Beat: Travel

MIKE POMPEO US STATE DEPT SECRETARY POMPEO TO TRAVEL TO FRANCE TURKEY

GEORGIA ISRAEL UAE QATAR & SAUDI ARABIA

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USPA NEWS - Senior State Department Officials Previewing Secretary Pompeo´s Travel to France, Turkey, Georgia, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia We are publish the exchange, (full text of the conversation) of Mike Pompeo and moderator, at office of US Department of State, Washington DC as regards of the Secretary's future trip tour in Europe and Middle Eastern countries. MODERATOR: Hey, good morning, everybody. Thanks for joining us. Welcome to this background call previewing Secretary Pompeo´s trip to France, Turkey, Georgia, and several locations in the Middle East which the Secretary announced this past Tuesday. Just a reminder, this call is on background and is embargoed until the call is completed. I would emphasize upfront that the purpose of this briefing is to discuss the upcoming trip, so I would ask that you keep questions focused on that. We have very limited time for the call today, and I apologize in advance if we can´t get around to everyone´s questions. I see there are quite a number of folks dialed in this morning.

MICHAEL R.POMPEO SECRETARY IF STATE 'S TRIP TO FRANCE TURKEY GEORGIA ISRAEL UAE QATAR AND SAUDI ARABIA----------

MODERATOR: Hey, good morning, everybody. Thanks for joining us. Welcome to this background call previewing Secretary Pompeo´s trip to France, Turkey, Georgia, and several locations in the Middle East which the Secretary announced this past Tuesday. Just a reminder, this call is on background and is embargoed until the call is completed. I would emphasize upfront that the purpose of this briefing is to discuss the upcoming trip, so I would ask that you keep questions focused on that. We have very limited time for the call today, and I apologize in advance if we can´t get around to everyone´s questions. I see there are quite a number of folks dialed in this morning.----------

Joining us, , who will brief you today on the European portions of the trip. He will appear in the transcript as Senior State Department Official One. will brief you on the second part of the trip. He will appear in the transcript as Senior State Department Official Two. They´ll first give some overview remarks and then we´ll take a few of your questions. If you´d like to go ahead and get in the queue to ask a question, you can dial 1 and then 0.----------

I will now hand it over to Senior State Department Official One to begin. Please, go ahead.----------

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: Thank you, , and good morning. As you know from the announcement, Secretary Pompeo will travel to Paris, Istanbul, and Tbilisi, Georgia over the next several days. The first stop, arriving tomorrow in Paris, Secretary is going to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony to honor the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in France. Obviously, as you know, this is a critical time in terms of reinforcing our solidarity with our oldest ally and affirm our strong condemnation of the attacks against innocent French citizens in Nice as well as the horrific murder of French teacher Samuel Paty. While in Paris, the Secretary will have a chance to meet with President Macron and Foreign Minister Le Drian to discuss transatlantic unity and facing global threats, including terrorism, promoting stability and security.And then the Secretary will travel to Istanbul, where he´ll have a brief visit and an opportunity to meet with His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I. He will also meet with the apostolic nuncio to Turkey, Archbishop Paul Russell, and tour the Rustem Pasha Mosque. Secretary Pompeo is going to use these opportunities to discuss religious issues and, as you know, promoting the unalienable human right of religious freedom and fighting religious persecution is a key priority for the administration and for Secretary Pompeo. He´ll also of course in all the stops have an opportunity to meet with our ambassadors and staff from our missions, embassies, and in Istanbul the consulate general.

From Istanbul we´ll travel to Georgia to meet with senior government officials, including the president, Salome Zourabichvili; Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia; and Minister of Foreign Affairs David Zalkaliani. He´ll also have a chance to meet His Holiness the Georgian Orthodox Church Patriarch Ilia. And in “” that´ll keep in the theme of religious freedom at that brief stop as well.

In Georgia, of course, we´re committed to helping Georgia deepen its Euro-Atlantic ties and strengthen its democratic institutions and processes. In fact, the second round of Georgian parliamentary elections for some 16 seats, I believe, that will have runoffs is going to be held November 21st. And of course, as we´ve said, free and fair electoral processes are critical for democracy in Georgia and the people of Georgia are actively participating in that process.

We´ll of course use this as an opportunity to reaffirm our support of Georgia´s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. And once again, I would unequivocally note that we condemn Russia´s invasion in 2008 of the

Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which still remain occupied by Russia.Finally, the Secretary will be meeting with representatives of Georgia´s vibrant civil society to hear their views on rule of law, on judicial independence, and an independent judiciary as part of the integral process, free adjudication of processes in the Georgian democracy, and respect for human and economic rights. That´s a quick wrap-up of our very quick visits and stops in France, Turkey, and Georgia. And why don´t I then hand it over to my colleague to discuss the Middle East stops?

