Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Sec. of State Mike Pompeo on Our Changing Role in Global Affairs
Guest(s): U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo
Air Date: June 11, 2020

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Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi everyone. This is Dr. Tim Clinton, Executive Director of the James Dobson Family Institute. I wanted to take a moment to let you know that we here at the James Dobson Family Institute love you and we're praying for you. If you're struggling and need some encouragement, we'd be honored to pray with you. You can call us toll free at (877) 732-6825. Or simply go to drjamesdobson.org. Thanks for inviting us to be a part of your day. Let's go now to today's presentation.

Dr. James Dobson: Ladies and gentlemen, in my 44 years on the radio, I've had the opportunity to interview President Ronald Reagan and George Herbert Walker Bush, and many other leaders of note. I am deeply honored today to have as my guest the 70th United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. He is one of the most qualified individuals to ever serve in this position, and I'm anxious to talk to him. Before having this responsibility, he served as director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He's a graduate of Harvard Law School and was the editor of the prestigious Harvard Law Review. He's married to Susan and they have one son, Nick.

Dr. James Dobson: Mr. Secretary, I've watched you from afar, especially in the last couple of years, and I respect you highly. I've been out there cheering for you and you didn't even know it.

Mike Pompeo: I could feel the prayer though.

Dr. James Dobson: We are praying for you, and there's many people around this country who are doing so as well. You are obviously carrying a very heavy load at this time. Thank you so much for joining us today.

Mike Pompeo: It's wonderful to be with you. I consider it a blessing and I'm looking forward to the conversation a great deal.

Dr. James Dobson: I would like to begin with a subject that offers a little good news, and the Lord knows that we need it now. There was a breaking story last Thursday about Iran's release of Michael White, who has been in prison for two years. He's a
navy veteran and he's either on his way home or he's there now. Give us the backstory on that release.

Mike Pompeo: It is fantastic news. It's something that we have been working on for quite some time. Michael White is a navy veteran. He'd been held for now two years on by the Islamic Republic of Iran. It'll take a little bit yet to get him back to the United States, but he is out of control of Islamic Republic of Iran. This is a great thing for him and for his family. Our team led by a fellow named Brian Hook did remarkable work to secure his release from Iran. We still sadly have others who are held there, and the American people should know that the state department team and President Trump are focused on securing the release for every American that is wrongfully detained. And we pray that the Iranians will make the right decision to let these people who did nothing wrong, but are being held unjustly and allow them to return home to their lives and to their families.

Dr. James Dobson: What were the charges against Michael White?

Mike Pompeo: There were a number of charges through time that they had raised, and in each case much like we see with the so called justice system there in Iran, they continued to delay and the obfuscate what had really taken place because the Iranians knew the truth. He was an innocent man and remains so. They charged him with things that relate to espionage and others. This is the nature of what this regime has done, and we hope all nations will join us in calling for every country that holds people on these kinds of false charges and allow these people to come back home.

Dr. James Dobson: Is there an easy answer to how many Americans they're holding now?

Mike Pompeo: It's a handful that are left there. We've been very fortunate. We've had others come home before Michael White as well, so we've been relatively successful, but we've also been very clear we don't pay for the return of our hostages. And so it is hard diplomatic work to convince the Iranians that it's the right thing to do. And we are very focused on getting those who are remaining, the handful that the Iranians are still holding, get them back as quickly as we can.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, there are so many problems in the world that come to your desk. What role does your responsibility there play in terms of dealing with international affairs? Describe your task as secretary of state.

Mike Pompeo: My primary mission is to provide President Trump with the best wisdom about how to secure America, to keep Americans safe, to defend religious freedom all across the world and here in the United States, and delivering the best wisdom about the courses of actions that we should take. And then in turn, take his guidance about how we'll deal with complex problems, whether that's working against the Chinese Communist Party or working with the problems that we find in the Middle East and Iran and Venezuela.
Mike Pompeo: Taking the guidance that he provides to us, and then taking my team of 70,000 scattered all across the globe and helping deliver diplomatic outcomes to get good outcomes for the American people in a way that doesn't put American sailors, soldiers, airmen, marines in harms way. To use diplomacy to get good outcomes for America so that we can grow our economy and keep the American people safe. That's my mission every day. It is a daunting task, but I work for a president who is very focused on making sure that our international diplomacy is very focused on protecting Americans and the American way of life.

Dr. James Dobson: I've watched you, as I said from afar, and it looks to me like you spend a good part of your life in the air. Isn't that an exhausting responsibility?

