Why Diplomacy Matters

REMARKS

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SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. And thank you, Jerica, for that kind introduction. Now, as the Secretary of State, we do diplomacy, which means you have to get the protocol right. So, howdy.

AUDIENCE: Howdy.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's great to be in Texas, one of the greatest countries in the world. (Laughter and applause.) Yeah, I just came back from South America, now Texas, and I'll return to the United States in the morning, yes. (Laughter.)

Seeing you all here reminds me of a George Patton quote. He said, "Give me an Army of West Point graduates and I'll win a battle. But if you give me a handful of Texas Aggies, I'll win a war." (Cheers.) That's tough to take from a West Point graduate. (Laughter).

Look, I understand that this institution has sent more of its graduates into the military than any other university other than our military academies. It's because you all are tough, you're committed, and you want to serve. You should be proud of that, and I love it. And it's why I really wanted to be here today. I want to thank, too – I want to thank the Wiley family for making this series possible.

Like Jessica**[1]** said, everyone here – Cadets, Bush school students, anyone looking to give back to America – should consider potentially one day working for the United States Department of State.

Now, I know, I get it, diplomacy doesn't sound as thrilling as firing anti-tank weapons, flying F-16s, crawling through mud. There's no "Top Gun" version of the State Department. Instead we get "Madame Secretary." No offense to Tea Leoni, those of you who are her fans.

But there's a good reason that many former military officers end up working as diplomats serving our country. It's because the work that we do is important for our soldiers, the soldiers need us, and we need them. Neither diplomacy nor the military can succeed at delivering for presidents and for our country without the other.

And I'm not the first guy to figure this out. In 1946, President Truman was traveling. President Truman was traveling with Winston Churchill to Missouri, where Churchill would deliver his famous "Iron Curtain" speech. He delivered it there at Westminster at a local college.

On the train, Truman showed Churchill a recent re-design of the presidential seal. The eagle's head was turned to the right, so it faced the talons holding olive branches. Now, that represented diplomacy. But rather than having the eagle turn to face the arrows, which represented war, Churchill pondered for a moment and he said, "I think the head should be on a swivel, back and forth."

In other words: Diplomacy and military strength go hand in hand. They are indeed intimately related. Each relies on the other.

I saw this as a young Army captain way back in the 1980s, when I patrolled that very Iron Curtain that Churchill spoke about. I had the incredible privilege, along with my fellow soldiers, we were there to deter the Soviets and indeed prepare this country for the worst. But ultimately, it wasn't our tanks that delivered that victory. It was diplomacy, backed by the credible threat of force that we had projected.

Aggies have a long history in the military. But you also have a long history serving America's diplomatic mission at the State Department, and I'd love that to continue. If you join us, if you work, it will make a difference in the life of every American.

Now, I'm going to speak just for a couple more minutes because I want plenty of time to take your questions. But before I do, I want to talk briefly about three aspects of my life, of the State Department's work.

First, it's an incredible element of promoting national security.

As they did during the Cold War, diplomats build relationships to ensure that disagreements never boil over into military conflict.

Take Jerica, you just heard from, and her team. They're talking to Mexican authorities to alleviate migrant crisis and to secure our border.

Her colleagues are confronting the opioid crisis by encouraging partners to cut off the drug flows, that fentanyl that comes in the United States and wreaks so much destruction.

Just a few months ago, we saw the announcement that China made that they would do their part to deny fentanyl access to our country. It was State Department's diplomats who sealed that deal.

And farther from home, State has helped grow the ranks of the Defeat-ISIS coalition, an enormous victory. We've seized back 100 percent of the caliphate, liberating millions of Syrians. American diplomats were at the center of creating that coalition and reducing threats to our citizens.

Just this morning, I spoke with our ambassador, who is working to bring peace in Afghanistan. There's another graduate of this fine institution, a young lady named Melissa. She is supporting our work there to broker peace between the Taliban and the Afghan Government. We're trying to end the longest war in United States history and save the lives of Afghans and American soldiers alike.

Or take a man named Steve Biegun, a truly remarkable fellow. He's one of my special reps. He's working on the North Korea file.

His team has gotten an international coalition together to put the toughest sanctions in history on Chairman Kim Jong-un and his country. But Steve's work is also important in that we are keeping the door open, working to achieve a diplomatic outcome where North Korea will be denuclearized in a way that brings peace to the peninsula.

