

[Press Releases: Turkmenistan National Day](#)

Press Statement
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

Washington, DC
October 27, 2017

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

The United States and Turkmenistan have been working together for 26 years to create a more prosperous, peaceful, and stable region. We reaffirm our commitment to Turkmenistan's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and we look forward to working closely with you on issues of mutual interest, from promoting regional stability to promoting cultural and educational exchanges between our people.

We send the people of Turkmenistan our best wishes as you celebrate this special day, and we hope our partnership grows stronger over the next year.

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[Press Releases: Secretary Tillerson's](#)

Call with Burma's Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
October 26, 2017

The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Secretary Tillerson spoke by phone with Burma's Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on October 26 to express concern about the continuing humanitarian crisis and reported atrocities in Rakhine State. The Secretary urged Burma's security forces to support the government in ending the violence in Rakhine State and allowing the safe return home of those displaced during this crisis, especially the large numbers of ethnic Rohingya, in accordance with the 1992 Joint Statement with Bangladesh and without further conditions. At the same time, he urged the military to facilitate humanitarian aid for displaced people in affected areas, allow media access, and cooperate with the United Nations to ensure a thorough, independent investigation into all allegations of human rights abuses and violations and to ensure accountability. Secretary Tillerson also condemned the August 25 deadly attacks by militants on security forces in Rakhine State.

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Press Releases: Remarks to the Staff and Families of U.S. Mission Geneva

Press Availability
Rex W. Tillerson

Secretary of State

U.S. Mission Geneva
Geneva, Switzerland
October 26, 2017

MR ALLEGRA: Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. As many of you know, this is the Secretary's final stop of a very impressive journey. Over the past week he has navigated the substantive and the logistic challenges of Riyadh, of Doha, of Baghdad and Kabul the very same day, and of Islamabad and Delhi, all in a single trip. And today he has added Syria to the mix here in Geneva, which of course has had a long tradition of hosting world leaders to confront the toughest issues of the day. Mr. Secretary, our platform for visiting secretaries, presidents, and the like is part of this mission's DNA. It is itself testimony to the agility, the flexibility, and the know-how of our American and our local staff.

In fact, to best describe this team – and especially with a Scout troop in the house – I did not need to look too far to find the characteristics that matter most. We are trustworthy and we are loyal. We are helpful and friendly to a fault. We are courteous and kind even in the face of provocation. We are obedient and cheerful even as we lack of sleep. We are thrifty in our own work and that which we expect from others. We are brave in confronting our adversaries. We are clean because, well, this is Switzerland. (Laughter.) And we are reverent to the calling of public service, and we are all very, very glad to have you here today.

With that, Mr. Secretary, thank you for taking the time to spend a few moments with us, and welcome to Geneva. (Applause.)

SECRETARY TILLERSON: Well, thank you, and it is a real pleasure to have a few minutes to spend with you. It's – that's the high point of each of those stops along the way. I didn't quite get to make it to the mission in Afghanistan. There were some logistical challenges there, but I look forward to going back.

I really appreciate the work of Charge d'Affaires Allegra, and we found we

have a common bond that we didn't realize, or I didn't realize. As it turns out we were both at the Boy Scout Jamboree in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho back in 1969, if I'm remembering right – somewhere in there. (Laughter.) So here we are standing on the same turf a half a world away – and I won't tell how many years later, but anyway.

And I think that recitation of the Scout law as a guiding set of principles – I've used that in my former career. I did a lot of speaking to groups of business leaders and graduate business schools, and they would always say, "Well, what's the best way to build an organizational values system around?" I said, "Just get the Boy Scout handbook out. It's all right there. Everything you need to create the proper culture for an organization are right there in those 12 points of the Scout Law." And that has always governed my values system having grown up with that. And I also have told people that everything I learned about leadership I learned in Boy Scout junior leader training. It was all just downhill from there. (Laughter.)

But again, a real pleasure to be here with the mission here in Geneva. And as Ted was saying, you have a very different role than most of the missions I visit. Most missions, of course, it's country-focused, country-specific, heavy in development and aid programs on the ground, so a very different kind of work than you do here. Here you have a very diverse set of requirements, and you have people like me and others kind of parachuting in and out on you at all times, and your need to be prepared to facilitate the important work that we have to do here that's so vital to moving these – some of our most challenging issues forward. So it does take a different kind of mindset and it takes a different skillset, and we recognize that each of you provide that unique capability for us, and it's so vital to our success here in Geneva.

