

# Press Releases: Remarks Addressing State Department Student Programs and Fellowships Participants

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Dean Acheson Auditorium

Washington, DC

August 18, 2017

---

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Well, good morning, all. And regrettably, I'm going to open the session this morning with a little bit of not-so-great news. I want to acknowledge that we have now received word and confirmed the death of one American citizen in the terrorist attacks in Spain amongst those who have been killed. We are still confirming the injuries and deaths of others, but obviously we express our deepest sympathies to the loved ones of this individual, and obviously the others who have been – who have suffered loss of life. And we offer our thoughts and prayers to their families, as they're going to be dealing with a very, very tough few days ahead of them.

So let's return to the subject at hand. Again, one of the things I most enjoy about this job, and I've enjoyed in the past, is the opportunity to have a conversation with young adults and people that are on kind of the front end and front edges of their professional life and where they may be headed. And so this is a real special opportunity for me to have the chance to talk with you a bit this morning. I know each of you are wrapping up your time with your experience here at the State Department. I'm certain – hopefully, I'm certain that you found it to be very useful, a great learning experience for you, and to also help inform you as to some choices that you'll be making about your future – the career you want to choose, your future professional life, and the path you want to travel.

So first, I want to thank you for the time you spent with us here. Thank you for your contributions and your service while here. You worked hard, and we appreciate on behalf of the country your service while you were here at the State Department as well, and I know your colleagues deeply appreciate your contributions as well.

I think with the events of so many things that have been happening this past

week, I want to use this as an opportunity in particular, because we have so many of – a great representation of so many of young great Americans who are making these choices ahead of them. And I know it's a topic that's on everyone's mind, in particular, and I think that's the topic of our race relations and diversity in the workplace. And I think, first, it's simply important to say – although I think it is well understood and embraced by, I'm certain, everyone in this room – that we all know hate is not an American value.

Nowhere is it an American value. We do honor, protect, and defend freedom of speech, First Amendment rights. It's what sets us apart from every other government regime in the world, in allowing people a right to expression. These are good things. But we do not honor, nor do we promote or accept hate speech in any form. And those who embrace it poison our public discourse and they damage the very country that they claim to love. So we condemn racism, bigotry in all its forms. Racism is evil; it is antithetical to America's values. It's antithetical to the American idea.

George Washington said in an address to the synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island, that his vision for our country was, I quote, "a government which to bigotry gives no sanction; to persecution, no assistance." In his second inaugural address in the middle of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln called on Americans to "bind up the nation's wounds." What Lincoln knew, and that we are sadly reminded today, that painful racial tensions are part of our experience as a nation. We too today should seek to bind up the wounds. We must pursue reconciliation, understanding, and respect regardless of skin color, ethnicity, or religious, or political views.

One of America's defining characteristics is the promise of opportunity for advancement regardless of your skin color, how much money your parents make, or where you came from. It's why millions of Americans, millions of people have risked their lives and their fortunes to protect this country, to come to this country – because they know that America promises a chance to fulfill your aspirations no matter your background. You will succeed based upon your efforts.

As my good friend Condi Rice has said, the essence of America is that which really unites us. It is not ethnicity or nationality or religion, it is an idea that you can come from humble circumstances and do great things. That it doesn't matter where you came from but where you're going. As the arm of the U.S. Government representing America around the world, the U.S. State Department should be a clear display of America's values and our people, not just in our mission but in the composition of our workforce.

We have a great diversity gap in the State Department. We need the State – we need a State Department that reflects the American people, reflects who we are. The State Department must redouble our efforts to increase diversity at the highest ranks of the Department, including at the ambassador level. Only about 12 percent of our senior Foreign Service officers are non-white. That number is about the same for our senior executive service.

To better understand our talent pool, I have directed the relevant committees

to adopt a new procedure. Every time we have an opening for an ambassador position, at least one of the candidates must be a minority candidate. Now they may not be ready, but we will know where the talent pool is. A big part of developing our minority leadership is identifying qualified individuals five and 10 years before they are ready to become senior leaders and managing and developing their careers, as we do others, so that they're undergoing preparations for those senior roles over time. We need to be – we need a more deliberate process to cultivate the abundance of minority talent we already have in the State Department.

All of this is a leadership issue. It's the role of leadership from the Secretary of State to the assistant secretaries and directors of bureaus and everyone in between. We have to own this process. We have to manage this process and be held accountable for the results of this process.