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Thanks, . Good morning, everybody. And I´m happy to be able to speak with you today to discuss the Secretary´s travel to the Middle East. The Secretary´s first stop will be Israel. While there, the Secretary will meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem, where they´ll discuss a variety of issues, including the implementation of the Abraham Accords. UAE and Bahrain have committed to opening embassies and exchanging ambassadors and to begin a cooperation on a broad range of fields, including education, health care, trade, and security. The accords represent a historic breakthrough, and we believe more Arab and Muslim-majority countries will soon follow down this path of peace.----------
The Secretary will then travel to the United Arab Emirates and meet with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. Of course, the United States and the UAE have enjoyed a very strong bilateral relationship for a long time, and that was reflected in our first strategic dialogue in October, which established a framework for deeper cooperation and discussion in a variety of areas, including defense, security, law enforcement, intelligence and counterterrorism, economic, energy and commerce, cultural and education, space, and human rights.----------
Because the UAE is an important friend and partner, we will do everything we can to help it counter the Iranian regime. This includes the proposed sale of $23 billion worth of F-35 aircraft, MQ-9B unmanned aerial systems, and air-to-air and air-to-ground munitions under the FMS system that the Secretary directed the department to notify to Congress on November 10th. These proposed sales echo the enhanced defense cooperation we embarked upon with Egypt in the wake of the 1979 Camp David Accords, as well as our closer security relation with Jordan following its normalization of ties with Israel, the Wadi Araba Treaty in 1994. The Secretary will also discuss the implementation of the Abraham Accords with the UAE, including the new Abraham Fund, which will expand business and financial ties between these two thriving economies and accelerate growth and economic opportunity across the Middle East.----------
The Secretary will then travel to Qatar to meet with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, and then His Highness the Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. The Secretary will emphasize that Qatar is not only a strong bilateral partner but also plays a significant role in addressing some of the region´s most challenging issues, including defeating ISIS and working together to create a better future for the people of Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan. We appreciate Qatar´s current efforts in hosting historic peace talks between the Afghan negotiating teams and the Taliban.Secretary Pompeo will also discuss the need for Gulf unity. The Secretary will reiterate that the Gulf dispute has lasted far too long. Only through increased cooperation with all six GCC countries and the U.S. can we thoroughly counter the malign influence of the Iranian regime across the region. The United States wants to see the parties involved resolve the dispute, to begin lifting of all restrictions on air space and land borders as soon as possible.----------
Lastly, the Secretary will travel to Saudi Arabia where he will meet with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The Secretary will discuss efforts to foster greater regional security and stability and express support for Saudi Arabia´s progress in transforming its economy in Saudi under the Vision 2030 plan. And he´ll reaffirm a relationship that has constantly grown deeper since the seminal meeting between King Abdul Aziz and President Roosevelt aboard the USS Quincy 75 years ago. And with that, and I would be happy to take a few of your questions.----------
MODERATOR: Okay. First, can we open the line of Matt Lee, please?----------
QUESTION: Good morning, and . And happy Friday the 13th to everyone. For , just very quickly: The only stop where you guys have not said that he´ll be meeting government officials is Turkey so far, so I´m just wondering, does he plan to meet with Turkish officials when he´s in Istanbul or no?----------
And then for , in terms of the visit to settlements, the Palestinians have already reacted extremely negatively to this. And I´m just wondering why you guys think that this is a "" I don´t want to say good idea "" but why "" what´s the point? What´s the message that you´re trying to send to them? Thank you.----------
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: Thanks, Matt. I´ll go ahead and start. In Istanbul, the Secretary´s focus is, as I said, on meeting with the ecumenical patriarch and other religious figures. There are no meetings with Turkish officials planned now. We just have a very tight schedule in Istanbul, and I believe senior Turkish officials also have their own travel schedule.----------
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: And Matt, I wish I could talk to you but "" about the Secretary´s specific meetings or stops along the way, but we´re just talking about the bigger "" the meta trip.----------
MODERATOR: Okay. Thanks. Let´s go to the line of Joseph Haboush.----------
(No response.)