Steve and our team have gotten enormous results. I was privileged to be in North Korea where Kim Dong Chul, Kim Hak Song, and Tony Kim were able to climb on an American airplane and return home from their – to their families from being held hostage in that country, a remarkable diplomatic achievement. Indeed, I'll never forget the moment, the very moment when they met their families on the tarmac. President Trump was there to greet them too, and I was thinking that morning – it was 3:00 a.m. Washington D.C. time – about the amazing work that our team had done not just that day, but in the weeks and months before that. Absent that great work, absent the work of people like you who decided to join the Department of State, they might well still be held in the hands

of the North Koreans.

The second thing we do every day at the State Department people don't truly see directly: We make sure that our diplomacy impacts the American people by strengthening the United States economy.

The truth is we have to compete in a global economy. The United States businesses need access to markets all across the world. President Trump is determined to open those markets for our products. That's certainly true of companies and businesses here in Texas where exports benefit your economy to the tune of $260 billion a year. It supports more than 900,000 Texas jobs.

And we help. We help by supporting these economic opportunities through our diplomats. We work to open these markets where there are some 1,600 economic officers stationed all across the world. We try to take down barriers. We try to make the case for American companies and why they can deliver true value to nations all across the world. Indeed, it's the case that there is seldom an engagement – I was in South America just before coming here today. Not a single one of my conversations – not in Chile, not in Peru or Paraguay or in Colombia did we miss the opportunity to make sure they understood that America was there prepared to help create value for their countries as well.

You've seen it in the work we've done to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement.

But you should know it's more than just commerce. There's a strategic element to this too. In Houston last month, I spoke to a group to talk about how energy impacts each and every one of us, how there is a national security component to America's capacity to deliver energy all around the world. We watch as a pipeline is being built in Europe, which will tether Germany to Russia in a way that is not good for German security or the security of the United States of America. The work that's being done here in Texas and Kansas and Oklahoma, all of the energy fields and in North Dakota – if done well, can work with our diplomacy to deliver true security not only to America, but to Europe as well.

And you should know Aggies are also helping State create a program to transport excess natural gas from right here in Texas to the Dominican Republic, so it can be sold throughout the Caribbean. We want to make sure the lights are on for your next spring break. (Laughter.)

We've got another team, a team that's working to warn our friends and partners against buying Chinese 5G technology and build out their infrastructure with Chinese equipment. These are companies like Huawei, which will take your private information and transfer it to the Chinese Government. It makes no sense. And American diplomats are at the forefront of sharing this information with the world.

None of us want our privacy, our freedom falling into the hands of the Chinese Communist Party.

The final thing before I close: The State Department helps with our American diplomats promoting and protecting our values – indeed, our very way of life.

The U.S. is the global standard-bearer for democracy, for freedom, for liberty, and for human rights as well. If we

The U.S. is the global standard bearer for democracy, for freedom, for liberty, and for human rights as well. If we don't speak up, no one else will.

A few months back, the United States made the decision to leave the United Nations Human Rights Council. We did so because it had become under the control of authoritarians and dictators, people that didn't really care about human rights. We made the decision to move our embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing facts on the ground. And our diplomats are even, as we speak, all across the world promoting American values and human rights all across the globe.

We're working on various missions, including making sure that the nature of Chinese Orwellian systems, particularly their clampdown on people of faith, are impacting us right here at home. I recently had the privilege to meet with a group of Uighur Muslims that came to my office. They talked about the systemic imprisonment, they talked about oppression, and even torture happening in parts of China today. This cannot be allowed to stand.

We're exerting maximum pressure to change the very nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran to make sure that that regime simply behaves like a normal country and does not spread terror throughout the world. Today as we stand here, Iran is engaged in conducting an assassination campaign throughout Europe. Our diplomats are working to push back against them so this will stop.

And my most recent trip was part of the effort that's being led by the Organization of American States and the Lima Group as we work to restore human rights and democracy in Venezuela. I know that we will ultimately be successful and that Mr. Maduro will leave that country.

Our diplomats also go on offense to promote American values, in part simply by building and maintaining a set of relationships that are centrally important to our country. These deep friendships matter as time moves on.

Jerica mentioned some of the work that she does with the youth in Ciudad Juarez.

That's a long-term investment in our relationship with our partners to the south in Mexico. We trust that the young people that she's working with will come to understand America, that they will come to understand how much we care about them. And when it's their time to lead, they will become good partners for our great nation.