We're also going to re-examine and expand where we recruit from. As some of you know better than most, America's best and brightest are not just from the Ivy League, but they're from a lot of other places in the country – Laredo, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; Roanoke, Virginia. They're kids sitting on the front row of their high school classes, they're veterans from our military who are coming out of service looking for the next part of their career, and many of them with a strong desire to continue to serve their country. And they're so gifted in many ways from many walks of life.

So we're going to build our recruiting team operations out in places that we haven't concentrated before. Now, that doesn't mean coming through town once a year and dropping some pamphlets off at the recruiting office. We're going to build and develop relationships with institutions around the country so that people can more easily find us, and more importantly, we can find them, not just to rely upon people seeking us out.

Qualified Americans of all backgrounds should know a State Department career at State is possible, and we need to work harder to find those individuals. Twenty-five percent of our Civil Service is African American. Only 9 percent of our Foreign Service specialists and 5 percent of our Foreign Service generalists are African American.

While our diplomats in residence at Howard, Spellman, Morehouse, and Florida A&M do an outstanding job ensuring that people understand the opportunities at the State Department, there are more than 100 historically black colleges and universities, and there's so much more we can do to raise awareness about the range of careers at State.

Only 7 percent of our Civil Service is Hispanic, in addition to 6 percent of our foreign generalists and 10 percent of our Foreign Service specialists. We're also recruiting at Hispanic-serving institutions, including Miami Dade College, Florida International University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the University of New Mexico. But we can do more to partner with Hispanic- and Latino-serving institutions and include more Hispanic and Latinos on our team.

We also want to expand our footprint at minority-focused job fairs, and we

can do more to recruit from one of the most diverse and proven talent pools, as I mentioned: our U.S. military, the men and women in uniform who are completing the service to their country and ready to move on to their civilian life. We already hire 29 percent of our Civil Service team, 29 percent of our Foreign Service generalists, and 16 percent of our Foreign Service specialists from the military, so we know this is a rich talent pool from which to fish.

Only about one-third of our senior Foreign Service officers are women, and we will work to close the gender gap as well.

Today is a fitting occasion to be sharing this with you because all of you in this room, through your participation in fellowships and internships here at the State Department, made an early declaration of your interest in public service. Some of you will even be working here soon. We will be keeping all of our fellowship and internship programs in place. The department-wide freeze we put on hiring programs early this year is only temporary, and it was a temporary measure so we could take a thorough accounting of the entire State Department in consideration of how to best strengthen it and to position ourselves to improve our diversity.

Our current fellowships and internships are valuable pipelines of talent for our organization and necessary to achieving our diversity objectives. You're our future leaders, whether here at the department or elsewhere in roles you may choose in the country. The seeds of greater diversity that we're planting today will have to be nurtured for years to come. Whether you find yourselves here or somewhere else, as future leaders, it will be your responsibility to run with that torch.

I think one of the things that it's important to appreciate is the value of diversity. It's not just to achieve a mix of population that looks like the rest of our country. I know from my long career in the private sector, my experience has been the value of diversity in the workplace is it enriches our work, it enriches our work product to have individuals who come with a different cultural perspective or they come with different life experiences. That's the value. They will see things in the world that I cannot see. I did not have that life experience.

And so whether it's African American, Latino, Hispanic, women, LGBT, come with experiences I do not know. This enriches the quality of our work. We know we are a stronger organization when we embrace, incorporate diverse points of view into our work product.

More importantly, I would say to you as individuals, if you are open, you will enrich your life. You will enrich your life by engaging with people of different backgrounds, different life experiences than you had as you were growing up, and you will find life to be a wonderful, wonderful mosaic. So I encourage you to do that. Now, before I close, I always – when I speak to young adults and people who are beginning the early parts of their career, I have a message I like to convey to all, and this is on the issue of integrity. Much of your future success and what defines you in your professional career or whether you fall short will be a function of how you

view your personal integrity and how you view to deploy your personal integrity or you choose to compromise your personal integrity.

So what does integrity mean? Well, I'm an engineer by training. I graduated from the University of Texas with a civil engineering degree. I was a practicing engineer for many years and worked at a very technical background. So when I think about integrity – and if you go to the dictionary and look it up, the second definition is “the state of being whole and complete.” Now, from an engineer, I think about this building – structural integrity. It's whole, it's complete; we don't worry about this building falling in on us because we know it is whole and complete structurally. It's sound. We just rely upon it.