MODERATOR: Joseph, are you there? Okay. He may have an issue with his line. Let´s move on to Francesco Fontemaggi.
QUESTION: I was wondering about the overall goal of this trip. The Secretary is going to meet with several leaders of countries who have congratulated President-Elect Joe Biden. Is he going to ask them somehow to stop engaging with him as the President-Elect? He said that there will be a transition to a second Trump administration. Is he going there to discuss the foreign policy of a second Trump administration? What is the scope?----------
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: Francesco, I´ll be happy to start on that. Obviously, the business of State continues. We have continuity of government and Secretary Pompeo remains focused on the mission. Our diplomacy and engagement, certainly on the Europe stops as I described, are all part of a broad strategy in the interest of U.S. interests and priorities, and that´s what we´ll be doing. He remains the Secretary of State and he and the team are very focused on that mission, and that´s the purpose of this travel.----------
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Yeah. , So I "" I don´t have anything to add to that. That´s exactly "" that´s exactly it.
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: Also, of course, a chance to meet with our missions, the ambassadors, the teams on the ground, both our diplomats and our local staff, too.
MODERATOR: Thank you. For the next question, can we go to the line of Lena Argiri.
(No response.)
MODERATOR: Moderator, can you open the line up? Lena Argiri.
OPERATOR: Lena, your line is open.
(No response.)
MODERATOR: I don´t know if you´re on mute.
(No response.)
MODERATOR: Okay, well, let´s move on. Let´s go to the line of Will Mauldin, please.
QUESTION: Thank you for having this. , I was wondering if you could speak a little bit more about whether there will be an Iran focus for the Gulf or Middle East sections, and if so, what´s the "" whether there will be any sort of new push to put more pressure on Iran or whether there´s going to be some kind of temporary lull in that as some of us prepare for the next administration.
And then for , if you don´t mind, I was wondering, on the Turkish leg, that might appear to some to be a snub that no Turkish officials are meeting with the Secretary. Is that due to the presidential transition or is it due to the friction with Turkey over things ranging from the Azerbaijan, Azeri conflict to new weapon systems from Russia? Thank you.
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Well, I´ll start off with that, Will. Listen "" I mean, listen, Iran´s destabilizing actions around the region put our partners at risk, especially in the Gulf at risk. We see "" we saw this last year with the attack on the tankers in Fujairah, the attacks on Abqaiq and Khurais in Saudi Arabia. So Iran is certainly an issue that looms large in our discussions with and our representations with our Gulf partners. It´s a major concern for them.
I´m sure the Secretary will also talk about China and "" with our Gulf partners about their problematic development and the investment behavior, opaque loans, corruption, type of investments that are problematic, who have been critical infrastructure like 5G communications, et cetera, that have an impact on our partners´ national security. So "" but undoubtedly, Iran will be a major topic of discussion.
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: On your question regarding Turkey, it is just a scheduling issue. We are coming into Istanbul where the patriarch "" ecumenical patriarch is based, and the schedule is very tight, and I also understand that Turkish officials, including the president and foreign minister, have their own travel schedule and will not be there.
And so we have plenty of opportunities to engage with our Turkish ally on all of the things "" a wide range of issues, including those where we have concerns like S-400s and the other issues you mentioned. We do that on a regular basis through all our diplomatic contacts, and in fact the Secretary and the foreign minister will have an opportunity to engage in just a few weeks´ time at the regular NATO foreign ministerial.
So this visit, this brief visit is focused on the religious issues, freedom of religion and that priority, and an opportunity particularly to meet with His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch.
MODERATOR: Okay. I think we have time for just a couple more questions. Let´s try the line of Athanasios Tsitsas from Antenna TV.----------
QUESTION: Good morning. You already answered my question. It was about Turkey. Thank you so much.
MODERATOR: Okay. Then let´s go to the line of Nick Wadhams.----------
QUESTION: , can you at least confirm the reports out there that the Secretary will visit the Golan Heights and the West Bank? And then second, can you confirm whether or not it is the strategy of this administration to build this so-called sanctions wall against Iran that would be difficult for a Biden administration to undo and get back into the JCPOA? Thanks.

SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TWO: Thanks, Nick. I´m not going to confirm or deny beyond the countries that I said

the Secretary was going to, the individual locations where he´s going to be stopping in those countries.
As for the sanctions, the "" regardless of what happens in these elections, the administration is here guaranteed through January 20th and is pursuing a policy that it has pursued for the past several years called the maximum pressure campaign that involves trying to press Iran to get them to come to the table and start behaving like a normal state, and that involves sanctioning the regime, sanctioning affiliates of the regime, sanctioning economic targets in an effort to encourage them to come to the table, and that´s not going to stop in the coming months.----------
MODERATOR: Okay, last question. Let´s try the line of Bryant Harris.----------
QUESTION: Hey, thanks so much for doing the call. I wanted to go back to Turkey. I know you´re not meeting with any Turkish Government officials, but I was wondering if I could get an update on CAATSA sanctions for S-400. I know previously the redline had sort of been full (inaudible). But they tested the missile system last week, so why haven´t the sanctions been implemented yet?----------
SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL ONE: Oops, sorry, I had you on mute. Our position on that is well known. There´s no change in that. It is clear, if you see the PEESA legislation that the State Department is interpreting the term "knowingly provide those vessels"? "" excuse me, I want to find my "" the correct pieces here. Why don´t we get back to you on that since it´s not part of the trip talk and I don´t have my language in front of me. If you want to give a call to the Press Office, we´ll be happy to follow up with you on that.----------
MODERATOR: Okay, thanks everybody. Apologies for not being able to get around to everyone. Thanks for joining the call, and thanks to our briefers for joining us this morning. Since this is the end of the call, the embargo is lifted. Have a great day. » Source: US Department of State

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