We do something different on a truly national scale as well with foreign aid. We provide assistance to countries like no other country in the world.

Our goal is often to turn struggling nations into strong, long-term partners, democratic partners for the United States.

And in times of crisis, when we've offered a hand, I can tell you that people like Melissa, the former Aggie stationed there in Afghanistan today, will benefit from the American aid which we've provided to that country.

About four years ago Melissa was in a tour in Nepal when a devastating earthquake hit that country, killing nearly 9,000 people.

She said it was one of her proudest moments as an American diplomat. She watched as the embassy rallied to the people's side, allowing those in need to come seek services at our embassy, to shower and to seek food and shelter at the American embassy.

For her next tour, she went to Kabul. And just moments after she landed, another earthquake. Everyone in the airport thought it was an explosion, but she knew. She'd been through this before.

She next traveled to Mexico City. The year was 2017.

You'll all remember it was one of the most devastating earthquakes to hit the Mexican – Mexico City in decades. And Melissa saw the great work that the embassy did to make sure that the people of Mexico City got back on their feet.

I made sure that Melissa did not come to visit with us today. (Laughter.)

She will tell you that as a diplomat, there was nothing more rewarding than watching American excellence, American graciousness, American resources in power, to meet and help people in times of adversity. This is the life of an American diplomat, and a noble undertaking, and one of true public service.

There is a story. It's about President Reagan's secretary of state, Secretary George Shultz. He understood diplomacy.

He would meet with our ambassadors as they went to the field. He would ask every ambassador who came by his office just before they went out for their first assignment – he would give them a pop quiz.

He would take them over to the side of his room, he would point them to a globe, and he would ask them – he would say, "Now that you've been confirmed by the Senate, point to the country that you now represent."

And they'd all fail, because they'd point to the country which they were leaving. Indeed, the correct place to point for every one of our diplomats is their service to the United States of America.

Secretary of State Shultz knew that, President Reagan knows that, President Trump and I know that too.

I know that you all have a tremendous sense of duty, a tremendous sense of service. I hope that today you can see that America's State Department is committed to living up to those standards.

And if our mission appeals to you after your time serving elsewhere, we would love to have you come be part of our team.

Thank you all for letting me be here today. Thank you for allowing me to be with you. Good luck, God bless you, and I look forward to taking your questions. Thank you. (Applause.)

MR PETROFF: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Well, welcome to Aggieland.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's great to be here.

MR PETROFF: I wanted to start first by asking about – if there are some young people in the crowd that really did hear that call to serve, what are the steps they should take in order to join the State Department and make a difference in the world?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Talk to the team standing right in the back on your way out. We'll sign you up. (Laughter.) So there's lots of different ways to serve at the State Department. We have folks from all different backgrounds – engineers, event planners, speechwriting teams, all the skills that the Lord gives different people. You can go take a look on our website, and then for those who want to make a career working in the Foreign Service, study hard and prepare for the Foreign Service exam, and then the process is pretty straightforward from there.

MR PETROFF: Okay, great. As we sort of look towards the future, what does – how does the State Department meet the technological challenges that the 21st century presents?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So there's two things as we look forward that I think are absolutely paramount. As Jerica said, I'm now two weeks short of being Secretary of State for one full year. There's two things, as I stare at the State Department to make sure that we're ready for the 21st century. One of them is what you identified. We need the capacity to move at the speed of our adversaries. They move quickly. Whether that's al-Qaida or ISIS or the Russians or the Cubans, they make decisions quickly. They – none of those are democracies, with all the process that's attached to that. And I wouldn't trade it for the world, don't make – don't confuse. But we have to make sure that American diplomacy can move at that speed. There's an information component to that, there's a technology component to that, and there's places that we have real work to do.

The second thing we need – and by the way, that space, that information management space, we saw this with the Russian efforts to impact our elections. We see this in the information space in Iran today. That information

the Russian efforts to impact our elections. We see this in the information space in Iran today. That information

space is an incredibly important component of being able to deliver the American message around the world in ways that it wasn't 20 or 30 years ago. The capacity for cheap, simple information readily available on your handset is different and presents a different information challenge for us. And we need to make sure that we're sitting there right on people's handset sharing the American message in the same way that our adversaries want to share in those countries as well.

