

**Statement for the Record**  
**before the**  
**U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**

**The Honorable Mike Pompeo**  
**April 12, 2018**

**Chairman Corker, Ranking Member Menendez, Senators,** thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee for U.S. Secretary of State. I'm grateful for your attention to my nomination over the last several weeks, particularly at a time when so many matters of global importance demand your focus.

Should I be confirmed, the regular contact we've established throughout this process will continue. I'll do my best to pick up your calls on the first ring, and I'll be a regular visitor to the Capitol. Your counsel and support will, if I'm confirmed, be critical to my leadership of the Department of State.

I'd also like to recognize former Secretary Tillerson for his dedicated service and commitment to a smooth transition, as well as Deputy Secretary John Sullivan for serving in the gap.

A personal thanks to all of the former living Secretaries of State, each of whom has fielded my calls these past weeks. Democrats and Republicans, from Henry Kissinger to John Kerry, you were kind enough to visit with me, offering candid and valuable advice. As I did with former CIA Directors, I will continue our contact should I be confirmed.

And, if you know me at all, you know that I derive balance and support from my wife, Susan, and son, Nicholas, who are with me today. Susan keeps our home front humming and is always there to remind me of the family issues affecting not just the Pompeos but every family under my leadership. And Nick? Well, Nick keeps me humble, keeps my sense of humor alive, and provides me, unfiltered, a millennial point of view! Since I left the private sector and re-entered public service, either of them could have asked me to step back into less-visible, less-consuming work. Instead they've encouraged me to give everything I can for as long as I can to this country that we love so much. Thank you, Susan and Nick.

To the men and women of the CIA: To say that it has been an honor, a privilege, and a joy doesn't do justice to the gratitude I feel to have served as your leader. I've demanded much over the last 15 months, setting expectations high. I've pushed responsibility and authority through the organization to every officer and, along with that, the required accountability. And you, the warriors of the CIA, have delivered—for America, for President Trump, and for me. Perhaps the highest compliments on our work come from our adversaries, whose fear and awe for our institution have steadily increased; and from our partner services around the world, which ask for more training, more intelligence sharing, and more joint operations than ever. This is not goodbye, because no matter how my nomination process ends, I will be with you, I will support you, and I will admire you.

Finally, I want to thank the President for his confidence and trust. My job at the CIA has been to deliver him world class intelligence, data, and facts, to help inform his decisions. I'm honored that he has selected me to help carry out many of those decisions as his chief diplomat.

Senators, if confirmed, I would raise my hand and swear an oath to defend our Constitution for the seventh time in my life. The first time was as an eighteen-year-old West Point cadet. With this oath, I would commit to defend the exceptionalism enshrined in our Constitution, which provides for our obligation to engage in diplomacy and model the very best of America to the world.

Make no mistake: America is uniquely blessed, and with those blessings comes a duty to lead. As I have argued throughout my time in public service, if we do not lead the calls for democracy, prosperity, and human rights around the world, who will? No other nation is equipped with the same blend of power and principle.

During this hearing, I anticipate that you are duty bound to learn and draw out information on two fronts: **“Who is Mike Pompeo?”** and **“What are his thoughts and plans to lead our State Department?”** Here’s a good start.

I was born in Orange, California and spent every summer on our family farm in Kansas. We didn’t have a lot of money growing up, but my sister and brother and I loved school and had fun. When I was a teenager, I was given the “Employee of the Month” award *twice* in my job at the local Baskin-Robbins ice cream store. I’m a movie buff and admit to a soft spot for my golden retrievers. My family says my Italian meatballs, my Dad’s recipe, are the best. I loved the challenge of teaching Sunday School to 5<sup>th</sup> graders who couldn’t sit still. Although he would dispute it, I can beat my son, Nick, in corn hole on any given day. I love Revolutionary War history, country music, show tunes, and college basketball. My appointment to the United States Military Academy at age eighteen marked my first travel east of the Mississippi, and those four years at West Point changed my life forever.

As a leader, I have been described as “blue collar”—that is, I’m not afraid to get my hands dirty. I don’t ever stay sequestered on the executive floor of any building.