So we appreciate all of you and we appreciate the families that are here. Our families are so important to our success – our spouses supporting us. I know Geneva's not a real hardship duty place, but it's a long way from home, and so all of the same sacrifices when you miss some family events back home. I know from having been deployed overseas myself on an unaccompanied basis you miss some birthdays, you miss some weddings, you miss some graduations, and that's a sacrifice on everyone's part. Hopefully down the road you'll reflect back on that time that you had here – and many of you, I know, have been in postings elsewhere – and the richness of what you experienced is going to more than outweigh the sacrifice that went with it. But we know it doesn't come free. It does come with a sacrifice, and we appreciate that.

So again, I'm really pleased to be here. I'm going to talk about three important values that I articulated the first day I walked into the State Department and gave my remarks on the steps. There were three things I said that were important to me coming to an organization that I do not know. I don't know the culture of the organization. I certainly know its reputation and its history and patriotism.

But there were three things that I told people that this is – these are three things I want everyone to try to work hard to do. And the first is safety and security, that we simply have to take care of ourselves first and you have to take personal responsibility for that. And then once you do that, take

responsibility for those around you. Many of the assignments – and many of you have been in those assignments – involve a great deal of risk. We feel an obligation to ensure that every day you are protected and taken care of, but you own a part of that as well.

So we are very committed to the safety and security of each of you. We want you to be committed to each other as well. As some of the folks back at the State Department will tell you, every meeting I have starts with, “Are all of our people safe?” And we go around the room in case anybody’s got any concerns. If they have any worries whatsoever, they get dealt with that day. That’s how serious I take it.

The second thing is that we wanted to be accountable. I say we have to hold ourselves accountable for what we do, for what people expect of us. And when we deliver, we’re accountable. When we fail or we have shortcomings or mistakes, we own those as well. And that’s okay. We learn from them. We understand how to fix it the next time. But we hold ourselves accountable. And if we do that, we can hold others accountable. And in particular, we can hold our foreign counterparties accountable, because we can’t hold them accountable if we don’t hold ourselves accountable.

And the last thing is respect. Every human being has an important role to play in this department. It doesn’t matter what role they may be playing, whether they’re in the mail room, driving a vehicle, or they’re at one of the most complex Foreign Service officer desks. Every one of those roles is important, because everything everyone does enables someone else to get their job done. So we should treat each other with that respect. And if we treat each other with respect, it becomes just a practice, a habit. We will treat others externally with respect as well, and that projects the best of America – a compassionate, caring people. And you’re that face of America on this – in this mission here, and so I’d ask you to be safe, take care of yourself, be accountable, own your responsibilities and hold yourself accountable, and treat each other and everyone with the respect they deserve. We’re all just human beings trying to do our job the best we can.

So it’s a pleasure to be with you and a pleasure to see the faces that are here. It connects me when I get back home that out here it’s not just a bunch of action memos and info memos. (Laughter.) There’s real people out there working hard every day on behalf of the American people, and I want you to know I appreciate it. I appreciate it very much. So great to see you. (Applause.)

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[Press Releases: Briefing by Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby On the Release of the Report on Human Rights Abuses and Censorship in North Korea](#)

Special Briefing
Scott Busby

Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Press Briefing Room
Washington, DC
October 26, 2017

MS NAUERT: Next, I would like to introduce you to one of the – our other deputy assistant secretaries. Come on up here. This is Scott Busby. Scott works for our DRL Bureau, which is Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. He's here to talk about the DPRK, North Korea. Today, consistent with the North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016, the State Department has

released its third report on North Korea human rights abuses and also censorship. In conjunction with the report, the Department of Treasury sanctioned persons and entities identified in this report. And our Deputy Assistant Secretary Mr. Busby will talk a little bit about that and take a few of your questions, and then I'll start the regular briefing.

Sir, go ahead.

MR BUSBY: Well, thank you, Heather. And good afternoon, everyone. Today, as part of our continuing efforts to promote accountability for North Korean officials, as Heather said, we're releasing our third report on serious human rights abusers from the DPRK. And this report identifies seven individuals and three entities as responsible for serious human rights abuses or censorship in North Korea.

In conjunction with the report, the Treasury Department has added these 10 North Korean individuals and entities to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List. Both actions are consistent with the North Korean Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016. Like the two prior reports, this report shines a spotlight on serious human rights abuses committed by the DPRK regime, including extrajudicial killings, forced labor, torture, prolonged arbitrary detention, as well as rape, forced abortions, and other sexual violence.

In particular, this report focuses on the many human rights abuses that underwrite the regime's weapons program, including forced labor, re-education through labor camps, and overseas labor contracts. Thousands of North Koreans are sent abroad every year to work in slave-like conditions, earning revenue for the regime. The government also deploys security officials abroad to monitor the activities of North Korean citizens and to forcibly repatriate individuals who seek asylum. This report includes individuals and entities responsible for these types of abuses.