The second piece is cultural, inside an institution. I have run a tank platoon. I was an executive officer in a cavalry troop. I ran two small businesses then was the director of the CIA, and now I am running the State Department. Every organization has to have an ethos, a central mission set that is clearly understood so that every single officer of the State Department understands the commander's intent.

And so we're working to build out life-cycle training programs and making sure that the ethos of the 21st century diplomat, the commitments that I spoke about in my remarks, are at the forefront of every officer's mind. So when you get to a place and you get to a time when there is a decision to be made, and perhaps the guidance isn't detailed sufficiently, you'll have the principles, you'll have the core understanding of what it is the expectations are for American diplomats, and you'll make a really good decision. I'm confident that we're in a good place there, but there's always more that can be done.

MR PETROFF: Great. Our campus is so excited to welcome you here today, and in the leadup to today we gave the community the opportunity to submit some questions. And Wiley has gathered some of those great submissions, and so now I'd like to turn to our audience for some more questions.

Can you please stand?

QUESTION: Howdy.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Hi. (Laughter.) Howdy. Get it right. I got it. (Applause.)

QUESTION: Good job. Good job.

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm from Kansas. I can – (laughter).

QUESTION: So my name is Riley Ferrell (ph). I'm a sophomore here, and I have a question for you. Here at Texas A&M we have a very strong tie to the military, which is very similar to your alum, West Point. How has this exposure to military culture when you were younger shaped your perceptions of diplomacy?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, that is a fantastic question. You do have that same culture here for sure. Throughout the whole institution, the commitment to duty and service permeates this institution in the same way it did the place that I did my undergraduate time.

I will tell you the other thing that I really took away from my time as a young officer in the military that I think is of

enormous value in my current role, and I ask all of our diplomats to do this, which is to listen. I remember – I've told this story before – there's an E7 named Sgt. 1st Class Petry, who, when I was a young second lieutenant, I went to my first assignment. I got out of what was an MI51 Jeep. Very few of you would remember these. And I climbed out and I walked over to him, and I had my gold bar and I'd been commissioned for all of, I don't know, 90 days or 120 days. And I walked up to Sgt. Petry, and he saluted and said, "Young man, you'll do well if you just shut up for a while." (Laughter.) He was right. I was also afraid of him, so it all worked. (Laughter.)

The capacity to understand, the capacity to listen in the military, is critical – to listen to your soldiers to make sure you understand, to listen to your commanders so you understand exactly what it is they're trying to get at – the same thing as here. I spend a great deal of my time talking and engaged with my counterparts around the world. I was with Chilean President Pinera a few days back, right? I wanted to not only hear him, to hear what he'd said, the things he had on his mind, but to listen in a way to try and comprehend what it was he really wanted and how our two countries could work best together.

If you said what's the one thing that I remember from my time in service, I learned a lot about leadership, but one of the things I truly did come to appreciate was the value of listening and taking onboard the ideas of others so that you can execute the mission more effectively. I hope all of the folks who work here at the State Department take that lesson onboard as well.

Thank you.

QUESTION: Thank you so much for your answer and for joining us here in Aggieland.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Riley.

QUESTION: Hi, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for the opportunity. My name is Angelita Garcia (ph). I am a third-year Ph.D. student. My question to you is: How does the State Department handle time-sensitive issues such as the humanitarian crisis currently gripping Venezuela? Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: So you have a big government, and that means sometimes we don't move just as fast as we need to. The great news is, is when a crisis breaks, we're good, we're very effective. So we have a group that is called the USAID. They provide aid and assistance, usually medicine and food. And literally within a handful of days of the recognition that the crisis, the humanitarian element of the crisis in Venezuela, had spiraled, it had spiked – it had been difficult; this has been years in the making, but it had taken a step change in the wrong direction – we were able to move not only food and medicine, but water. We were able to mobilize airlift from our military, C-17s flying to – I flew in here from Cucuta, Colombia, to take it to the border. The American people are enormously generous. It's still sitting. I walked through the warehouse, where there is still food and medicine sitting.