I have no discomfort with directness or confrontation; I prefer face-to-face conversations over email; I don’t hold grudges and I always make time for student and youth programs in the organizations that I run—they are our future. Just this past Monday, I swore in another class of freshly minted CIA officers. It was a very special moment for me.

That’s a look at who I am. Now for the question of how I would lead the United States Department of State. I will focus on what matters most in any leadership role: actions—not words.

## **#1: Set the Mission & Empower the Diplomatic Corps**

Throughout my time in Congress and at the CIA, I’ve met hundreds of State Department leaders and officers, and I’ve met even more over the past month. In a recent series of Department briefings with team members at State, they all, to a person, expressed a hope to be empowered in their roles, and to have a clear understanding of the President’s mission. That will be my first priority. They also shared how demoralizing it is to have so many vacancies and, frankly, not to feel relevant. I’ll do my part to end the vacancies, but I’ll need your help. And I will work every day to provide dedicated leadership and convey my faith in their work—just as I have done with my workforce at the CIA.

When I took over as Director, the CIA had just completed a massive restructuring that caused considerable turbulence—as these things do. Immediately after my

arrival, I began speaking in every meeting and every conversation about the Agency's mission, providing the team with the "Commander's Intent." I worked relentlessly to break down unnecessary layers of approval, reached out to the career professionals, did a lot of listening, and encouraged our officers to be creative and take risk when required. Further, I encouraged our officers to make independent decisions. If I couldn't add value, I wanted them to execute and be accountable. And understanding that any organization will experience failure when reaching for great things, I promised to have their backs. And I did. No one will ever take calculated, lawful risks to reach greatness if they feel it could end their career. And, when our team needed extra resources, I never hesitated to ask the President—and so long as he found value in the task, he never hesitated to provide them. I will, with your help, do the same at the Department of State.

You have my commitment, too, that I will work with each of you, the White House, and the entire Senate to fill the senior vacancies. This is critical to strengthening the finest diplomatic corps in the world. America and the world need us to be that.

## **#2: Strengthen Workforce Culture and Communication**

The second action item I'd like to highlight is strengthening workforce culture and communication.

I learned many years ago from a crusty Sergeant First Class that good leaders need to shut up and listen. A lot. Just as I've done in each of my previous leadership roles, I will rely on those around me to achieve the team's goals. And we will listen to our foreign partners as well. At the CIA, I launched regularly-scheduled, small group town halls, not very originally titled, "Meet with Mike." The first 75 or so officers to

sign up had the chance to spend an hour with me listening to them. I not only enjoyed these sessions, but I learned a great deal. Further, I almost never travelled abroad without meeting with my local team on the ground. They were crucial to my understanding of the nuance of each country and its people. I also wanted the chance to ask them if they had everything they needed.

It matters deeply to me that our staff and their families are safe and thriving. When traveling on behalf of the Agency, it was always important to me to be able to assess security and medical resources, housing, schools, and other support for our families. Not long ago, I was traveling on an overseas trip when it became apparent there were serious housing safety issues for Agency and State Department families at one post. While I was only on the ground a short time, I was able to talk with the Ambassador to lodge my concerns and ask that action be taken. I do not want to send any family where I would not send my own, nor will I send an officer where I would not go.

The State Department's workforce must, by necessity, be diverse in every sense of the word—in terms of race, religion, background, and more. I'll work to achieve that diversity, just as I have successfully done at CIA, by focusing on mission and demanding that every team member be treated equally and with dignity and respect.

But there is one more ingredient critical to our success—and that is listening to and working alongside each of you and your staffs. I have used, at CIA, the model former Director Panetta suggested to me: fewer hearings, more cups of coffee; shorter conversations, more frequently. I found it most useful with your colleagues on SSCI and hope that you, too, will find it valuable.

All of this—listening, leveraging differences, unleashing talent, teamwork—will become the fabric of a State Department culture that finds its swagger once again. We will be effective, expeditionary, diverse, and successful in fulfilling our mission.

### **#3: Serving the Commander in Chief**

So far I've talked about how I would empower the Department of State to succeed in its work. Now let me talk a little about the work itself. By definition, the job description of the Secretary of State is to “serve as the President’s chief foreign affairs adviser.”