Mike Pompeo: It is. I spend a lot of time on the road. Perhaps the only good thing for me that came from this virus that is so nasty and has caused so much death and destruction is I've spent a little less time on an airplane these past few weeks, but I'm anxious to get back out. You know this, the only way to truly engage successfully often is to be sitting in a room with someone, to be straight in front of them, to break bread with them and have a serious discussion about how we can move forward. And so a big part of my role is to travel around the world to achieve American ends, and I'm looking forward to heading back out before too long.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, there are so many things that we could talk to you about. Before we went on the air, I prayed about this program and you join me in that prayer. You have a very strong commitment to Jesus Christ, don't you?

Mike Pompeo: I do. I have known since I was a young man that Jesus Christ was my savior, and I talk about that a lot in my role as secretary of state. I think it's important that people know who I am and the way my worldview is informed from my faith. My wife and I taught fifth grade Sunday school for a bunch of years before I came back to Washington when I ran for Congress from Kansas. We miss that, because it was a chance to take those young people and share the word of Jesus Christ through the Bible with them as well. And so it's a part of what I do here. We have focused on religious freedom, not just for Christians, but for people of Jewish faith, Muslims, all faiths to make sure that every human being has the capacity and the will and a government who will permit them to exercise their conscience, their rights.

Mike Pompeo: And then secondly, to make sure that people understand that here in America, our rights are in fact God given. They didn't come from any government who gave them to us. They were bestowed upon us by God, and it is government's role to make sure that those God given rights are protected.

Dr. James Dobson: I wish that every committed Christian out there knew how many initiatives, how many decisions, how many executive orders, the president issues every two or three days in defense of religious liberty. I get them on a regular release, and it's just amazing how committed to that issue he is.
Mike Pompeo: Yeah. It's a big part of what the president has asked us to do. We have ambassador-at-large named Sam Brownback, former governor of Kansas, who I've known for many, many years, who we brought on board to lead that effort. But we know this, this first freedom, this capacity to worship in the way you want and to exercise your faith in the way you want, it's good for governments when people can do that. People, when they're denied that freedom, people are restless and rightly so. And so we have gone around the world telling the story about why religious freedom is good for those nations above and beyond, why it's the right thing for every human being to have the capacity to express that. The president feels that, he sees it. He directs us to go do it.

Mike Pompeo: Just last week, he issued another executive order, which is going to help us use foreign assistance in a way that's consistent with that objective. It has been a real prayer. We've had these great ministers where we bring people from all across the world. The biggest diplomatic engagement ever held at the state department now a year and a half ago really needs that, where people from many, many religious came to Washington, came to the state department to talk about how we would protect religious rights for people in minority religions all across the world.

Dr. James Dobson: How rare is it for foreign countries and policies to support religious liberty? Is this really a rarity in human affairs?

Mike Pompeo: Sadly, it is. Too few people enjoy what I think sometimes Americans take for granted, our capacity to worship and practice our faith. I'm seeing the numbers, some two thirds of the people across the world live in countries with reduced capacity to exercise their religious freedom. It just makes that mission all that much more important for us to encourage leaders across the world to understand why it's the right thing to do. Why these fundamental rights are so important to grant to their people.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. You were interviewed on Fox News. I happened to be watching. This was last week, and you were talking about China and the threat it poses to the country. Why should we be concerned about a nation on the other side of the globe?

Mike Pompeo: Jim, you and I have been around a while and we have seen what governments that deny religious freedom, what communist, authoritarian regimes do not only to their people that's bad, but the risk that it poses to the United States of America and Americans is very real as well. You could see it up close and personal in the context of the virus that began in a place called Wuhan, China. And you'd say, goodness gracious, where is Wuhan. Why does that matter to me? Well, it turns out that from Wuhan, China, the Chinese Communist Party permitted people to travel. They traveled to New York, they traveled to Milan, and now hundreds of thousands of people across the globe are dead.

Mike Pompeo: And so as much as we might like to think, boy, they can do their thing and we'll do ours, the actions that these regimes take and the behavior of the Chinese...
Communist Party in the time of that pandemic, where they couldn't tell the truth, they couldn't share with the world what happened, those things have a real world impact all across all this long way from China. That's one example why we need to do everything we can to make sure that we're doing all the right actions, not for the benefit of anyone, say for the American people.

Dr. James Dobson: Does the Chinese government, the communist government there really intend to establish world dominance militarily and otherwise? Do they really have us in their crosshairs?

Mike Pompeo: I don't think there's any doubt that the Chinese Communist Party believes that they now have a very powerful military. They have 1.4 billion people and they are beginning to move into places like Africa, and they're running influence operations here even in our United States with the effort to undermine the democratic values, the freedom loving values that places like the United States and places like Europe have. And so if you ask me the question, is the Chinese Communist Party have every intention of taking away those central ideas that our founding fathers bestowed upon us, I think the answer is almost certainly yes, and we have an obligation to convince them that it is not in their best interest to do that, and second, that it will not be something that will go unnoticed, and that the United States, President Trump has been very strong. The United States will respond. We're going to make sure that no nation ever undermines the central nature of the American experiment.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I trust that there will always be an administration that understands that, because in one term, they could do tremendous damage to the United States and to other freedom loving people around the world. Tell us what's going on in Hong Kong now, what are the Chinese trying to do there?