We can't always get it – as in the case of Venezuela, we weren't able to get it to the people who needed it. Maduro is still denying food to the starving and medicine to sick children. I saw some of those sick children yesterday who had crossed the border into Colombia. It's truly tragic. But you should know the State Department in a crisis, and

had crossed the border into Colombia. It's truly tragic. But you should know the State Department in a crisis, and

those crises can range from humanitarian crisis to – I recall very early in President Trump's term – I was not in this job, I was the director of the CIA at the time – when Bashar Assad had used chemical weapons against his own people. Your government was able to, in the course of a very eventful 36 hours, do all the groundwork that was needed to make sure that we could respond, to let them – the leader there in Syria understand that this was unacceptable and this administration wasn't going to allow the use of chemical weapons – Assad to use chemical weapons against his own people. We moved quickly, we moved accurately. The Department of Defense did its task flawlessly. It was a demonstration of American capacity to move in crisis moments in a way that is very effective.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here today. I am a Dreamer. What would you tell the Dreamers in this country who have love for this country, who attended these universities like I have, and who fear this administration?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah. So —

QUESTION: And thank you for being here.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much, sir. Look, this administration has been clear: There was a – there was work that was done early on in the administration, try to achieve comprehensive immigration reform which would have impacted many. I don't know your particular situation, but would have impacted many. Couldn't make the political machine work.

It is also the case that President Trump is determined. He is determined to ensure that there's American sovereignty on our southern border and that we know who's coming in and out of our country. That seems like a – there seems to be widespread agreement – I served in Congress for six years, so I suppose you could say I'm part of the problem too, but suffice it to say I think there's consensus there, and yet we can't get our laws tweaked in a way that I think would fundamentally recognize the central values of America in a way that would do honor to all those who want to come here and want to come here in a way that is lawful and those that are trying to come here legal, which is something President Trump has made clear. And I think there's consensus on both sides of the aisle, frankly, that that's something that we need to be capable of stopping as well, so —

QUESTION: Excuse me, Mr. Secretary. I'm 100 percent disabled veteran, and she is – the lady here – she's active Army. And due to my service to the country and her service to the country – I (inaudible) – that we are not able to go to see our family, as you know better than everyone in this room. And I just need my family. I have not seen my mother-in-law, my brother-in-law for seven years. And your subordinate in Embassy Dubai – they denied the case, although we dealt – we told them we just need to see them for 12 days to show them the country and see me. And – but they denied the case.

And I served the country, I – disabled 100 percent. After (inaudible), I lost 25 friends just in my last deployment, but no one taking care of my kids. And I told them they're not going to be staying here as an immigrant, they just

want to come here to see me, to see my home, and that's all I need, for just 10 days. And they did even not listen to me, sir. Okay, thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah, thank you. Thank you for your service. I can't comment. I don't know your particular case, so I just can't – I apologize. I can't answer your question about that particular situation.

MR PETROFF: If we could please hold questions to those with the mike, please. (Applause.)

QUESTION: He is the state representative.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, with the new designation of Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a foreign terrorist organization, I was wondering how heavily the United States would be pursuing sanctions against companies with alleged dealings with this organization.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Vigorously. (Applause.) So I'll – so we never talk about sanctions, any particular sanction before we get to the place where we can make a decision, but this was – if you back up a step – it's – you have to back up a step. Our mission is to try and create peace and stability in the Middle East. That's the macro objective. And so we've worked on that by building out an enormous coalition to defeat ISIS. We're still working to take down the remnants of ISIS. There are various estimates, from 5 to 12 to 21,000 members of ISIS who are still there, moving around in Iraq and Syria and Turkey. Our efforts to continue to prevent them from attacking around the globe are real and serious and will continue.

The second piece of that has been to identify the other great threat, which is the Islamic Republic of Iran, which remains the largest sponsor of terror, who has supported Lebanese Hizballah, has supported Hizballah's actions in Syria. The Shia militias under the stranglehold of the ayatollah who are working in Iraq aren't working for the best interests of the Iraqi people. You see what's happened in Yemen – an enormous – an enormous humanitarian crisis. The UN did good work in Stockholm to reach an agreement, but the Iranians won't let the Houthis actually implement the Stockholm agreement. So the second piece of this is to convince Iran it's not in their best interest to continue to foment terror and engage in malign activity all throughout the Middle East.

So a – so the next step down from that is how do you do it. One of the pieces of that is our sanctions effort. We have lots of efforts apart from that. With respect to the designation, which actually came into effect just this week, some – the unclassified – some 20 percent of the Iraqi economy is controlled by the IRGC. So my wisdom for those of you who are connected to companies that might be doing business with them or if you're the general counsel for a European bank that's doing business with a company that might have a 20 percent shareholder, the IRGC, is you should check your work.