Well, your personal integrity is much the same way. It's not something that can be trained. It's not something that can be taught. You're born with it. You're born with a clean slate, with your personal integrity. No one can take it from you. Only you can relinquish it. And you express that integrity every day in so many actions that you may not even think about. And most importantly, it's those things you do when no one's looking, that you do the right thing not only when people are watching but, more importantly, when they're not watching the choices you make. If you relinquish your personal integrity – you choose to take a shortcut, you choose to compromise a rule, you choose to move ahead at someone else's expense – you may have a short-term gain out of that. But once you relinquish any element of your personal integrity, it is very, very difficult to regain it. It puts you on a pathway that's very hard to reverse.

So I can't emphasize to you enough the value of that quality that exists in you. It's yours; you own it. It's yours alone to decide how you use it. If you choose to conduct yourself committed to a life of personal integrity, you will be whole and complete. I promise you. If you choose to compromise or give away your personal integrity, you will have a life that is neither whole nor complete. I know this because I have seen it happen to others.

So you're at this stage of your career where you get to choose how you want to conduct yourself. This is the most important quality you will take to the workplace with you. Yes, your skills and all that you've learned and all you've studied hard to do, and that will be a continuum – for the rest of your life you will be learning. But your integrity is just there. It defines how you will conduct yourself, how others will see you as well – as a trusted partner, a trusted colleague, or someone they have to keep an eye on. I know you'll choose the right path of integrity.

So, again, thank you for your service here this summer. I wish you all the best. Whatever decisions you may make about your future, I know the quality of this group of individuals. You're going to be extraordinary citizens to our country. You're going to be extraordinary leaders in our country whatever you choose to do. We're proud of you. We're proud you were with us for this time. And for those of you that come back to work for us, I look forward to seeing you around the building. God speed to all of you and God bless you. (Applause.)

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*

---

## **Press Releases: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to Deliver Address to State Department Student Programs and Fellowships Participants**

Notice to the Press  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
August 17, 2017

---

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson delivers remarks to the current cohorts of the Unpaid Student Internship Program, the Unpaid Legal Intern program, The Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Program and Summer Enrichment Scholars, the Thomas R. Pickering Fellows, and the Franklin Fellows at 10:10 a.m. on Friday, August 18, 2017, at the U.S. Department of State.

All of these programs serve to expose the participants to the work of the U.S. Department of State and provide them the opportunity to contribute to the mission of the Department and to experience what a career in the Foreign and Civil Services entails.

The Secretary's remarks will be open press coverage. There will be a pooled camera spray of the group photo with the students preceding the Secretary's remarks.

Please watch the remarks streamed live on [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov) and [Facebook.com/usdos](https://www.facebook.com/usdos). Please follow @StateDept for more information.

*Preset time for video cameras: 9:30 a.m. from the 23rd Street Entrance Lobby.*

*Final access time for journalists and still photographers: 9:45 a.m. from the 23rd Street Entrance Lobby.*

Media representatives may attend this event upon presentation of one of the following: (1) A U.S. Government-issued identification card (Department of State, White House, Congress, Department of Defense or Foreign Press Center), (2) a media-issued photo identification card, or (3) a letter from their employer on letterhead verifying their employment as a journalist, accompanied by an official photo identification card (driver's license, passport).

For further information, please contact the Press Office at 202-647-2492.

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*

---

## [Press Releases: Remarks With Secretary of Defense James Mattis, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono, and Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera at a Press Availability](#)

Remarks

Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Dean Acheson Auditorium

Washington, DC

August 17, 2017

---

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Well, good afternoon. I'd like to start by acknowledging the incident in Barcelona which has the hallmarks, it appears, of yet another terrorist attack. We offer our condolences to the loss of life and the

injuries that have occurred to so many innocent people yet again. We will continue to monitor the situation. We stand ready to assist law enforcement, national security authorities in Spain. Our consulates in Barcelona and our entire Mission Spain team are currently assisting Americans in Spain who are affected by these events. We ask U.S. citizens in the area to let your loved ones know you are safe. Terrorists around the world should know the United States and our allies are resolved to find you and bring you to justice.

