

# Press Releases: Remarks en Route to Paris, France

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

En Route to Paris, France

January 22, 2018

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**QUESTION:** Great. So you want to talk about your trip to Paris?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Yeah, I thought just a little bit of background on why we're going to Paris. We're going obviously for this meeting that's being hosted by the French on the chemical weapons accord – what can we do to better prohibit the use of chemical weapons, hold people accountable for the use of chemical weapons. And so we'll have an exchange of views. Obviously, we know chemical weapons are being used in Syria. We've seen it. We know they've been used by the North Koreans. Exchange of information and mechanisms we'd have to bring this to a stop. So that's what we'll be spending the session tomorrow on.

**QUESTION:** Is there – was there some reports of chemical weapons use in Afrin?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** I've heard of none at this point.

**QUESTION:** Okay. I saw something crossing the wire right before we took off, so I maybe misread it.

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** If it has, it hasn't caught up with me yet anyway. But no, I'm not aware of any.

**QUESTION:** And do you have a sense of what – you talked about the – you called for restraint on both sides. It seems like we're kind of in a proxy war now where you have two NATO allies kind of facing off in Syria, and it seems like a sort of dangerous situation.

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** No, I don't think you're going to find two NATO allies facing off at all. This is – as I said in the press avail there in London, Turkey has legitimate concerns about terrorists crossing the border into Turkey and carrying out attacks, and we – we appreciate their right to defend themselves. But this is a tough situation where there's a lot of civilians mixed in, so we've asked them to just try to be precise, try to limit your

operation, try to show some restraint, let us see if we can work with you to create the kind of security zone you might need. So we're in discussions with the Turks and some of the forces on the ground as well as to how we could bring this – stabilize this situation and meet Turkey's legitimate concerns for their security.

**QUESTION:** You mentioned working groups on Iran, so who – is that E3 plus U.S.? And they're starting to meet, or they've met so far?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Yes. No, it's E3 plus the U.S., and we've had informal talks with the E3 members for quite some – and we've had informal talks with the EU going all the way back to the UN General Assembly. I hosted a working dinner of the E3 plus the EU. So this is just a continuation of the exchange of views on how we can address these flaws in the nuclear agreement, what kind of mechanisms could we use, but also how can we cooperate more on countering Iran's activities that are not related to the nuclear program, our concerns about their arms exports to Yemen and elsewhere. So we're formalizing – I think maybe what we're doing is we're formalizing these groups to put a little bit more of structure around our working together to see what we can do together.

**QUESTION:** Is there like a timetable on that? I mean, is May a – is it –

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** No, I mean, obviously we – we're in a bit – the U.S. is under a bit of a timetable to deliver on what the President is looking for, but we don't – we can't set timetables for others. I mean, they're sovereign governments so –

**QUESTION:** The President laid out that – four concerns: sunsets –

**QUESTION:** (Off-mike.)

**QUESTION:** – ballistic missiles, malign activity – what was the fourth one – but is it like one working group per concern? Is it – like how are you orienting these conversations?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** No, we're working – it's all being worked as – in a package because that's the way we'll have to deal with it ultimately.

**QUESTION:** And at what level is this happening? (Inaudible.)

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Well, it's being led from the State Department.

**QUESTION:** Okay. Then – so like when you say they're meeting in a week, like someone from State will travel to Vienna or something?

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Yes. Yeah, we have a team. We have a team traveling, actually. They're coming to Europe.

**QUESTION:** Okay.

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** A team that will meet with counterparts. So we'll see what we can get done.

I think they're going to make us all sit down.

**QUESTION:** All right. Yeah.

**QUESTION:** Thank you, sir.

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