

Press Releases: Secretary Tillerson To Deliver Remarks at Foreign Affairs Day Celebration and Attend the AFSA Memorial Plaque Ceremony

Notice to the Press
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 4, 2017

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will participate in the Department of State's Foreign Affairs Day Memorial Plaque Ceremony on Friday, May 5, 2017, at 4:15 p.m., at the Department of State.

Secretary Tillerson will deliver remarks paying tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country around the world. American Foreign Service Association President Barbara Stephenson will give welcoming remarks.

The Memorial Ceremony is scheduled to begin at 4:15 p.m. in the C Street Lobby of the Department of State.

The Secretary's remarks are open press.

Preset time for video cameras: 3:15 p.m. from the C Street Entrance Lobby.

Final access time for journalists and still photographers: 3:45 p.m. from the C Street Entrance Lobby.

The event will be streamed live on www.state.gov, Facebook.com/usdos, and BNET. Follow @StateDept for more information.

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.

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Press Releases: Secretary Tillerson Meets With the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Readout
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 4, 2017

The below is attributable to Spokesperson Heather Nauert:□

Secretary of State Tillerson hosted the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for a special U.S.-ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting, reinforcing the Strategic Partnership between the United States and ASEAN and commemorating the 40th anniversary of U.S.-ASEAN relations.

Secretary Tillerson underscored that the Asia-Pacific region is a top priority for the Trump Administration and that ASEAN is an essential partner. ASEAN Ministers welcomed the continued commitment by the United States to ASEAN, including the Association's community-building and regional integration efforts. They jointly took note of the 30th ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue, held on May 3, in which senior officials of the United States, ASEAN member states, and the ASEAN Secretariat discussed cooperation on political, security, and economic issues. The Secretary and the Ministers stressed their shared commitment to advance peace, security, and prosperity in the region.

Secretary Tillerson and the ASEAN Foreign Ministers discussed the tensions on the Korean Peninsula caused by the DPRK's nuclear tests and missile launches, and the grave threat posed to regional stability. They recognized the need for full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Secretary Tillerson and the Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their adherence to a rules-based order in the Asia-Pacific and to the common principles articulated in the 2016 Joint Statement of the U.S.-ASEAN Special Leaders' Summit, including the peaceful resolution of disputes, with full respect for legal and diplomatic processes, and in accordance with international law. The Secretary noted shared concerns by many in the region regarding militarization and land reclamation in the South China Sea. The Secretary and the Ministers stressed the need for ASEAN Member States and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea in its entirety, and took note of efforts towards the early conclusion of a meaningful Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

Secretary Tillerson and his counterparts discussed economic partnership through U.S.-ASEAN Connect, the Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement, and the ASEAN Connectivity through Trade and Investment program.

The Secretary noted his intent to represent the United States at the ASEAN Regional Forum, East Asia Summit Ministerial, and U.S.-ASEAN Ministerial meetings in August in the Philippines.

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Press Releases: Acting Assistant Secretary C.S. Eliot Kang Travels to Brussels

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 4, 2017

Acting Assistant Secretary for International Security and Nonproliferation C.S. Eliot Kang will be in Brussels May 5 to participate in the NATO North Atlantic Council and meet with the EU Political and Security Committee. While there, he will discuss a range of nonproliferation challenges, with a special focus on the international community's response to North Korea's destabilizing and UN-proscribed nuclear, ballistic missile, and proliferation programs.

For updates, follow the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN) on Twitter, at @StateISN.

For more information about ISN, please visit our website:
<http://www.state.gov/t/isn/>.

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Press Releases: Statement on Russia, Turkey, and Iran's De-Escalation Zones Plan for Syria

Press Statement
Heather Nauert

Department Spokesperson

Washington, DC
May 4, 2017

Russia, Turkey, and Iran, at the conference in Astana, announced agreement today on an effort to reduce the violence in certain areas of Syria. The United States was represented at the Astana conference by Acting Assistant Secretary Stuart Jones. We were not a direct participant in the negotiations

and are not, at this point, a party to the agreement.

The United States supports any effort that can genuinely de-escalate the violence in Syria, ensure unhindered humanitarian access, focus energies on the defeat of ISIS and other terrorists, and create the conditions for a credible political resolution of the conflict.

We appreciate the efforts of Turkey and the Russian Federation to pursue this agreement and have encouraged the Syrian opposition to participate actively in the discussions despite the difficult conditions on the ground.

We continue to have concerns about the Astana agreement, including the involvement of Iran as a so-called “guarantor.” Iran’s activities in Syria have only contributed to the violence, not stopped it, and Iran’s unquestioning support for the Assad regime has perpetuated the misery of ordinary Syrians.

In light of the failures of past agreements, we have reason to be cautious. We expect the regime to stop all attacks on civilians and opposition forces, something they have never done. We expect Russia to ensure regime compliance.

The opposition must also live up to its commitments, with Turkey as the guarantor, to separate from designated terrorist groups, including Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham, which continue to hijack the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for a representative and accountable government.

We nonetheless hope that this arrangement can contribute to a de-escalation of violence, end the suffering of the Syrian people, and set the stage for a political settlement of the conflict. We look forward to continuing our dialogue with the Russian Federation on efforts to that can responsibly end the Syria conflict. We continue to strongly support the UN-led process in Geneva, under the stewardship of Staffan de Mistura, as the center of international efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement.

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Marking a Milestone for School Choice



Yesterday, the President welcomed advocates, administrators, teachers,

parents, and students to the White House to mark a milestone for school choice.

This week, Congress is poised to pass legislation that President Trump will sign into law, a spending bill that will give new life and funding to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program – the only federally funded voucher program in the nation and a case study in school-choice success.

Since its creation in 2004, the Opportunity Scholarship Program has given parents and families hope by giving them a pathway to take their children out of failing public schools and put them in a private school instead.

Over the past 13 years, nearly 20,000 students have applied to the program, and more than 7,500 students have been accepted. And more than 1,150 children are participating in the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program at this very moment – including many of the students who joined us today.

It's no surprise why this program is so wildly popular.

While only 69% of D.C. public-school students graduated from high school last year, a stunning 98% of scholarship recipients walked across the stage to receive their diploma. And 86% of those graduates were accepted into college to continue their education and to continue climbing the ladder of opportunity.

The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program proves that school choice works. President Trump could not be more proud to extend this crucial program. But his commitment to school choice doesn't end there.

On January 26th, only a few days after we took office, President Trump declared National School Choice Week for 2017. He called on federal and state lawmakers to expand school choice for "millions of additional students." And now he's fighting every day to make this vision a reality.

President Trump believes that a child's future shouldn't be determined by his or her parents' income or area code. And the next generation shouldn't be trapped in a broken system that puts the status quo ahead of students' success.

Rest assured, President Trump will work tirelessly to ensure that wherever an American child goes to school – whether it's a public school, a private school, a parochial school, a charter school, or at home – that they go to a great school and get a world-class education.

Yesterday, we celebrated a historic achievement – but I know that it's only the first of many.

Under President Donald Trump, we are entering a new era of opportunity, choice, and excellence in America's educational system – and our nation's children will reap the rewards for generations to come.

