

Press Releases: Interview With Pete Mundo of the Pete Mundo Morning Show, KCMO

Interview
Michael R. Pompeo

Secretary of State

Via Teleconference
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QUESTION: KCMO 103.7 FM and welcome in Mike Pompeo. Mr. Secretary, really appreciate a few minutes of your time as always.

SECRETARY POMPEO: It's good to be with you.

QUESTION: You're in town – it's great to be with you as always. You're in town. I know you've got an event going on this morning in Overland Park. What's happening there?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So we're going to be out in Overland Park with a big State Department team and some leaders from the Netherlands as well talking about entrepreneurship and how the State Department can help Kansas businesses, Missouri companies sell their products around the world: goods, retail, you name it. And if a company wants partners or is looking for a chance to grow and expand all around the world, the State Department has tools and people prepared to assist them.

I ran a small business for a while here in Kansas, and it was always a challenge to operate internationally. I want to make sure these companies understand how to do it, and we can make it just a little bit easier for them.

QUESTION: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Pete Mundo, 710 KCMO, 103.7 FM. So, Mr. Secretary, I know you've been in Houston and in Iowa doing similar things. And some people might say: Well, what's he doing with some of these domestic trips? I know for you it's been important to make sure that people, young professionals in the heartland are considering the State Department so you get less of that I-95 corridor – not that they're bad people, but it brings a different perspective. So how do you try to facilitate that process?

SECRETARY POMPEO: We need a diverse workforce at the State Department. That

means getting people from Appalachia and from Iowa and all across America. I wanted to go out and talk about the opportunities for smart, young people who want to serve America. The State Department is a great place to be an American diplomat. It's a real privilege. We use talents all across the spectrum, from historians to linguists, from mathematicians to engineers. A broad range of skills are applicable to what it is we're trying to do to help keep Americans safe. And I want to make sure that young people who are graduating from school here in Kansas or in Missouri or in Iowa or Texas are aware of these opportunities. It's a great place to work, it's a wonderful opportunity, and the chance to serve is very real.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, obviously with you being back in the state it's a topic and a question that we've had a lot of interest on this show, so – and it's kind of brought back up as well with some recent newspaper interviews that you've done here locally. I know you ruled out on the Today Show any idea of running for the Senate in 2020. Is that still the case, and how much do you think about a future back here in Kansas doing something politically on the state level?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I think others think about it a lot more than I do. (Laughter.) I must say I'm incredibly focused on what I'm doing today. Being the Secretary of State is more than a full-time gig. I have a privilege to serve President Trump and America in this role. I'm going to keep doing this as long as President Trump will permit me to do so.

I love Kansas. It's home for Susan and me for sure, but at this point we're very, very focused on the mission in front of us.

QUESTION: Are there any – there's a lot of names being talked about for that Senate race, especially now that you're out of it. Whether it's the former governor Jeff Colyer or Kevin Yoder or Kris Kobach, is there somebody in this realm that you like more than others, that you think about for that seat with Pat Roberts retiring?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I know all of those folks. I'll let the good people of Kansas sort it out. I'm very confident when they do so, they'll pick a new, really talented, good senator.

QUESTION: Fair enough. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo joining us on KCMO. All right, Mr. Secretary, obviously North Korea's taken a lot of your time here lately. You had the second summit in Vietnam a couple of weeks ago. Now there's some rumblings that maybe North Korea basically wants to blow up any of the positive discussions that you guys have had here lately and they might go back to some of the testing that they've done. How concerned are you that some of the positive discussions you guys have had over the past year are going to be for naught?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I always go back to first principles. When we came in, this threat was real. There was no diplomatic engagement. They were firing missiles. They were conducting nuclear tests. We've got each of those things stopped, and we hope that that will continue to be the case. So we have made progress. It's – as President Trump has said, this is a long journey. It's

going to be difficult. To convince North Korea to give up their nuclear weapons took a great deal of work, but in, goodness, June of last year Chairman Kim made a promise, he wrote it down for the world to see, that he was committed to denuclearizing.

Now the task in front of us is to get him to deliver on the promise that he made to President Trump and to the world. We made a little bit of progress in Hanoi along that route, not nearly as much as we had hoped, but the effort continues because it's important. This threat to the world from North Korea's nuclear weapons is real. President Trump is determined to diminish that risk to people all across the globe, including right here in Kansas.

QUESTION: Now, Mr. Secretary, you mentioned right there that you didn't make as much progress as you had hoped. As you've had a couple of weeks to digest that trip, is there something in particular that you think Chairman Kim and North Korea were hung up on, bothered by? Is there some reason that the progress wasn't made that you and all of America was hoping for on that specific trip?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I can't say much about the details of the negotiation as those are important private conversations, but it's clearly a range of issues around timing and sequencing and how it is we achieve this. President Trump's commitment, the commitment he made for a brighter future for the North Korean people, is very, very real, but it must follow – it has to follow the verified denuclearization of North Korea. And getting that sequencing right and getting it laid out in a way that each of the parties can agree to and take down the tension level along the North and South Korean border, it matters to the people of Japan and South Korea, our important partners, and it matters to the whole world.

QUESTION: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Mr. Secretary, before we let you go, a number – we're giving away Royals tickets here. So give me your favorite number between 1 and 10 and that caller's going to get our Royals tickets. Give me – what's the number?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm a big seven fan. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: He's a seven guy. That works out for 710 KCM0. How about that? Well done, Mr. Secretary. Always appreciate your time.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Thank you very much. Thank you, sir. Have a good day.

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