

# Pompeo Cairo Speech: Misreading History

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**Mike Pompeo**, the current American Secretary of State, gave a speech at the American University in Cairo on January 10, 2019. He started the speech identifying himself an evangelical Christian, that is also a Christian Zionist, and said, “In my office, I keep a Bible open on my desk to remind me of God and his Word and the Truth” and he referred to Israel as “our [United States] ally”, a distinction not granted to any Arab country in his speech.

A white, Christian Zionist, American Secretary of State gave a speech in Egypt – a conservative Muslim country, where the Muslim Brotherhood was born, where some of the most conservative Muslim thinkers are from and the home of Al Azhar University; the internationally renowned and recognized Islamic academic center – where he celebrated his country’s resounding support for Israel. To add insult to injury, the Secretary of State proudly noted that “President Trump campaigned on the promise to recognize Jerusalem – the seat of Israel’s government – as the nation’s capital. In May, we moved our embassy there”.

Pompeo went on to use this “platform” in Egypt to lambast President Obama, the first American president of African, Muslim heritage; bashing him and holding him responsible for ills in American foreign policy and in the Middle East.

The whole event is incongruous, to say the least; a black comedy!

Pompeo assured us that “It is a truth that isn’t often spoken in this part of the world... America is a force for good in the Middle East.” An example of this honorable American “force for good” in the Middle East, he noted, is the presence of “US military personnel stationed in Saudi Arabia and major bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the Emirates. They are there at the invitation of the host country.” This raised two points:

First, why are American military personnel in the Gulf countries? Trump had answered this question, regarding Saudi Arabia specifically, at a rally in October 2018 in Southaven, Mississippi. He clarified the US role in Saudi Arabia, saying “We protect Saudi Arabia. Would you say they’re rich? And I love the King, King Salman. But I said: King – we’re protecting you – you might not be there for two weeks without us – you have to pay for your military” This is NOT a force for good.

Second, Pompeo stated that Americans are in the Gulf countries at the invitation of the host countries which makes it legitimate and legal. However, Pompeo declared that “In Syria, the United States will use diplomacy and work with our partners to expel every last Iranian boot”. It is kosher for America to be in a country at the invitation of the host country to protect its political system, but is it not kosher for Iran to be in Syria at the invitation of the

host country to protect its political system?

Thus, America in the Middle East is not “a force for good”, but a force to protect oppressive and expansionist authoritarian regimes on the one hand and exploit the resources of the host country on the other.

Pompeo came up with another curious assertion: “We learned that when America retreats, chaos often follows.” Vietnam descended into total chaos following the American invasion and started the process of recovery after the American retreat. Iraq descended into total chaos following the 2003 American invasion and so did Syria, following the American and American allies’ invasion during the recent civil war. Both countries are on the way of recovery with the reduction of American military involvement. A notion is developing in the Middle East, and to some degree worldwide, that Israel and, its closest ally the US, threaten international peace and security.

In another part of the speech, Pompeo said that America, along with allies and partners, dismantled “the Islamic State’s caliphate, liberating Iraqis, Syrians Arabs and Kurds...” However, he ignored the fact that it was the US, and particularly its allies in the region, who recruited and encouraged terrorists from all over the world to come to Syria and opened their borders to these terrorists to gather in Syria. Once in Syria, these terrorists were provided money and weapons to establish the Islamic State’s Caliphate.

Wittingly, or unwittingly, Pompeo gave the green light to Israel to wage a war against Iran. He said, “We strongly support Israel’s efforts to stop Tehran from turning Syria into the next Lebanon”. This is another example of America not being “a force for good”, but a force for war and destruction.

Another curious assertion by Pompeo: “America has always been, and always will be, a liberating force, not an occupying power.” This brings back to memory the tragic Vietnam War and the American Mỹ Lai Massacre: “It became necessary to destroy the town to save it”.

The low point in Pompeo’s speech, and there were several, was when he said with a straight face that “Saudi Arabia and Gulf countries contributed towards stabilization efforts” in Syria. Tell that to the Syrians who, in this brutally cold winter, are facing shortages of heating fuel, cooking fuel and electric power.

**President Abraham Lincoln** is often credited for having said:

“You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.”

It is loud and clear that Pompeo, and beyond him the American administrations in recent decades, have forgotten Lincoln’s admonition and try to fool all the people all the time.

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