

President Trump Visits Kirkwood Community College

Yesterday, President Donald J. Trump visited Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to address his efforts to foster agriculture innovation. He spoke about the value of farming to the Nation's economy and ensured the Administration would continuously embrace the challenge to rebuild rural America.

“We have to make sure American farmers and their families, wherever they may be, wherever they may go, have the infrastructure projects that they need to compete and grow. And I mean grow against world competition, because that's who you're up against now.”

President Trump

For the past two weeks, the Administration has been working extensively on vocational education, infrastructure, and technology. The President declared he would push for increased rural internet access in his proposed infrastructure plan.

“American farmers and ranchers are the best – absolute best at what they do. And they can compete anywhere if they are given a level playing field.”

President Trump

Watch President Trump's remarks:

Secretary Price Hosts Listening Session with Obamacare Victims

On Wednesday, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, M.D., hosted a listening session at the White House with Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Seema Verma to hear from individuals who are facing a lack of choice in healthcare plans due to insurers pulling out of Obamacare marketplaces.



Citizens from Ohio, Iowa, and Missouri shared real-life stories of how Obamacare has negatively impacted themselves, their families, their businesses, and their communities. These real-life examples show the extremely limited options of healthcare plans that are available, and the consequences of such high premiums and deductibles.



A small business owner from Missouri spoke of his inability to keep employees because of the advantage Obamacare gives to large corporations. An insurance agent from Missouri spoke of her guilt as she was unable to help her friends and neighbors, and was forced to deny them insurance due to the high costs. A doctor from Iowa spoke of his children, both diagnosed with a terminal disease, and his struggle as he was forced to choose between his practice and his children's medical care.



These examples, among countless others, demonstrate the tolls Obamacare has taken on the American people. The American people are frustrated with Obamacare, and they are looking for change.

“This is about real folks; this is about real people’s lives. And the stories that we’ve heard at this table and around the country have been remarkably moving.”

Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price

Secretary Price reaffirmed the Administration’s commitment to reduce Obamacare’s burdens by providing the American people with the highest quality healthcare system.

Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary Simon Henshaw To Travel to Uganda for Refugee Summit

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
June 21, 2017

Acting Assistant Secretary for Population, Refugees, and Migration Simon Henshaw will travel to Uganda from June 21-23 as part of the United States delegation to the Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees, led by U.S. Ambassador to Uganda Deborah Malac. The Summit, hosted by Ugandan President Museveni and UN Secretary General Guterres, is being held in light of Uganda now hosting nearly 1.3 million refugees, including those entering in large numbers from South Sudan – currently the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis.

Assistant Secretary Henshaw's visit reinforces the U.S. commitment to the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which demonstrated the unity of the international community in humanitarian efforts to save lives, protect rights, and share responsibility on a global scale.

For more information on the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, visit <http://www.state.gov/j/prm> and follow @StatePRM on Twitter.

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: United States Strategy for Engagement in the Caribbean

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
June 21, 2017

The U.S. Department of State, in coordination with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), submitted a multi-year Caribbean strategy

to Congress on June 19 that establishes a framework for enhancing the security and prosperity of the United States and its Caribbean partners. Considered the “third border” of the United States, the Caribbean is a vital part of our efforts to counter organized crime and illicit trafficking, support democracy throughout the Western hemisphere, strengthen energy security, and create jobs through increased trade and investment.

A secure and stable Caribbean contributes to a safer and more prosperous United States by securing the U.S. border, protecting U.S. citizens abroad, and increasing opportunities for U.S. exports. The United States will continue to work with the Caribbean region to support commitments in the multi-year strategy; encourage private sector-led growth and job creation; reduce energy costs through diversification, regulatory reform, and public-private partnerships; and maximize partnerships in health and education for more sustainable growth and development in the Western Hemisphere.

Congress mandated this Caribbean strategy through the United States-Caribbean Strategic Engagement Act of 2016 (H.R. 4939), which underscores U.S. interest in enhanced relations with the governments of the Caribbean, the Caribbean diaspora, the private sector, and civil society.

To view the Caribbean strategy, visit our webpage at
<https://www.state.gov/p/wha/rt/caribbeanstrategy/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.

