

Mike Pompeo Challenged at Senate Foreign Relations Committee with regard to North Korea, Iran, Yemen

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*Newly appointed Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo** had every reason to expect that his first official appearance before the [Senate Foreign Relations Committee](#) would be the usual slam-dunk as mostly obedient, respectful Senators aligned with his testimony.*

Instead of the typically gratuitous compliments and undeserved deference, there was a display (albeit a minority) of some moral courage with a rare slice of truth on Capitol Hill, epitomizing the real-time requirements of a Senator's job: to be skeptical, provide oversight and demand accountability from every Federal government witness, no matter the rank – once referred to as ‘grilling the witness.’”

Besides fraternizing with America's most privileged citizens, endless rounds of lavish Capitol Hill receptions, wide ranging international travel opportunities (aka junkets), a liberal vacation policy and exorbitant benefits out of step for the minimal accomplishments actually achieved, the current Senate paradigm has allowed too many Members to degenerate into a protuberance of greedy, sniveling, weak-minded buffoons with no genuine regard for their constituents or what was once the greatest democracy on the planet.

Days earlier, as the nation's top diplomat, Pompeo delivered the Trump Administration's controversial “[After the Deal: A New Iran Strategy](#)” in a decidedly undiplomatic speech to a less than enthusiastic audience at the Heritage Foundation. That aggressive strategy included a dozen doomed-to-fail, [untenable demands](#) that were little more than a precursor for military intervention and regime change.

Before the hearing began, Pompeo unexpectedly read a [crude letter](#) from President Trump to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un cancelling the June 12th summit citing “*tremendous anger and open hostility*” and concluded with the moronic “*If you change your mind ..., please do not hesitate to call or write me.*” To date, Trump has [softened his stance](#) against a meeting and hints the June summit may occur on schedule.

As the hearing began, most Senators expended their allotted time by steadfastly avoiding the massive foreign policy blunder that had just been dropped in their laps. The following excerpts focus on two Members, **Sen. Rand Paul** (R-SC) ([1:58](#)) and **Sen. Ed Markey** (D-Mass) ([2:19/3:27](#)) since they had the most extensive dialogue with Pompeo and because they gave Pompeo the most grief. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Or) ([3:34](#)) and Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) ([3:15](#)) questioned implications of the upcoming Authority for Use of Military Force (AUMF).

Sen. Paul launched into a rapid-fire critique exposing the inadequacies of Pompeo's Iran Plan with a much needed dose of reality as he methodically decimated the strategy, beginning with the requirement that Iran reveal the 'military dimensions' of its nuclear program:

"Let's substitute Israel for Iran. Does anyone believe that Israel is going to reveal the military dimensions of their nuclear program?" Paul inquired whether the Saudis would be willing to discuss *"anything they've done to develop nuclear weapons or reveal the military dimensions of their nuclear program. So really what you're asking for is something they (Iranians) are never going to agree to."*

Regarding the requirement that Iran end its proliferation of ballistic missiles, Paul explained that

".. when we supply weapons, the Saudis buy weapons, the Saudis have a ballistic weapon program, they (Iran) respond to that. The Saudis and their allies ...spend more than eight times Iran so when you tell Iran that you have to give up your ballistic missile program but you don't say anything to the Saudis, you think they are ever going to sign?"

"If you leave Saudi Arabia and Israel out of it and look at Iran in isolation, that's not how they (Iran) perceive it. We want Iran to do things that we're not willing to ask anybody else to do and that we would never do."

Regarding Pompeo's demand to end military support for the Houthi rebels:

"Once again, you're asking them to end it but you're not asking the Saudis to end their bombardment of Yemen. If you look at the humanitarian disaster that is Yemen, it is squarely on the shoulders of the Saudis."

Paul then drew attention to the demand for Iran to withdraw all its forces from Syria noting that

"ISIS is getting weapons from Qatar and Saudi Arabia" and that "Saudi Arabia and Qatar are ten times the problem. The people who attacked us came from Saudi Arabia. We ignore all that and lavish them with bombs."