This definition was driven home to me in recent conversations with former Secretaries of State. I asked each of them how they had defined the core responsibilities of the job. They were remarkably consistent in their answers: job number one is to represent the President.

For me, this means building substantial relationships with our allies—relationships that President Trump and I can utilize for both tough conversations and productive cooperation. It also means working with our adversaries to make clear America’s objectives and the means by which we intend to achieve them. In this regard, I’m fortunate to have a sizeable head start.

On as many as a third of my days at the Agency, I’m engaged with foreign counterparts. I have led the CIA to forge stronger relationships with our closest partners in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. I’ve travelled to these regions to demonstrate our commitment to working alongside them. I’ve also met with leaders in countries with which we share very few common objectives. I’ve

asked my team to find those narrow slivers of common ground to stand on, so that we can deliver results for America. I would do the same at the State Department. We must do so not simply to be collegial, but to find partners who will help us achieve our objectives. I deeply believe this.

Representing America also requires promoting America's ideals, values, and priorities to those who ultimately determine the trajectory of geopolitics: the voters and citizens of the world. To succeed in our diplomacy, it is important to appeal directly to key populations, and not to forfeit the perception of our country to misleading state media or other faulty information channels.

Whether speaking to foreign leaders or the foreign public, it is important for the Secretary of State to clearly communicate the President's directives and goals. Every former Secretary I spoke with stressed the importance of maintaining a close relationship with the President.

I've worked to build that kind of relationship with President Trump over the past 15 months through hundreds of hours of intelligence briefings. My relationship with President Trump is due to one thing: we've demonstrated value to him at the CIA. So, in turn, he has come to rely on us. I intend to ensure that the Department of State will be just as central to the President's policies and the national security of the United States. We need to be nimble, smart, and relevant to the difficult issues the President confronts every day—always delivering value. I cannot deliver effective diplomacy worldwide on my own. I will need the men and women of our diplomatic corps exercising their skills to deliver this value to our country.

One of the many values of robust diplomacy is that it increases our chances of solving problems peacefully, without ever firing a shot. I saw this as a young cavalry officer in the United States Army, where I led troops patrolling the Berlin Wall from 1986 to 1989. The remarkable work of Foreign Service officers, over many years, no doubt saved my soldiers and me from military confrontation with the Soviet Union—a war for which we were preparing, and a conflict that the world thankfully avoided.

I know firsthand the painful sacrifices of our men and women in uniform. So when journalists, most of whom have never met me, label me—or any of you—as “hawks,” “war hardliners,” or worse, I shake my head. There are few who dread war more than those of us who have served in uniform. And there is a great deal of room between a military presence and war. War is always the last resort. I would prefer achieving the President’s foreign policy goals with unrelenting diplomacy rather than by sending young men and women to war.

I am serving a President who feels the same way. While the military balance of power can set the stage and create leverage, the best outcomes are won through negotiations and the gains they can achieve.

#### **#4: Diplomacy is for the Brave and the Bold: Global Challenges and Opportunities**

At this time I’d like to talk about the substantive challenges facing the State Department around the world. These challenges are well known to this committee, but I’ll briefly share my views on a few of the most critical.

First, diplomatic efforts are underway to rid the world of a nuclear North Korea. There is no higher diplomatic task for the State Department team than solving this decades-in-the-making threat to our nation. The stakes are high for everyone, but I believe them to be the highest for the North Korean regime. The State Department has successfully rallied the world to cut ties and impose sanctions that have had a profound impact. But there is much diplomatic work left to do, including supporting the President's intent to meet with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. That meeting will take place against a backdrop of commitment by our President to achieve denuclearization and prevent America from being held at risk by a North Korean arsenal of nuclear weapons. I have read the CIA histories of previous negotiations with the North Koreans, and am confident that we will not repeat the mistakes of the past. President Trump isn't one to play games at the negotiating table—and I won't be either.