Secretary Mattis and I are grateful for the opportunity today to host Foreign Minister Kono and Defense Minister Onodera today. The bonds of America and Japan have – forged over previous decades will continue to endure. Today's honest and productive discussions reaffirmed our mutual commitment to confronting threats to regional peace and security.

As you might imagine, we spent a fair amount of time discussing North Korea. North Korea's recent intercontinental ballistic missile and other missile launches are unacceptable provocations, and they must stop immediately. We agreed to bolster our alliance capabilities to deter and respond to North Korea's unacceptable behavior and other challenges to regional security. In cooperation with other nations, we will continue to employ diplomatic and economic pressure to convince North Korea to end its illegal nuclear and ballistic missile program.

I think, as was clear by all peace-seeking nations and the unanimous UN Security Council resolution that was adopted, as well as very strong statements being made by the ASEAN nations and others throughout the world, we all seek the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea. We again call upon all nations to fully enforce the UN Security Council resolution imposing additional sanctions on the regime in North Korea. We will remain vigilant against the North Korean threats through our military preparedness.

The United States will honor our treaty agreements with Japan without reservation, whether in times of peace or in the face of conflict. We will also cooperate to advance trilateral and multilateral security and defense cooperation with other partners in the region, notably the Republic of Korea, Australia, India, and other southeast Asian countries.

We also discussed our concern about the security environment in the East China Sea and South China Sea. The United States and Japan oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands, and we reaffirmed that Article V of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty covers these islands. We also oppose militarization activity in the South China Sea. Maritime disputes should be settled peacefully and maintain the freedom of navigation in accordance with the United Nations Conventions on the Law of the Sea.

We maintain our unwavering commitment to the 2015 Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation, and we have instructed our staff to accelerate their implementation. We also will explore new and expanded activities in intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance training and exercises, research and development, capacity building, and joint or shared use of



facilities. Our conversation stressed the critical role that U.S. extended deterrence plays in ensuring the security of Japan, as well as the peace and stability of the Asia Pacific region, and we plan to deepen our engagement through the extended deterrence of dialogue.

Both the United States and Japan are committed to the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, which seeks to maintain operational and deterrent capability while limiting the impact on local communities. I welcome the resumption of the plan to construct the Futenma replacement at the Camp Schwab Henosaki<sup>[1]</sup> area and adjacent waters, as this is the only solution that addresses operational, political, financial, and strategic concerns, and avoids the continued use of the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. We hope to avoid further delays that will impede our ability to provide peace and security to Japan and the region. We do express our sincere appreciation to Okinawa for hosting U.S. military personnel and for playing a central role in the U.S.-Japan alliance.

The United States and Japan will continue our shared resolve to protect our citizens and work for security and stability in northeast Asia. Our conversations today reaffirmed that we are stronger and more secure when we work together, and we will continue that course of action.

And with that, I turn it to Foreign Minister Kono.

**FOREIGN MINISTER KONO:** (Via interpreter) My name is Taro Kono, Foreign Minister. At the outset, with regard to the incident that occurred in Barcelona, to all those that have been sacrificed and to their families, I'd like to express my deepfelt condolences. And to those that have been injured, I should also like to express my sympathy. Under no reason can terrorism be condoned. We absolutely condemn this. And at this very difficult time, I'd like to express our solidarity to Spain.

At the 2+2 conference between Japan and the United States, we had discussions, which were very rich in substance, allowing us to achieve major outcomes. I'd like to thank Secretaries Tillerson and Mattis and all those who have worked to make the conference a success.

The conference was convened based on instructions from the leaders of the United States and Japan on the occasion of Prime Minister's Abe visit to the United States in February of this year. The security environment in the Asia Pacific is becoming increasingly severe. Never has there been a time that calls for a more united and concerted response by the United States and Japan. From such a perspective, we had an in-depth discussion on the strategic environment of the Asia Pacific region, beginning with the North Korean situation. At this first 2+2 conference since the start of the Trump administration we were able to reaffirm the strong commitment of the United States and Japan, which is extremely significant, the strong commitment to the region, which is extremely significant.

On North Korea, towards its denuclearization, we agreed we would ramp up effective pressure. We will call on China to take specific measures to make North Korea change its behavior. On the threat of ballistic missiles, as an

alliance, we will strengthen our defense posture and capabilities and respond. We have agreed on this point. We have confirmed the importance of cooperation through the security treaty.