Press Releases: Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis at a Joint Press Availability

Press Availability
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Dean Acheson Auditorium
Washington, DC

June 21, 2017

SECRETARY TILLERSON: Hello. Good afternoon, all. I do want to thank Secretary Mattis, State Councilor Yang Jiechi, and PLA Chief of Joint Staff Fang Fenghui for a day of very productive meetings.

Secretary Mattis and I were quite pleased to host the first session of the Diplomatic Security Dialogue since we agreed on this format at the presidential summit in Mar-a-Lago. This is one of four distinct dialogue areas that will implement our President's vision for constructive, results-oriented bilateral relations. We're sustaining these regular talks at a much higher level than in previous years and among principals in both the civilian and the military agencies. President Trump, I know, looks forward to his state visit to China later this year.

As we've said before, U.S. and China have undergone – relations have undergone a profound transformation over the past 40 years. These dialogues provide an opportunity to consider how we're going to engage and how we're going to live with one another over the next 40 years. In furthering this relationship, we need to work to expand areas of cooperation, as we did today, on issues where we have shared security interest. But we also need to address, directly and very frankly, areas where we face threats or areas where we have differences so that we can narrow these differences and solve the problems.

The most acute threat in the region today is posed by the DPRK. We both call for complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. And we call on the DPRK to halt its illegal nuclear weapons program and its ballistic missile test as stipulated in the UN Security Council resolutions. We reaffirmed our commitment to implement in full all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

For example, we both agreed that our companies should not do business with any UN-designated North Korean entities in accordance with these resolutions. China understands that the United States regards North Korea as our top security threat. We reiterated to China that they have a diplomatic responsibility to exert much greater economic and diplomatic pressure on the regime if they want to prevent further escalation in the region.

Whether it is money laundering, extorting Korean expatriates, or malicious cyber activity, North Korea has engaged in a number of criminal enterprises that help fund its weapons programs. We must step up our efforts to help to curtail these sources of revenue. Countries around the world and in the UN Security Council are joining in this effort and we hope China will do their part as well.

The United States remains committed to building North – to commit – is

committed to holding North Korea accountable for multiple violations of UN Security Council resolutions which expressly prohibit its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. We regret that it is the North Korean people who suffer when the regime diverts resources to these prohibited programs, and we urge the DPRK regime to choose a better path for its people.

We also had a frank exchange of views on the South China Sea. Secretary Mattis and I were clear that the U.S. position remains unchanged. We oppose changes to the status quo of the past through the militarization of outposts in the South China Sea and excessive maritime claims unsupported by international law, and we uphold the freedom of navigation and overflight.

With that said, China has committed to resolve their disputes peacefully and in accordance with recognized principles of international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. During the dialogue, we also decided to adopt greater coordination to face the global threat posed by terrorism. We will be looking to China to help the Iraqi Government in specific meaningful ways to ensure the country's long-term stability and economic growth as it battles ISIS and begins its long process of rebuilding.

An important part of our discussion about the next 40 years was the – was increasing mutual trust and working toward a long-term risk reduction effort between our two militaries and our government. Building on what we've done in the air and maritime spaces, U.S. and Chinese civilian and military teams start discussions in new areas of strategic concern like space, cyberspace, nuclear forces, and nonproliferation issues. We need to enhance stability and develop strong international standards in these areas, and we need China to play a major role.

Lastly, we discussed how this administration will stand up for American and universal values like human rights. We will not be shy about raising our concerns about China's human rights record, and I was direct and candid in our meetings today. Talk is not enough when it comes to increasing cooperation and narrowing differences between our two sides. The action items we have agreed upon today have set a foundation for additional areas of cooperation and we look forward to our next interaction at this level and between our two presidents.

And I'll turn it to Secretary Mattis.

SECRETARY MATTIS: Well, thank you, Secretary Tillerson. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. A few words to add to Secretary Tillerson's report, to give you something from the defense perspective. This has been a unique opportunity for our nations to engage in philosophical-level discussions about how we discuss these issues and to discuss the way ahead, together hosting our counterparts, State Councilor Yang and General Fang.

In this first round of dialogues agreed to by our presidents at the summit at Mar-a-Lago, we gained a glimpse of a mutually beneficial future that we can create. As Secretary Tillerson mentioned, the United States seeks a constructive and a results-oriented relationship with China. Events like the Diplomatic and Security Dialogue we just completed represent our effort to

elevate and focus our bilateral discussions. I'm committed to improving the U.S.-China defense relationship so that it remains a stabilizing element in our overall relationship. Our two nations can and do cooperate in mutually beneficial ways.