With these efforts, we aim to send a signal to all DPRK Government officials, particularly prison camp managers and mid-level officials, that we can and we will expose human rights abuses and censorship in the DPRK and that these individuals will suffer consequences for such actions. Thank you very much.

MS NAUERT: Any questions?

MR BUSBY: Yes, ma'am.

MS NAUERT: Go ahead. Kylie, go right ahead.

QUESTION: I have a quick question. There's one individual on the list who's based in China at the consul general in Shenyang. I'm not sure how to pronounce that. But what do you expect China to do as a result of the U.S. pointing to this individual? Do you expect them to take action against them? What's the expectation?

MR BUSBY: This individual was included in the report because of his responsibility for facilitating the return of North Korean asylum seekers to North Korea. His case has been raised with China. I don't want to speak for

what China may or may not do with his case, but we've brought it to their attention.

QUESTION: What are the possibilities for what they might do?

MR BUSBY: The range of possibilities, right, including expelling from the country.

MS NAUERT: Janne.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. Regarding North Korean human rights abuse, do you expect North Korean leader Kim Jong-un putting into ICC, International Criminal Court, for abuse?

MR BUSBY: Well, a decision like that is obviously not one that the U.S. Government takes. That's a decision that can be taken by any number of other entities. So again, I don't think I can speak for what those entities may or may not do with regards to Kim Jong-un.

QUESTION: Can you give us an estimate of what assets are actually frozen as a result of the sanctions that were announced by Treasury today? Are there any significant assets falling under U.S. jurisdiction that have actually now been frozen as a result of their acts?

MR BUSBY: I'd have to refer you to our Treasury Department for that sort of information. I don't have those sorts of details.

QUESTION: And just one follow-up on the question about potential sanctions: If you don't know or can't tell us what kinds of action China might take, and you don't know, in fact, whether China will actually take any action, why is there any reason to believe that there will be any accountability for the individual that you've identified, or any consequence?

MR BUSBY: Again, the report is just out today. We have communicated the results of this report, the data in this report, with the Chinese and with other governmental authorities in the region. It's now up to China to decide what to do with it.

QUESTION: Have they ever previously acted against a North Korean official who has been similarly identified?

MR BUSBY: This is the first such individual mentioned in a report like this, but –

QUESTION: But surely you've raised other issues with them in the past, or other individuals.

MR BUSBY: Yeah. I don't know off the top of my head. I couldn't tell you.

QUESTION: You don't know –

MR BUSBY: I could tell you off the top of my head, but we could get back to you.

QUESTION: Great. It'd be interesting to know if they ever have acted.

MS NAUERT: Abbie from NBC News, final question.

QUESTION: Hi. I wanted to ask – I believe that this is not the first time you have decided to target mid-level officials within the North Korean Government, and I believe the philosophy was the idea that people would feel a different level of responsibility in that mid-level position. Have you seen any effect by undertaking that – targeting that particular level of people within the North Korean Government?

MR BUSBY: So very hard to get information out of North Korea, but we have heard from defectors that there – they have seen policy changes and in some cases the harshness of their treatment has been lessened, they have said, as a consequence of sanctions such as these. So we have heard that from defectors.

MS NAUERT: Thank you so much. Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby, thank you for coming in.

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[Press Releases: Briefing by Deputy Assistant Secretary Jim Walsh On the State Department's Role in Combating the Opioid Crisis](#)

Special Briefing

Jim Walsh, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics And Law Enforcement Affairs

Press Briefing Room

Washington, DC

October 26, 2017

MS NAUERT: Glad to have you here. Everybody, thanks so much for coming. I brought a few extra guests with me today as a part of our effort to try to bring more of our experts into the room to provide you information on timely issues. I just want to add on a personal note to that my colleagues who are joining us have served at the State Department for 15 and 17 years, respectively. They are both Civil servants who have done tremendous work on behalf of the department and the American public.

We have a tremendous amount of respect for both our functional and regional bureaus, our Foreign Service officers, our career Civil servants, and I want to highlight some of the excellent work that they are doing. They are tremendous patriots. They have served all around the world – many of them have – and are really example of State Department’s best and brightest.

I’d like to start by introducing you today to Jim Walsh. He is the deputy assistant secretary for a bureau which is called INL. You probably heard the President a short while ago talk about the opioid crisis here in the United States. The President talked about how, through a whole-of-government approach, we will aggressively fight the addiction throughout the administration – the addiction crisis in the United States.

The President said we can be an end – a generation to end this epidemic. The State Department is also doing its part in trying to do away with the problem of drug addiction and all of that. We play a key role in combatting the deadly epidemic. Our bureau dedicated to drugs and law enforcement, INL, is leading efforts around the globe related to the opioids crisis, so to provide some details on this and answer your questions on the issue, I’d like to welcome to the podium our Deputy Assistant Secretary Jim Walsh from the INL Bureau. That stands for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement. He has a quick address for you. We’ll take a few questions, and then I’d like to introduce you to another one of our deputy assistant secretaries.