We shared our concerns regarding the situation surrounding East and South China Sea. We reaffirmed that the Senkaku Islands are within the scope of Article V of the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and that we would oppose any unilateral behavior attempting to undermine Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands. For the peace and stability of East Asia and the East China Sea, we will continue to cooperate with the United States.

On the South China Sea, we have confirmed that we need to continue to engage ourselves and watch for any acts which would impede freedom of navigation. Under this severe security environment, under all situations, the alliance must secure seamless response, and it's extremely important. And we agreed that we would properly examine ways to strengthen the alliance.

And in area of cyberspace and space, we would steadily promote Japan-U.S. cooperation in new areas. We were able to achieve agreement on this.

ROK, Australia, India, and Southeast Asian countries – we will promote more than ever before cooperation and security and defense. The coastal nations of the Indo-Pacific region and with regard to capacity building in the area of marine security, for Japan, we will provide assistance to the tune of approximately \$500 million in the three years from this year to 2019. We want to deepen our cooperation with the United States on this front as well. For the transparent economic development of this region between Japan and the United States, we agreed that we would closely cooperate.

At the conference today, we reaffirmed that it is indispensable to steadily promote realignment of the U.S. armed forces in Japan from the perspective of maintaining the deterrence of Japan-U.S. alliance while mitigating the impact on Okinawa and other local regions. In order to avoid Futenma Air Station becoming a permanent facility, it was reaffirmed between the U.S. and Japan that the only solution was relocation to Henoko. I explained that in compliance with the present agreement between Japan and the United States that we would proceed with relocation to Henoko with strong resolve. We will make an all-out effort to realize the complete return of Futenma Air Station. I also pointed out that it is important to make the effort to have the understanding of the local citizens on issues such as that of Kadena Air Base.

As a result of the conference today, we were able to elucidate the path that the Japan-U.S. alliance should pursue in a security environment that is becoming increasingly severe. Based on the results obtained today, we want to firmly move forward with measures to further strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of a Japan-U.S. alliance. Thank you.

**SECRETARY MATTIS:** It's been an honor for us to host Japan's defense and foreign ministers here. I don't think anything better demonstrates that importance that our two nations place on this alliance than our counterparts traveling here so soon after assuming their positions.

As you've heard, we've just completed warm and very productive, detailed conversations about the situation facing our nations, and we've achieved very highly useful results. First, of course, we never take alliances for granted, and what we've done is we've reaffirmed the trust between us.

Second, we have deepened and broadened our combined military efforts by improving on our bilateral relations and exercises. As President Trump noted in February, the United States commitment to defend Japan through the full range of military capabilities is unwavering under Article V of our mutual defense treaty and the extended deterrent commitment.

As demonstrated by the UN Security Council resolution and by the ASEAN communique, the international community also recognizes North Korea as a threat to Asia and to the world. Japan and the Republic of Korea are on the front line against the North Korean threat. We in the United States recognize any confrontation with North Korea would pose an immediate danger to our allies and their populations.

Today's meeting is a reminder that each nation gains security in concert with other nations. The international community is speaking with one voice: North Korea must stop its dangerous actions as we work to maintain security and denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. In light of the serious situation we face, we are accelerating implementation of the 2015 Guidelines for the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation and continuing to realign U.S. forces in Japan and Guam. Our militaries are also cooperating in new ways, and you've heard several of them mentioned here already. This includes our emerging cooperation in such areas as space and counterspace – cyberspace as well as ballistic missile defense and maritime security.

Together, we will deter and, if necessary, defeat any threat. Any initiation of hostilities will be met with an effective and overwhelming response. Our two nations will demonstrate the strength of our alliance by continuing those bilateral activities and by enhancing cooperation with the Republic of Korea. We call on North Korea to choose a better path than one of provocation and threats. Such a path is not in its own best interests nor in the best interest of any other nation.

Thank you. Minister Onodera.

**DEFENSE MINISTER ONODERA:** (Via interpreter) My name is Onodera. I think we had a wonderful discussion. First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt respect to Secretary Mattis and Secretary Tillerson for leading us to have such a great outcome of the meeting. In 2015, we have drawn up the guideline and we have changed the guideline following the new – the new legislation. And since that, the defense cooperation between Japan and U.S. has greatly progressed and the alliance has never been so solid.