"It was naïve to pull out of the Iran Agreement and in the end, we'll be worse off for it."

Pompeo was Stunned and the Silence was Deafening. Pompeo had absolutely no reaction to Paul's devastating analysis of US foreign policy in the Middle East, offering no explanation, no excuse, no correction or thoughtful response; nor did any other Senator present dare step into the swamp.

Next up was Sen. Markey citing Trump's reference to North Korea's 'tremendous anger and open hostility' and inquiring:

"How did you expect North Korea to react to comparisons between Libya and North Korea, between the fates of Kim Jong Un and Qaddafi. Why would you expect anything other than anger and hostility in reaction to these

comparisons?”

Markey was referring to Vice President Mike Pence’s [comment](#) that “*Kim Jong Un will end up like Qaddafi if he does not make a deal*” and National Security Advisor John Bolton’s “*we have very much in mind the [Libya model](#) of 2003-2004.*”

As background, in 2003 Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi relinquished his nuclear, biological and chemical weapons allowing inspectors to oversee and verify the process. By 2011, with [US and NATO instigation](#), Libya experienced a violent overthrow of its government with Qaddafi brutally murdered. And who can ever forget former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s macabre glee “[we came, we saw, he died.](#)”

Pompeo expressed “*misunderstanding taking place with this idea of a Libya model*” and that he “*hadn’t done the work to find out what that was...when Libyans chose to give up their nuclear weapons in 2003. That’s the Libya model.*”

Markey explained:

“The Libya model, as Kim Jong Un has been interpreting it, is that the leader of the country surrenders their nuclear capability only to then be overthrown and killed. Why would you not think that Kim would not interpret it that way as it continued to escalate with Bolton and Vice President talking about the Qaddafi model? ...why would you think there would be any other interpretation at what happened to Qaddafi at the end of his denuclearization which is that he wound up dead? Why would that not elicit hostility from a negotiating partner three weeks prior to sitting down..”

From there Markey and Pompeo bantered back and forth with Pompeo consistently failing to grasp the connection between Qaddafi’s [2003 disarmament agreement](#) and US military interference in Libya in 2011 that resulted in Qaddafi’s death as sufficient reason for North Korea to feel threatened. No matter how precise the clarification, Pompeo continued to respond as a dense, one-dimensional thinker unable to wrap his mind around logic that challenged his view of a simulated reality, as if looking at the same object through a different lens.

Committee chair Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn) agreed with Markey.

“I opposed so strongly what the Obama administration did in Libya was exactly the argument you are laying out right now...to have someone like Qaddafi who gave up their nuclear weapons and then go kill him to me sent exactly the signal that you are laying out right now.”

Corker then announced that he

‘just had discussion with Secretary’s staff and he is now 15 minutes late for a meeting. I’m going to allow a couple of comments but going to stop it in five minutes.’”

Markey immediately inquired

“Who is the meeting with Mr. Secretary.. if you are not going to stay here and answer questions from us.. can you not push that meeting back another 15 minutes...

Corker:

“this is getting a little bit, this type of discourse, I’m sorry, I’m the one doing this. I’ve been very generous”

Markey:

“...but we agreed to two seven- minute question periods and it is being ended here for two members..”

Markey continued until Sen. Corker gaveled his time had expired.

As the Foreign Relations Committee contemplates an upcoming markup and vote on a Forever AUMF next week, it will be a time for other Committee Senators to step outside the Matrix and dig deep to find their own moral fortitude.

***Renee Parsons** has been a member of the ACLU’s Florida State Board of Directors and president of the ACLU Treasure Coast Chapter. She has been an elected public official in Colorado, an environmental lobbyist for Friends of the Earth and a staff member of the US House of Representatives in Washington DC. She can be found on Twitter @reneedove31*

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