MR WALSH: Thank you, Heather. Good afternoon, everyone. With the President and First Lady just speaking about our nation's drug crisis, I'd like to share a few comments about how the State Department is addressing the opioid epidemic. With heroin and synthetic opioids fueling this crisis produced overseas, transnational criminal organizations moving this deadly product, our national strategy to respond to this crisis must include an international component. Responding to this crisis is a top priority for the administration, and here at the State Department we're leveraging our partnerships across the globe to stem the flow of these killer drugs. We're pulling diplomatic levers both bilaterally and multilaterally, and using foreign assistance to protect U.S. communities.

Effective October 18th, criminals now have a tougher time producing fentanyl because two major ingredients needed to produce this dangerous drug are now internationally controlled. The State Department led a robust diplomatic campaign to advocate for this result, which culminated in a unanimous international vote to impose the new restrictions. This is just one important step in our efforts to reduce the supply of deadly synthetic opioids and ultimately help save American lives.

On the other side of the globe we are working with China. We are encouraging China to continue to crack down on illegal production and trafficking of synthetic opioids. We have made notable progress on this front to date. In March and July 2017, in response to U.S. requests, China agreed to establish new controls on five dangerous synthetic drugs, including carfentanyl, which you may know is a hundred times more deadly and potent than fentanyl. Next week the State Department, along with our interagency partners at the Department of Justice, will travel to China to take part in a recurring experts-level counternarcotics working group meeting to further expand this cooperation.

We are also using foreign assistance to strengthen Mexico's ability to stop illicit drugs from reaching our border. The INL Bureau efforts on the ground, including building Mexico's capacity to interdict illegal drugs, improves security along our southwest border and reduced production of heroin and synthetic drugs, and we will take down clandestine drug labs. On December 1st we'll gather again with not only Mexico but our northern partner, Canada, who is facing its own serious fentanyl challenge. This will take place at the next North American Drug Dialogue.

Beyond the supply work – supply-side work, our international drug demand reduction programs are discovering new approaches that are being adopted by U.S., state, and local prevention and treatment professionals. INL has developed a scientifically grounded, evidence-based, universal curriculum for both treatment and prevention. This will head off and break the chain of addiction in a more effective manner. Our overseas demand reduction tools and global research will also help address the opioid crisis domestically.

The bottom line is this: We at the State Department are moving forward and are full aware of the gravity of this crisis. With over 64,000 Americans dead from overdoses in 2016, with drug traffickers taking advantage of new ways to move and sell their product, including through the dark web, and rogue

chemists developing assiduous new synthetic drugs at an alarming rate, we must constantly be adapting our approach in responding to new and deadly realities.

This challenge is a dire one, and it will continue to be a top priority for the department.

Thank you. I'll take a few questions.

MS NAUERT: Who would like to start? Come on, no one's curious in this room? You're reporters.

QUESTION: I'll do it.

MS NAUERT: Okay.

QUESTION: All right.

MS NAUERT: Said, is that you?

QUESTION: I'll take a shot at it. How are you coordinating your effort with, let's say, countries such as your allies like Egypt and so on, where there is an emerging problem similar to yours?

MR WALSH: Sure. We – as I said, we work in the multilateral and bilateral arena. Through the international multilateral arena, we meet on a regular basis in the International Narcotics Control Board, and we also work in a bilateral through our embassies. Through our Drug Demand Reduction Programs, we're also collecting a lot of information to gather an appreciation of how dangerous this – fentanyl, in particular, is occurring throughout the world. Our statistics are not there, but it is – we are getting evidence that it is reaching a lot of other countries as well. And so through the collection of information and sharing of our techniques for drug demand reduction, we're working with them.

QUESTION: Would that be security agency-to-security agency coordination, or at the diplomatic level? How is –

MR WALSH: Mostly diplomatic, with Egypt in particular.

MS NAUERT: We'll take one more question. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Thank you so much. Regarding the – Carmen Ria Rodriguez, Radio Marti. Would you say that it's coming from abroad, or is this home-elaborated? What would the major supplier be?

MR WALSH: The major supply of the heroin, as you heard from our President, is coming from Mexico, in fact. DEA estimates about 90 percent. Of the fentanyl, the vast majority of it does come from China. And we – what we are seeing is that it's either being trafficked through Mexico and being combined with the heroin, or it's being directly shipped to the United States via mail.

MS NAUERT: Thank you so much.

MR WALSH: Thank you.

MS NAUERT: Thank you, sir. Appreciate it. And thank you for your expertise and your time. Glad to have you.

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