However, if we look to the regional strategic environment in front of us, in front of our alliance, we have the pressing issue of North Korea. North Korea has plans to launch ballistic missiles to the waters close to Guam and it is also advancing on their efforts to launch ICBM-class ballistic missiles, miniaturizing nuclear weapons to warheads.

So for this threat of North Korea, at this meeting we agreed to increase the pressure and to strengthen the alliance capability. In light of the threat of North Korea, the four of us confirmed the importance of the unwavering U.S. commitment to extended deterrence. Also, the U.S. forces have been deploying even more assets in the Asia Pacific region and has been showing their commitment visibly to this region. I would like to highly evaluate the efforts of the United States and also, continuing with the United States, I would like to make efforts to enhance the defense capability and defense posture of Japan.

Also, we shared our concerns on East China Sea and South China Sea situation. We will deepen our defense cooperation in securing the peace and stability in East China Sea as well as engaging coastal nations in the South China Sea.

In order to secure a seamless response of the alliance to any situation, we must constantly continue our efforts to strengthen the alliance. Through today's discussion, we were able to seek out a specific direction for our future efforts. Moving forward, we will accelerate the implementation of a guideline and we will further promote cooperation under the peace and security legislation. We will expand peacetime cooperation such as surveillance and joint training. And furthermore, we will continue to promote cooperation in ballistic missile defense, including acquisition of new assets, and enhanced capability in new domains such as space and cyberspace. Through this, we intend to strengthen further our joint responsive posture. Along with this, in order to strengthen our own defense capability, we intend to review the national defense program and also work on the new midterm defense program, and this was explained in the meeting today.

The presence of the U.S. forces in Japan is at the core for the alliance to function as deterrence. At the same time, the operation of U.S. forces should take into consideration the local residents and secure safety. These are indispensable. From this standpoint, we were able to confirm our steady advancement of the realignment of the U.S. forces in order to reduce the burden on the local people, maintaining the deterrence at the same time. The transfer of Futenma Air Station to Henoko would – is the only solution to avoid continuous usage of the Futenma Air Station, so we will steadily proceed with the construction of this transfer. Kadena Air Base issue and the Osprey are matters that I have renewed my request for the consideration to the local residents and securing the safety. In light of today's outcome, we would – I would devote myself even further for the securing the safety and security of the people in preparation for any situation to occur.

**MS NAUERT:** Elise Labott from CNN for Secretary Tillerson. Elise.

**QUESTION:** Thank you very much. Actually, I'd – I would love if both Secretary Tillerson and Mattis could answer a question on North Korea. You wrote in your op-ed last week that, obviously, the U.S. prefers a diplomatic solution to the crisis in North Korea, but you said that that diplomatic and economic efforts and pressure were, quote, backed by a credible military option. In recent days, the White House strategist Steve Bannon called the ratcheting – the diplomatic and economic ratcheting up of North – tensions with North Korea a, quote, "sideshow." He said that there was no military solution and

that the real issue is an economic war with China. Does this reflect some kind of new opinion by the administration or was he speaking for himself, and are you afraid that comments like this might dilute the credible military deterrent that is backing your diplomatic and economic efforts? Thank you.

**SECRETARY TILLERSON:** Well, I don't really have a comment on what Mr. Bannon's remarks were in that particular interview. I read those. I think we have been quite clear as to what the policy and the posture towards North Korea is, and I think Secretary Mattis and I in that op-ed wanted to inform – as best we were able to do, inform the American people first, but also inform our important friends and allies as to what our approach is.

And our approach has been endorsed by the President. It is reviewed with him periodically in terms of the status of how the approach is working, and it is first and foremost, as you have seen, to undertake a very concerted, deliberate campaign of exerting pressure on the regime in North Korea to an extent that, as best we can tell – and we did study previous attempts over the past two decades. What's different about this campaign is, I think, the level of international unity around this campaign, the level of cooperation we are getting from China and from others in the region, and the intensity with which we are carrying out the campaign.