We prioritize mechanisms that contribute to greater risk reduction between our armed forces, that open and maintain effective channels of communication between us, and that expand areas of cooperation where we can. At the same time, we do manage our differences where we have them, and while competition between our nations is bound to occur, conflict is not inevitable.

This afternoon, we affirmed North Korea's nuclear missile program is a threat to peace and security in the Asia Pacific region. We also affirmed our strong commitment to cooperate, including through the UN, to realize our shared goal of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Meanwhile, we will continue to take necessary measures to defend ourselves and our allies.

We also discussed the importance of freedom of navigation elsewhere in the region, and the peaceful resolution of those disputes in the maritime space, and we discussed ways to decrease tension and reduce risk in the South China Sea. As we maintain open dialogue on this topic, the United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.

And third, the United States and China agreed to explore new areas of mil-to-mil cooperation, including exchange of officers to improve transparency and mutual understanding, and to discuss strategic issues that Secretary Tillerson mentioned. We welcome the opportunity to engage with the Chinese counterparts on strategic topics to discuss our differences, and will now press forward where we can work together.

Thank you.

MS NAUERT: We have two questions today. First, we'll start out with Nike Ching from Voice of America. Nike.

QUESTION: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary Tillerson. After your last visit to China in March, a Vietnamese American from Houston, Sandy Phan-Gillis was released. Now today, after your discussion with Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi, should we expect good news to come soon on the release of the three more Americans detained in North Korea?

Separately, on Qatar, in a statement on Qatar issued by the State Department yesterday, the administration seems to have acknowledged that it's being played by the Saudis over the Qatar crisis. Isn't that embarrassing? Thank you.

SECRETARY TILLERSON: With respect to the three additional American citizens that have been illegally detained, unlawfully detained by the regime in North Korea, our efforts continue towards their release. I have nothing to report further on that at this time.

With respect to the situation in the Middle East between Qatar and the four countries who have issues with Qatar, our role has been to encourage the

parties to get their issues on the table, clearly articulated, so that those issues can be addressed and some resolution process can get underway to bring this to a conclusion. Our desire is for unity within the Gulf, and unity within the GCC, and that we redirect all of our efforts on the war against terror, the war to defeat ISIS and Daesh in the region.

MS NAUERT: Barbara Plett from BBC.

QUESTION: Thank you. Secretary Mattis, the President seemed to signal yesterday that he was extremely angry and frustrated with North Korea, and that China had failed in its attempt to help on that. Despite these continued efforts at cooperation, is the administration beginning to think that China will not be able to rein North Korea in, and is there any consideration of new, direct action? In particular, has the military posture changed in any way?

And if I may, a question on the South China Sea. Control of the South China Sea is a fundamental part of China's strategic policy. Freedom of navigation efforts notwithstanding, how far is the U.S. willing to go to prevent militarization? Thank you.

SECRETARY MATTIS: In regards to the President's view of North Korea, I believe he represents the American people's view of North Korea right now. We see a young man go over there healthy, and with a minor act of mischief, come home dead, basically – die shortly – immediately after he gets here. There is no way that we can look at a situation like this with any kind of understanding. This is – goes beyond any kind of understanding of law and order, of humanity, of responsibility towards any human being. So what you're seeing, I think, is the American people's frustration with a regime that provokes, and provokes, and provokes, and basically plays outside the rules, plays fast and loose with the truth, that sort of thing.

As far as China's role, China continues to work these issues. We – the reason for this dialogue that we had today was to have an open and frank dialogue about what more can be done in areas of common interest. I would point out to you that China's end state on the Korean Peninsula in terms of nuclear weapons is the same as ours, and we continue to work towards that end state.

On South China Sea, this is a dialogue where we identify areas where we can work together and to understand those areas where we have, I would call them disconnects, where our understanding of the problem is very different from theirs. And we had that discussion here today, and we'll continue to work – to close gaps in our understanding and to work some kind of manner in the future that removes these irritants. But I would say for right now that's the whole purpose for the dialogue that we held here today, and we will be holding more in the future.

MS NAUERT: Thank you, everyone.

SECRETARY TILLERSON: 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.