



Tillerson offers NKorea talks

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson

Washington

Washington's top diplomat Tuesday expressed willingness to talk with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) without precondition, indicating a softening of the hawkish U.S. stance though the White House publicly remained unrelenting.

"We're ready to have the first meeting without precondition," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said at the 2017 Atlantic Council-Korea Foundation Forum, an annual policy forum co-hosted by think tanks Atlantic Council and Korea Foundation.

"Let's just meet," he told an audience of around 300, adding, "We can talk about the weather, if you want."

However, the White House, responding to Tillerson's remarks, said there was no policy change on the DPRK.

"The president's views on North Korea (the DPRK) have not changed," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement released soon after Tillerson's speech.

It was not the first time that Trump and Tillerson appeared to be not on the same track over the Korean Peninsula issue.

Trump snubbed his state secretary over two months ago when the latter was trying to reach out to Pyongyang to start a dialogue.

"Save your energy Rex," Trump tweeted.

Tuesday's remarks showed Tillerson's efforts to seek a peaceful solution amid escalating tension on the peninsula.

"Can we at least sit down and see each other face to face, and then we can begin

to lay out a map, a roadmap, of what we might be willing to work towards?" Tillerson said at the forum.

"It's not realistic to say we're only going to talk if you come to the table ready to give up your program," he said, referring to the DPRK's longtime devotion to nuclear and missile programs and fast advancement in the technology and Trump's warning of military intervention if the programs were not halted.

Tillerson said dialogue is possible whenever Pyongyang is ready.

The remarks came two weeks after the DPRK successfully test-fired a newly developed intercontinental ballistic missile, drawing strong condemnation from the international community. (Xinhua)

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Do you think US - North Korea talks will take place in 2018 as Tillerson shows readiness?

Yes No Cant Say



"We are losing the battle. Those before us were lucky. They could say they didn't know. And it was true. We've known for about 20 years now. And every day that goes past, we know a little more."

Emmanuel Macron
French President
about climate change

Rest in sight

Duterte's martial law again extended



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte won martial law powers across the southern third of the country for one more year to combat Islamic militants and leftist rebels

Defects found at China nuclear reactor project

Defects were found in equipment for a third-generation nuclear reactor under construction in southern China with the problematic parts being replaced

Bhutto's son takes up destiny

A decade after Pakistan's first female leader Benazir Bhutto was assassinated, her son Bilawal is striving to reclaim his mother's mantle.

Homeless man pilfers €300,000

Police in Paris are hunting an opportunistic homeless man who "landed himself a Christmas present" by taking advantage of an unlocked door to steal €300,000 in cash from Charles-de-Gaulle airport.

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US helicopter window falls on Japanese school ground

Osprey aircraft on the tarmac at the US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma



Tokyo

A Japanese boy has been injured after a window fell off a US military helicopter and landed on a school playground - the second such incident in a week.

The window crashed down in a sports ground where 50 children were playing at an elementary school near the Futenma marine airbase in the country's south just after 10am local time.

Officials from the city of Ginowan said the metal frame fell from a CH-53 transport helicopter leaving a boy with minor arm

injuries.

The US military said it was taking the 'regrettable' incident 'extremely seriously' and was opening an investigation.

Last week, a part of another US military helicopter fell on a nearby kindergarten roof, but no one was injured.

"This is a regrettable incident and we apologise for any anxiety it has caused the community,' the military said of the latest incident, urging local residents to stay clear from where the object landed 'for safety purposes'. (MailOnline)

Republican Roy Moore loses Alabama Senate race

Washington

Republican Roy Moore, accused of pursuing and molesting multiple teenage girls while in his 30s, was defeated by his Democrat rival Doug Jones in Alabama's special Senate election on Tuesday.

Jones had 49.5 per cent of the vote against Moore's 48.9pc, with 91pc of precincts reporting, according to AP.

"Thank you, Alabama!" Jones told supporters in a Birmingham hotel ballroom after the result was declared. "I am truly overwhelmed."

"At the end of the day, this entire race has been about dignity and respect. This

campaign has been about the rule of law. This campaign has been about common courtesy and decency," Jones told supporters.

The former U.S. attorney became the first Democrat to win a Senate seat in the deep red southern state since 1992, trimming the Republican Senate majority to 51-49.

His victory was fuelled by huge turnouts and near-unanimous support from black voters in Alabama, local analysts said.

The CNN exit poll found 30pc of the electorate was black and 96pc of black voters backed Jones. (Xinhua)

Ice balls wash on Russian coast

Moscow

Strange ice balls that washed up on the coast may have

been caused by oil pollution, an ecological expert has said. A video shows the strangely

uniformly sized ice balls washing up in the Gulf of Finland in north-western Russia.

Ecologist Ilya Leukhin told local media that oil spills in the water could have created the ice balls but she was not the only one with a possible explanation for the phenomenon.

Yuryi Shahov, who videoed and shared the sight online, said: 'Seems that someone has thrown snowballs into the Gulf.'

Some believe that snow was rolled together by the waves, or that what look like ice balls could in fact be stones covered with ice.

The balls were up to 17 cm (7 inches) in diameter and no definitive explanation for their existence has been accepted.

Others, though, had less plausible explanations as to why the ice balls had formed. (MailOnline)

Thousands of perfectly round ice balls have washed up in Russia



Selfie time!



French President Emmanuel Macron and actor and Former Governor of California Arnold Schwarzenegger take a selfie in front of the Eiffel Tower after the One Planet Summit in Paris, France. (Courtesy: EPA)