Obviously, any diplomatic effort in any situation where you have this level of threat that we're confronted with – a threat of proportions that none of us like to contemplate – has to be backed by a strong military consequence if North Korea chooses wrongly. And I think that is the message that the President has wanted to send to the leadership of North Korea, and it was really in response to this ever-escalating levels of threat and rhetoric that were coming from the regime in Pyongyang. And you've heard the words; you've seen the videos that they have produced. I think the President just felt it was necessary to remind the regime of what the consequences for them would be if they chose to carry out those threats. We are prepared. Our – we're prepared militarily, we're prepared with our allies to respond if that is necessary. That is not our preferred pathway, and that was – that's been made clear as well.

So we continue our full-out efforts, working with partners, working with allies, to bring that pressure on the regime in North Korea with a view that at some point, with a unified international message like we've never had before, they will realize the level of isolation they find themselves in and that the future that they will face with that level of isolation is bleak and will only become bleaker if they continue this pathway. So that is – our effort is to cause them to want to engage in talks, but engage in talks with an understanding that these talks will lead to a different conclusion than talks of the past. And so we will continue that effort diplomatically first and foremost, but knowing that North Korea sits with a significant capability already within their grasp, I think it is only prudent that they fully understand the consequences should they make a bad choice for themselves and, obviously, there are consequences for others as well.

**MODERATOR:** The next question from Japanese media. Mr. Sugimoto.

**QUESTION:** (Via interpreter) My name is Sugimoto from Sankei Shimbun newspaper. My question is addressed to Minister Kono and Secretary Tillerson. The question is the following: It's related to dialogue and pressure in connection with North Korea. With regard to North Korea, what conditions must be met for you to decide that you can start a dialogue? Could you outline your thinking? And in addition, at today's conference, to China, which has influence over North Korea, you've asked for resolute measures to be taken. However – and there was agreement on this. However, up until now, with regard to China, they have not sufficiently applied the kind of pressure that the United States and Japan are seeking. In the efforts made by Japan and the United States, in what respect is it lacking so that you're – China is not being fully mobilized, please?

**FOREIGN MINISTER KONO:** (Via interpreter) The July Japan-U.S.-ROK summit meeting confirmed that North Korea, if it changes its course and if it refrains from intimidating and provocative action and toward denuclearization, if it is ready to come back to serious dialogue, these measures to be taken are important, first and foremost. There's no sense to dialogue for the sake of dialogue; we agreed on this point between Japan and the United States, or Japan, U.S., and ROK at the center.

The international community will continue to apply maximum pressure to North Korea. I think there's a necessity of doing so. The trade amount with North Korea is such that 90 percent is accounted for by China, and their role is very important. And I agree with that. The new UNSC Resolution 2372, if that's fully implement – strictly and fully implemented, foreign reserves of North Korea can be decreased to the tune of over \$1 billion. China must fully and strictly implement – we would like to encourage China to strictly and fully implement these measures after the 15th. Oil and steel and seafood – China announced that it would restrict importation of this. As we saw an agreement to encourage a specific action by North Korea, we will work on China to take responsible and constructive action, and we would like to continue to seek that China do this.

**MS NAUERT:** Yeganeh Torbati from Reuters for Secretary Mattis.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Secretary Mattis, I wanted to ask you first about Afghanistan. Do you expect to have a decision on the administration's South Asia strategy after tomorrow's meeting at Camp David, and what should we expect that strategy to look like? And just very quickly, your service chiefs have spoken about the events of Charlottesville and condemning white supremacy and racism and hate, and I was just wondering if you wanted to add to any of those comments as well. Thank you.

**DEFENSE SECRETARY MATTIS:** Certainly. First, in response to CNN's earlier question, I can just assure you that in close collaboration with our allies, there are strong military consequences if DPRK initiates hostilities.

In regards to the Afghanistan meeting tomorrow, we will meet with the President – Secretary Tillerson and I and several others on the national security team. We will move this toward a decision. As I said, I think it was yesterday, publicly, we are coming very close to a decision and I anticipate

it in the very near future.

On the service chiefs and the comments after Charlottesville, these are leaders of our diverse armed forces. They simply said the same message that we have lived by for decades and we continue not to serve in the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps; we serve in the United States Army, United States Navy, et cetera. And in that regard, it's a widely diverse force. We look at E Pluribus Unum on our coins. Out of many, one. They were simply emphasizing on the battlefield we are one team and that's the way we stay.

Thank you.