QUESTION: Howdy, Mr. Secretary. My question for you is: Given your experience as the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, can you elaborate on the intersection between U.S. intelligence operations and U.S. diplomatic operations, as well as how the two cooperate or clash?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, ma'am, I can. Howdy to you. So it's amazing – I'm the only person ever in American history to hold both of those jobs consecutively. We'll find out if that's a good idea or a bad idea. The history books will get to write that. (Laughter.)

It was fascinating. It was great preparation, because I had a couple of advantages coming into this job. I had had a chance to work on almost every one of these same problem sets from a different optic in this administration, so it gave me a good jumpstart when I came to be Secretary of State.

The two institutions have very different mission sets. The CIA's mission set is clean and simple: deliver the best data set to the most important leader in the world and deliver it in a timely fashion and a consumable fashion. So as CIA director, you spend every moment worried that you didn't get the president of the United States or the secretary of state or the secretary of defense the information they needed to make a really world-class decision in a tough space. So that's the CIA mission.

It doesn't come into conflict with the Department of State all that often. Indeed, I spoke with Director Haspel just this morning. I had a handful of questions about a particular problem set I was working on. I asked her to go make sure that tomorrow when I have the opportunity, I get a chance to see their latest and best information set. So they will be providing a tool for us. Done well, the Intelligence Community – more broadly than just the CIA, there are many other elements, we have folks that do lots of other pieces of intelligence collection – the Intelligence Community will provide that fundamental underpinning.

I talked about the Syria chemical strike. The first in the barrel to respond to that was the CIA. The President wanted to know immediately were they really chemical weapons that were fired or was this – right? We've all seen YouTube videos that turned out not to be true. Were the chemical weapons actually fired by the regime? Did they actually hit civilians? What was the magnitude, what was the scope, what was the nature of those chemical weapon systems? Before he could make a decision or even consider a recommendation by his secretary of state about how to respond, he needed to have best-in-class data.

And we were under the gun. The CIA, the Intelligence Community doesn't get things right every time. It has a history, it's made mistakes, it's imperfect like the rest of us. So we were under the gun. The President gave us just a handful of hours, and we deployed an amazing team – a team of chemists and physicists and engineers and battlefield experts and explosive device experts and folks who spend their whole life looking at potholes in the road to decide what it was that actually created that crater. It's a great life.

It took us a few more hours than I wished, but in a matter of hours I was able to deliver a very clear response to the President, identify places that were risks, what we knew, what we didn't know, but it gave him sufficient information that he could then move on to look for the then-secretary of state to give him a recommendation about the foreign policy that we ought to pursue there, and then in this case he turned to the Department of Defense to consider potential responses as well. It was a place where you see a perfect example of America's military and diplomacy and intelligence all working together to deliver to the President of the United States a

clean set of options based on real data.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, ma'am.

QUESTION: Howdy, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Howdy.

QUESTION: My name is Sanjay Letchuman (ph), and I was wondering, in the light of recent diplomatic efforts abroad with nations such as North Korea and Syria, which you talked about a little bit, do you see sanctions being lifted off these nations in the foreseeable future?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Sanjay (ph), I hope so. I would love nothing more than to lift the sanctions on North Korea, I truly would, because it would mean we were successful. It would mean that North Korea no longer had a nuclear weapons program or a weapons of mass destruction program. It would mean we'd had the opportunity to verify that that was the case, so we knew we weren't taking anyone's word for that. It would be a glorious thing. President Trump talks frequently and tweets almost as often – (laughter) – about a brighter future for North Korea, right?

We desperately want that. Steve Biegun – I mean, the work that he's done and our team has done – we have – it's remarkable. We have the toughest sanctions in history on North Korea today. And frankly, the work that's been done at the United Nations – they're not American sanctions. These are UN Security Council resolutions. These are the world's sanctions on North Korea. They're the toughest in history, and yet we have also made more progress on negotiating the leader of North Korea to make a strategic shift, to make this decision that says, no, it's the – these – the history which said that a nuclear weapon system is the only defense, it's our only lever for security, to make the shift to say no, that's actually what threatens our nation the most.

We haven't gotten there. Chairman Kim signed a document in Singapore in June. He's told me no fewer than half a dozen times that he is prepared to denuclearize. I've now spent more time with Chairman Kim than Dennis Rodman. I'm very proud of that. (Laughter.) We're not home yet, but I pray that one day that President Trump gets to announce that we're removing the sanctions regime from North Korea.