**Next, Russia** continues to act aggressively, enabled by years of soft policy toward that aggression. That's now over. The list of this administration's actions to raise the cost for Vladimir Putin is long. We are rebuilding our already strong military and recapitalizing our nuclear deterrent. We have imposed tough sanctions and expelled more Russian diplomats and intelligence officers from the U.S. than at any time since the Cold War. We are arming brave young men and women resisting Russian expansionism in Ukraine and Georgia. This list is much longer, and I'm confident I'll have the opportunity to add to it today. But the actions of this administration make clear that President Trump's national security strategy, rightfully, has identified Russia as a danger to our country. Our diplomatic efforts with Russia will prove challenging, but as in previous confrontations with Moscow, must continue.

**Iran**, meanwhile, has been on the march and has paid too low a price for its dangerous behavior. Our administration has developed a strategy to counter Iran that will raise that cost. The issues surrounding Iran's proliferation threat are real and we, along with our allies, must deal with the long-term risk that its capability presents. But we cannot let the nuclear file prevent us from acting against Iran's cyber efforts or its attempts to provide missiles to the Houthis to attack Saudi Arabia and Americans who travel there. Iran's activities in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon threaten the very existence of Israel, and the global reach of Hezbollah threatens us right here in the homeland. Iran freed American hostages for the sake of a deal and then turned immediately to holding still more. I will work for their freedom every day.

President Trump is prepared to work with our partners to revise the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to fix its most egregious flaws. If confirmed, it will be an immediate personal priority to work with those partners to see if such a fix is achievable. The stakes are high for everyone, but especially Tehran. If confirmed in time, I look forward to engaging key Allies on this crucial and time-sensitive topic at the G7 Ministerial Meeting on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and the NATO Ministerial Meeting later that week.

Even while America has reestablished a position of strength in our diplomatic relationship, **China** continues its concerted and coordinated effort to compete with the United States in diplomatic, military, and economic terms. For years, through IP theft and coercive technology transfer, China has exploited weak U.S. trade policy and leeched wealth and secrets from our economy. Militarily, it continues its provocation in the South and East China Seas, in cyberspace, and even in outer space. This administration is determined to work diplomatically with the Chinese government in an effort to develop a more productive bilateral partnership. We have been pleased

with China’s support of our efforts to apply pressure on the North Korean regime, but it must do more. The State Department must be at the center of formulating and executing our China policy.

Those are just a few of our challenges. The failed state of Syria poses a mounting threat to human rights, national security, and regional stability—and it deserves an increasingly severe response. Similarly, our nation faces unique and pressing security, governance, and development challenges in Iraq, Afghanistan, Latin America and Africa, where our diplomacy must support people’s efforts to improve their lives. The State Department must also be at the forefront of America’s efforts to ease humanitarian crises in Burma, Yemen, Venezuela, parts of Africa, and elsewhere.

Couched in all of our global challenges are opportunities—opportunities to promote security, stability, and human rights in key regions. I also believe we have opportunities for increasingly robust and fair trading relationships that benefit the American people.

Should I be confirmed as Secretary of State, I will execute diligent and firm diplomacy, working alongside the world’s finest diplomatic service, to help our President confront the challenges and seize the opportunities of our time.

### **Bound by Duty**

Before I take your questions, I want to speak for a moment about duty to country—which is something I feel today in great measure. I know all of you feel the heavy weight of it in your positions, as does President Trump.

The desire we all feel to fulfill our duty to the best of our ability often manifests itself in a fierce competition of ideas, including on the subject of foreign policy. America's engagement with the world has always, rightfully, been a topic of debate. I'm sure we'll engage in a healthy amount of that in just a moment. Yet, all throughout my life, I've been reminded that once the debates conclude, the carrying out of our foreign policy—the actions that make it real—must be a matter of duty.

It's a reminder that while our country might disagree on the 'what' and the 'how' of our global involvement, it rarely disagrees on the 'why'—which is to defend the safety of our families, the prosperity of our nation, and the survival of freedom in our world. Diplomacy gives us the chance to achieve these goals peacefully.

I believe our Commander in Chief has made historic strides already in pursuit of this mission. If I have the honor of serving him as Secretary of State, I pledge to work with each of you, to strengthen our State Department, to champion the patriots who serve there, and to deliver on our shared diplomatic objectives—on behalf of every American.

I look forward to your questions.

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