**MODERATOR:** One more question from the Japanese media. Mr. Shiga.

**QUESTION:** My name is Shiga from NHK. I have a question to Secretary Mattis and to Minister Onodera on the missile defense. North Korea has plan to launch some ballistic missile to the surrounding waters of Guam and we are seeing tension mount. In the 2+2 joint statement, the – it is incorporated that Japan's role would be expanded in the alliance. When the missile is launched, what specific actions would the U.S. take?

And then for Japan, what would Japan's role be in the missile defense? Also, what would the U.S. expect Japan to do in the case of the launch of the missile?

**DEFENSE SECRETARY MATTIS:** In the event of a missile launch towards the territory of Japan, Guam, United States, Korea, we would take immediate, specific actions to take it down.

Minister Onodera.

**DEFENSE MINISTER ONODERA:** (Via interpreter) Yes, simply if – my response would be in the event there's an attack on Japan, then we will use the asset available to us for the missile defense and we will defend Japan. But should different circumstances occur, then we will solidify the relation that we have with the U.S. with a closer communication, we will defend the country. And that is – we discussed today.

**FOREIGN MINISTER KONO:** Thank you.

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*

---

# **Press Releases: Gabon National Day**

Press Statement  
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC  
August 17, 2017

---

On behalf of the United States of America, our best wishes to the people of Gabon on the occasion of the Gabonese Republic's 57th Independence Day. The United States values its partnership with Gabon and will continue to support the Gabonese people in strengthening democracy, human rights, and economic progress.

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*

---

# **Press Releases: State Department Terrorist Designations of Ahmad Alkhalid and Abu Yahya al-Iraqi**

Media Note  
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC  
August 17, 2017



---

The Department of State has designated two ISIS leaders – Ahmad Alkhalid and Abu Yahya al-Iraqi – as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) under Section 1(b) of Executive Order (E.O.) 13224. E.O. 13224 imposes strict sanctions on foreign persons determined to have committed, or pose a significant risk of committing, acts of terrorism that threaten the security of U.S. nationals or the national security, foreign policy, or economy of the United States. These designations seek to deny Alkhalid and al-Iraqi the resources they need to plan and carry out further terrorist attacks. Among other consequences, all of Alkhalid's and al-Iraqi's property and interests in property subject to U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in any transactions with them.

Ahmad Alkhalid is an ISIS bomb-maker responsible for the deaths of numerous civilians in Europe. He is the explosives chief of the terrorist cell that carried out the November 2015, attacks in Paris and the March 2016, attacks in Brussels. A Syrian national, Alkhalid traveled to Europe, where he helped plan the Paris attacks and manufacture the explosive belts used in that plot, which killed and injured hundreds of people, including a number of Americans. Following his return to Syria shortly before the attacks in Paris, Alkhalid continued to guide ISIS operatives in Europe on making the bombs used in the March 2016, Brussels attacks. Alkhalid is wanted internationally and a European warrant for his arrest has been issued.

Abu Yahya al-Iraqi, also known as Iyad Hamed Mahl al-Jumaily, is a senior ISIS figure who reports to ISIS leader and designated SDGT Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Al-Iraqi has reportedly played a key role in security for al-Baghdadi and oversees ISIS security in Iraq and Syria. ISIS has killed hundreds of Iraqi civilians and forced residents to serve as human shields as it has continued to suffer territorial losses throughout 2016 and 2017. ISIS has demonstrated its continuing ability to conduct massive terrorist attacks with high civilian death tolls.

Today's action notifies the U.S. public and the international community that Alkhalid and al-Iraqi have committed or pose a significant risk of committing acts of terrorism. Terrorism designations expose and isolate organizations and individuals, and deny them access to the U.S. financial system. Moreover, designations can assist the law enforcement activities of U.S. agencies and other governments.

These designations are part of a larger comprehensive plan to defeat ISIS that, in coordination with the 73-member Global Coalition, has made significant progress toward this goal. This whole-of-government effort is destroying ISIS in its safe havens, denying its ability to recruit foreign terrorist fighters, stifling its financial resources, countering the false propaganda it disseminates over the internet and social media, and helping to stabilize liberated areas in Iraq and Syria so the displaced can return to their homes and begin to rebuild their lives.

In addition to designating ISIS as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under E.O. 13224, the Department of State has also designated over 30 ISIS leaders and operatives under E.O. 13224, and will continue to target the group to deny it access to the U.S. financial system. A list of State Department-designated FTOs and SDGTs is available here: <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/index.htm>.

*The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.*