

Press Releases: Remarks at the UN Security Council Ministerial Meeting on D.P.R.K.

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

United Nations

New York City

December 15, 2017

SECRETARY TILLERSON: Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. On behalf of the United States, I thank Japan and Foreign Minister Kono for convening this ministerial session on the growing threat from North Korea.

Upon taking office, President Trump identified North Korea as the United States's greatest national security threat. That judgment remains the same today.

After its ICBM launch on November the 29th, the North Korean Government claimed that it now possessed the capability to strike any location in the continental United States. North Korea's growing capabilities reflect a direct threat to our security and the security of the entire world. We do not regard this claim as an empty threat.

The North Korean regime's continuing unlawful missile launches and testing activities signal its contempt for the United States, its neighbors in Asia, and all members of the United Nations.

In face of such a threat, inaction is unacceptable for any nation. Through a series of robust Security Council resolutions, this body has taken a leading role in condemning North Korea's unlawful nuclear and missile programs and imposing consequences. The international community remains firm in our determination that we will not accept a nuclear North Korea.

Each UN member state must fully implement all existing UN Security Council resolutions. For those nations who have not done so, or who have been slow to enforce Security Council resolutions, your hesitation calls into question whether your vote is a commitment to words only, but not actions. For countries who have not taken action, I urge you to consider your interests, your allegiances, and your values in the face of this grave and global threat.

We believe that more can and must be done beyond enforcing the minimum requirements of the Security Council resolutions directed at the DPRK. Last spring, the United States initiated a peaceful pressure campaign of economic and diplomatic sanctions against North Korea, with the intent of setting conditions for North Korea to engage in serious negotiations toward the complete, verifiable, and irreversible abandonment of its nuclear weapons programs. Our resolve to continue this campaign is even greater today. Over the past year, many allies and partners of the United States have joined our campaign, going beyond mere compliance with the Security Council resolutions. We ask these nations to continue to increase pressure through unilateral action. Doing so will further isolate North Korea politically and economically, cutting off support and funds for its unlawful nuclear and missile programs.

We particularly call on Russia and China to increase pressure, including going beyond full implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions. Continuing to allow North Korean laborers to toil in slave-like conditions inside Russia in exchange for wages used to fund nuclear weapons programs calls into question Russia's dedication as a partner for peace. Similarly, as Chinese crude oil flows to North Korean refineries, the United States questions China's commitment to solving an issue that has serious implications for the security of its own citizens.

Recently the North Korean regime has sought to portray UN sanctions as harmful to women and children. But this is a regime that hypocritically spends billions on nuclear and ballistic missile programs while its own people suffer great poverty. The regime could feed and care for women, children, and ordinary people of North Korea if it chose the welfare of its

people over weapons development. The DPRK has a choice: It can reverse course, give up its unlawful nuclear weapons program, and join the community of nations, or it can continue to condemn its people to poverty and isolation. The regime in Pyongyang bears the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of its people.

North Korea claims to undertake its nuclear weapons program as an essential step for the survival of its regime. In making this choice, North Korea has made itself less secure, and its economy has become further isolated and disconnected from the global economy.

We have been clear that all options remain on the table in the defense of our nation, but we do not seek, nor do we want, war with North Korea. The United States will use all necessary measures to defend itself against North Korean aggression, but our hope remains that diplomacy will produce a resolution. As I said earlier this week, a sustained cessation of North Korea's threatening behavior must occur before talks can begin. North Korea must earn its way back to the table. The pressure campaign must, and will, continue until denuclearization is achieved. We will, in the meantime, keep our channels of communication open.

Our message today is one that this body has heard before, and one that we will continue to repeat: The United States will not allow the regime in Pyongyang to hold the world hostage. We will continue to hold North Korea accountable for its reckless and threatening behavior today and in the future. We ask every nation here to join us in exerting sovereignty to protect all of our people. We ask all to join a unified effort to achieve a complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Thank you.

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[Press Releases: Kazakhstan's Independence Day](#)

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
December 15, 2017

On behalf of the Government of the United States of America, warm congratulations to the people of Kazakhstan as you celebrate 26 years of your nation's independence.

Today, the United States and Kazakhstan are closer partners, working together to expand our economic, energy, science, and technology cooperation, and to promote regional security and stability. Our cooperation on global issues has deepened during Kazakhstan's term as a member of the United Nations Security Council. We congratulate Kazakhstan on the success of Astana Expo 2017, which showcased Kazakhstan's commitment to energy resource development across the globe.

We look forward to strengthening our partnership over the coming years and we send the people of Kazakhstan our best wishes as you celebrate this special day.

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[Press Releases: Remarks With Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono Before Their Meeting](#)

Remarks
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

United Nations
New York City
December 15, 2017

SECRETARY TILLERSON: Well, Minister Kono, first let me thank Japan for using its opportunity as chair of the Security Council this month to bring attention to this very serious issue of North Korea's nuclear weapons development program. Appreciate your leadership on this issue and look forward to the opportunity for members of the Security Council to express their views. And I too welcome the attendance of the representative of North Korea so that we have the opportunity to speak directly to their representative as well.

So thank you, again, for electing to host this event during your time as chair. Thank you.

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[Press Releases: U.S.-China Consultation on Foreign Nongovernmental Organization Management](#)

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 14, 2017

The United States and China held the inaugural U.S.-China Consultation on Foreign Nongovernmental Organization Management on December 14, 2017 in Beijing, China. The two sides discussed the critical role that NGOs play in facilitating people-to-people exchanges between the United States and China. Both sides believe that the strength and success of all countries depends on protecting and supporting civil society. The United States urges China to ensure that the new Foreign NGO Management Law will guarantee the continuous operations of U.S. NGOs in China. The two sides decided to meet again in 2018 and continue working-level consultations to address the concerns of civil society leaders. The Ministry of Public Security and related public security organizations decided to meet with representatives of NGOs and Professional Supervisory Units early next year in order to resolve their questions and concerns about registration.

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[Press Releases: Thirty-First Session of the Special Verification Commission Under the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles \(INF Treaty\)](#)

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
December 14, 2017

The Thirty-First Session of the Special Verification Commission under the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) took place in Geneva, Switzerland, December 12-14, 2017.

Delegations from the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, and Ukraine met to discuss questions relating to compliance with the obligations assumed under the Treaty.

Marking the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty, delegations expressed the view that the INF Treaty continues to play an important role in the existing system of international security, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and that they will work to preserve and strengthen it.

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