Syria – I put Syria in the same bucket. There are those who think that Assad has prevailed. I don't know that there's a need to declare winners and losers, but the facts on the ground are that today Assad rules over a very broken country with 6 million displaced persons. He controls, depending on how you count it, a third to 40 percent of the real estate of Syria. Much of the oil wealth, the thing that has driven Syria's economy for an awfully long time, is not in the control of the Assad regime, and he faces a determined coalition put together in part by the institution that I am so privileged to run, whether they are European countries or Gulf state nations or countries even in Africa who recognize that we can't begin to rebuild Syria until there is a political resolution there.

And so before those sanctions go away, before not only the UN sanctions but the American sanctions, the

And so before these sanctions go away, before not only the UN sanctions but the American sanctions, the sanctions that the European Union has put in place go away, UN Security Council Resolution 2254 will have to have been fulfilled, which means a political resolution to the outcome, so the migrants who have left Syria for Turkey and for Lebanon and for Jordan can return home and a political process can begin to move forward. These sanctions are never something we do with glee, and we do them only as a means to try and achieve an outcome that's good for the United States and good for the world.

QUESTION: Thank you so much.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, Sanjay (ph).

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: My name is Oren Shed (ph) and I am a freshman at A&M, and it's an honor to have you here. My question is: What are some important parts of the State Department's work that many people are unaware of?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I talked about the economic work we do. You cannot have an effective national security policy without an economy that is growing. We should all be mindful that America remains $22 trillion in debt. That is a challenge. For those of you who – my son is 28 years old. I figure we'll pay the bills while I'm here. I wonder if we will for his whole life. You have to have an economy that is thriving and flourishing, and the State Department takes this mission on.

There is no other American institution that has officers in the field at nearly every American embassy – 180-plus American embassies – where we have economic officers who, for those of you who go decide to start your own business or run a company or become part of a global operation, touch base with our team. We are unabashed in the Trump administration about making sure that American businesses get every opportunity to go compete.

I talked about the aid distribution that we do. I don't think people often connect up the State Department with the humanitarian assistance work that we do, not only the money but the work that we do to coordinate. It is almost always the case that when you see a catastrophe like you saw in Mozambique now a few weeks ago, it is almost always the case it is a State Department officer from the United States that among – that are among the first people that the government of that country turns to to begin to coordinate and develop effective responses. We're incredibly proud of that work.

The last thing that I didn't get a chance to talk about that we do is we run big programs that are cultural exchange programs. You would have students here at Texas A&M who came in from other parts of the world to come and study and be part of America. We also work to make sure that students here in America get a chance to go study in other nations. It is remarkable how often I'll be meeting with a foreign leader and I find that his English is better than mine. That is often because of a State Department program that gave them the opportunity to come visit, understand the United States of America, and the dividends that that pays to our nation from having invested those resources are really important.

these resources are really important.

So there's a couple, three thoughts about things the State Department does that don't make the front page of the local paper.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you, sir.

QUESTION: Howdy, Mr. Secretary. Could you please share more with us about how you see the relationship between the United States and Latin America developing in the areas of trade and immigration?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So our administration is an enormous beneficiary of the changes that have taken place in South America. For those of you who know the history of South America, democracies have been too few and free-market economies have been far too scarce. Today, South America is turning back in the right direction. You see that in Peru, you see that in Chile, you see that in Brazil, you see it in Ecuador, you see it in many, many South American countries where people have recognized that the old model – call it – I don't want to use a pejorative, but these weren't free-market economies – but that the old model had failed them and that they need to rejoin the global world and compete and produce product and add value.

So on trade I think there's an enormous opportunity for American businesses to go to these places, to go to South American countries and sell our products. There's growing middle classes in these countries as well. And they will also continue to deliver product into our country, so they will continue to move up the value chain and deliver goods for American consumers at prices that are affordable. I think that trade opportunity down there is enormous.

When those countries become successful, the migration issues become mitigated, right? People want to stay in their own countries. When I was on the – it's been – 36 hours now. I was on the bridge between Colombia and Venezuela. I watched hundreds of people streaming into Colombia. This was on Palm Sunday afternoon. Hundreds of people steaming in there. And I had a chance to talk with a couple of dozen of them. With one exception, they all wanted to return home to their own country. They had family there, they had deep roots there. But they had nothing. There was no economic opportunity for them. Indeed, many of them said that they had stayed in Venezuela longer than they probably should've. I met two mothers who had begun to feed their children every other day. That's breathtaking. Absolutely breathtaking.