Mike Pompeo: This is yet one more example of the Chinese Communist Party denying basic freedoms. In this case, it was to the people of Hong Kong, where they had made a promise for 50 years, they would allow Hong Kong to operate in an autonomous way. And frankly, over the last decade, we allowed them to continue to erode those freedoms, and President Trump has made the decision where we're no longer going to tolerate that. It reached a point where it was no longer something we could look the other way from. So we are now going to work diplomatically to convince the Chinese Communist Party to reverse course, and in the likely event that they don't choose that, we're going to respond in the way the president laid out to impose real cost for this decision where the basic freedom, the freedom to live your life, to speak and assemble and all the things we take for granted are being denied to the people of Hong Kong in a violation of the very commitment that they made to those very same people.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, the people of Hong Kong know what freedom is and what it isn't, don't they? They are sort of largely supportive of our nation and what we stand for, democracy.
Mike Pompeo: They do. Jim, they've come to understand that their success, not just their economic success of which there's been a great deal, but their success, their capacity to live their lives in the way they want it and to raise their families the way they want depended on having their freedom. And now they see it taken away and they're turning to the world to ask us to do what we can to preserve that. And President Trump has committed to doing what we can.

Dr. James Dobson: You mentioned the virus, COVID-19 virus a minute ago. We know what it's doing to America. What has been its impact around the world? You're there. You see it. I think of the virus mainly in terms of what it's done to America, but there must be people who are starving to death, people who are sick and don't have access to medical care. There must be tragedies around the world as a result of this.

Mike Pompeo: Yes, sir. It's absolutely the case. There are no human beings who live in regions that haven't been impacted by this. We're blessed we have wonderful medical systems here in the United States as challenged as we have been. Many of these countries don't have that kind of healthcare infrastructure, so they have been impacted even to a greater degree than we have. Some of these countries, they're further out, so the virus is just beginning to impact them. That ranges from places in difficult parts of Africa to central Asia. Moscow is at a terrible time with it as well. The destruction that it has brought on human lives and on human health and on economies, which will have real life implications as well for people's health and wellbeing are truly of historic importance.

Mike Pompeo: And so our mission here has been to do two things. One, to make sure we do everything we can to protect lives of American people and keep them healthy, and then to go build our economy back out, which will benefit all of these people across the world.

Mike Pompeo: When you see this virus in countries like Ethiopia and Bangladesh and countries that were already under enormous economic pain, they don't have the resources that the United States and other Western countries have, you know that this virus will be devastating. And I am hopeful that the Chinese will see that this was something that they could well have reduced the risk from, and that they will be part of the solution as well, where we're counting on a global team to go develop a vaccine and therapeutics, and then ultimately to help build back these economies all around the world, so death and starvation that may flow from this virus will be diminished.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you think China was just negligent in the way that they dealt with the virus after they knew about it, or was it intentional?

Mike Pompeo: There are still so many unanswered questions. When you see a nation, and this is what authoritarian regimes do, when they have a crisis, they close up, they refuse to share information. They kick journalists out. They disappear doctors or journalists. When you see authoritarian regimes behaving that way, there's real risk that there was something that they knew. We know that early in January or
the end of December, they came to understand the risk that was presented to them. And then they, along with the World Health Organization, didn't get the information to the right places so that the globe could respond, the whole world could respond in a way that was sufficiently timely.

Dr. James Dobson: They wouldn't even allow our scientists to come and inspect the circumstances, did they?

Mike Pompeo: That's right. And indeed, they still have not. We still have. I mean here we said today, we still have unanswered question about how this began, who patient zero was, the very first patient that was impacted, and how this virus went from Wuhan in a single individual to the global pandemic we have today. We still haven't had our scientists in. We're still asking the Chinese government to permit that. We hope that they will. We need the world's best scientists to understand the history of this so that we can prevent something like this from ever happening again.

Dr. James Dobson: Do you think we're getting a handle on it here in this country and maybe other places, or is the worst yet to come?

