build the team, we're going to get our swagger back, and the State Department will be out in front in every corner of the world leading America's diplomatic policy, achieving great outcomes on behalf of President Trump and America.

QUESTION: Secretary Pompeo, thank you. Thanks for your time in a very busy schedule.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you.

QUESTION: Always good to talk with you, sir.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Chris.

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Press Releases: Iraqi Parliamentary Election

Press Statement
Mike Pompeo

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
May 12, 2018

The United States congratulates the Iraqi people on today's parliamentary election. Citizens from every ethnic and religious group, and from all 18 provinces, including those internally displaced, made their voices heard.

The newly elected members of parliament will have the important task of forming an inclusive government, responsive to the needs of all Iraqis. We hope this process moves quickly, and on the constitutional timeline, so that Iraq can continue moving toward a more secure, prosperous, and brighter future.

The United States stands ready to partner with Iraqi leaders as we continue to build a long-term relationship of cooperation and friendship between our two nations – a strategic partnership based on the Strategic Framework Agreement that will contribute to stability in the region and growing peace and prosperity in Iraq.

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[Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Susan Thornton Travels to China and Japan](#)

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 11, 2018

Acting Assistant Secretary Susan Thornton will travel to Beijing, China and Tokyo, Japan May 14-16.

On May 14, she will be in Beijing to hold bilateral consultations with Chinese government officials.

Acting Assistant Secretary Thornton will visit Japan May 15-16 to participate in the second annual Wall Street Journal CEO Council Conference and to meet with Japanese government officials to discuss regional security issues.

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[Press Releases: Condemning Violence in Nicaragua](#)

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 11, 2018

The United States remains deeply concerned about the ongoing crisis in Nicaragua, and condemns the overnight violence that left at least two student demonstrators dead and many more injured.

Those responsible for killings and other human rights abuses and violations must be brought to justice. We call on the Nicaraguan government to respect the rights of protesters and to create the conditions needed for a credible dialogue, including the cessation of all violence. The Government of Nicaragua should allow independent international human rights organizations, such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, to assess the human rights situation in Nicaragua.

We reiterate our strong support for the Nicaraguan people and their demands for genuine democracy.

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