So as – so the solution to that, there's now a million-five migrants in Colombia, there are three-quarters of a million migrants in Peru from Venezuela, hundreds of thousands strewn in other countries in South America. The solution to that is creating democracy and opportunity inside of Venezuela. That's – the answer to the migration problem which is burdening Peru and Colombia and Chile, and now Ecuador, the solution to that is creating economic opportunity at home so these people can stay in the first instance.

Now, some 3 million of a population of roughly 30 million – 10 percent of the people of Venezuela – have been forced to flee their country. We need to do two things. First, we need to fix that, allow the Venezuelan people to fix

forced to flee their country. We need to do two things. First, we need to fix that, allow the Venezuelan people to fix

that so that the next 10 percent don't leave. That's the estimate for 2019; somewhere between another 2 and 3 million people will have to flee Venezuela because of economic hardship. And then if we do it well and are good enough to do it quickly and begin to rebuild Venezuela, we can get some of the 3 million who have left back home – back home to their families, back home to their homes, back home to what they know and love so that they can be part of the rebuilding of Venezuela. I see those same opportunities with respect to migration issues all throughout South America and Mexico too.

MR PETROFF: All right, I think we have time for one last question.

QUESTION: Hi, Mr. Secretary. My name is Ben Allen (ph), and I'm a civil engineering student. My question for you is: How do you balance condemnations with concessions in diplomacy with a controversial government such as Saudi Arabia? Thank you.

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I always begin with a deep understanding that no secretary of state gets through their first day without recognizing it's a tough world out there. We don't appreciate how glorious it is to be here in the United States of America on a consistent enough basis and with enough fervor. Maybe you do here at Texas A&M, but I think too many Americans don't understand how blessed we are. These are – are many, many tough places out there.

Having said that, not all tough places are the same. They each present a different set of challenges. I – it reminds me, you would know this as – it's a bit of an aside. But in terms of how you think about problem sets, I – when I was a cadet, what's the first – what's the cadet motto at West Point? You will not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do. I was the CIA director. We lied, we cheated, we stole. (Laughter.) It's – it was like – we had entire training courses. (Applause.) It reminds you of the glory of the American experiment.

And so when you deal with these countries, you have to just recognize they're not all the same. Some of these difficult, nasty places want to partner with the United States and just haven't gotten to the right place yet, just haven't been able to move their own institutions. And some of them may only be trying half as much as they ought to be trying, but they're trying to move in the right direction. That presents a very different way of thinking about how the United States ought to address them. In those cases, we ought to assist them.

We should never shy away from calling them out. We have to be consistent. The State Department puts out every year a Human Rights Report. It's just a compendium of bad acts around the world during the last 12 months. It's way too long a book. But you should look at it. We call out friends, we call out adversaries, we call out everyone in between. But we have to find places where some of these countries that aren't living up to our human rights standards – we address it, we work to fix it, we hold them accountable as best we can, and then we work to make sure those things don't happen again.

There are another set of bad actors who'd just as soon see you all perish from this planet. That calls out for a different American response. And so sorting those through, figuring out exactly the right mix of American tools –

diplomatic tools, economic tools, political tools, military tools, figuring out precisely what the right mix is the task

that we engage in at the State Department, but we do it with all of our partners in the national security apparatus as well. So the leadership in the White House, the Department of Defense, the Intelligence Community, the Department of Treasury – we were talking about sanctions – all of those have an important piece of figuring out what exactly the right mix is.

And so just two things. One, we need to constantly evaluate if we have that right with respect to every one of those actors. Have we got the right balance? Are they still in the same place? Are they still making progress? Are they still serious about addressing the shortcomings that we identify? And then second, we have to be relentless, whether they are friends or adversaries, in making sure when a nation falls short that America will never shy away from calling them out for that behavior that didn't rise to the level that we hope every nation can achieve.

MR PETROFF: All right. Well, I think that's all the time we have today. Thank you so much for taking our questions.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you all very much. (Applause.)

MR PETROFF: It was a pleasure to meet you, sir.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you all. (Applause.)

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