Mike Pompeo: No. I think we understand it a great deal better than we did just a couple of weeks back, and even a few weeks before that, we know more. We know how to respond to it more. Our best doctors and epidemiologists and scientists and pharmaceutical companies are working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to develop both therapeutics and a vaccine. I am praying that they will get each of those just as quickly as they possibly can, but even here, even here in the United States, we can see that we're learning how to respond to this in ways and we're learning how to manage this process forward. And now, as the president has said, it's very important we get the economy going back again.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, we're talking to Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, and there are so many questions I want to ask you. Let me ask you a rather complicated question and one that's been on my mind. I hope that our listeners will follow this. But I've said many times that change occurs in a crisis. And when people are frightened or hungry or they're unemployed, they often become sitting ducks for tyranny. When given a choice, this is ... I'm not sure this is original with me, it probably isn't, but I believe it. When given a choice between chaos and tyranny, people will nearly always choose a dictatorship because it presents itself as being more predictable. I'm sorry, this is a lengthy question. But World War II resulted in part from the economic depression that swept Europe and other continents in the 1930s. Six million Germans were out of work and inflation completely destroyed their economy. Money was worth nothing.

Dr. James Dobson: Adolf Hitler came along and presented himself as the only one who could bring stability to Germany and they followed him. And instead, he brought destruction and 50 million deaths. Once again, the nations of the world are in crisis. Does that instability concern you at this time?
Mike Pompeo: It does. And your point, which is that the risk that someone in a crisis or in chaos will sell their soul for a farthing, right? Will accept the jackbooted thugs that come on and create a system, a government system that denies them their basic freedoms in exchange for some promise of a little bit of certainty and some economic capability, that risk is real. We see that in places around the world. But I must say, as a man of faith, I think that the soul is stronger than that, and that God is watching what's taking place today. And we saw that too.

Mike Pompeo: On the flip side of World War II, we saw in other places around the world, we saw people say, we're just not going to do that. Our freedoms are too important. We're going to go fight for them, where we said, we're going to go restore certainty and freedom and democracy. And we're willing to risk our lives to do that at great economic cost and at great risk to their own lives. We have seen other places where humanity rises up and demands it. And I am confident that in this time, this challenging time all across the globe and the challenges we have here in the United States as well, that the good people of United States will recognize that it is worth fighting for it, that this desire to maintain our democracy and our freedom is real and will continue to work to make sure that certain, that we continue to have this here at home as we have for these past years and all around the world as well.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, I know a lot of people are trying to get to you trying to interview you, and I appreciate you giving us this time. It's almost gone. Is there anything you would like to say to the people of this great land?

Mike Pompeo: Only that I've now had this privilege to serve for a year and a half as the director of the Central Intelligence Agency and now just over two years as America's Secretary of State, and I've had the chance to go out and watch the world. The people of the United States should know that the world looks to us as a beacon. They know that this is a special place. They know that God gave us a set of rights and our founders set this course in motion for this great experiment. And they should know that they can be very proud, that as I travel around the world, people want to see me, America's Secretary of State. They want to come to know me. They want to come seek our assistance, seek our help, and most of all know, they understand that America will continue to lead and do the right things that preserve the freedoms for our people and that we are indeed a generous nation that can help them as well.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, tell our friends out there, especially those who have a deep Christian faith how they can pray for you and pray for our president.

Mike Pompeo: Pray for both of us as you did before we came on the air for the continued strength and wisdom. These are difficult jobs. For sure, it is a complex world that requires consistent returning to one's faith, and that we would keep that and look to him for our guidance, and that we would continue to work to understand how much America means to the world and how much good we can do for our own people when we are out there working on their behalf.
Dr. James Dobson: Well, I often come to Washington. If you're not off in North Korea or someplace, when I come through there, I'd love to say hello, shake your hand, maybe give you a hug. Is that okay?

Mike Pompeo: I would welcome all of that, and a prayer alongside of it would be fantastic.

Dr. James Dobson: Thanks for giving us this time today.

Mike Pompeo: Thank you so long.

Rodger Marsh: You've been listening to Dr. Dobson's interview with the 70th United States Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo. I thought it was a fascinating interview that we just heard, very historic in nature. If you would like to receive a CD copy of this interview, visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org and request a copy of this conversation. Simply click on the order a CD button and we will send a CD right to your door. Again, go to drjamesdobson.org, and then click onto the broadcast page.

Rodger Marsh: As we wrap up this broadcast, I want to remind you to sign up for Dr. Dobson's newsletter. Every month, he takes time to write about an issue that is impacting the institution of the family. Request a copy of any of Dr. Dobson's newsletters today by going to drjamesdobson.org. That's D-R jamesdobson.O-R-G, or by calling (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. Thanks so much for listening today and for your faithful support of this ministry. Family Talk is fueled by you, our faithful listeners. Your constant backing allows us to bring you these relevant and informative programs. Learn how you can partner with us by going to drjamesdobson.org. That's D-R jamesdobson.O-R-G, or by calling (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825. Now, on behalf of Dr. Dobson and the rest of the staff, I'm Roger Marsh, praying blessings upon you and your family. Join us again next time for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.