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Tillerson: Attacking North Korea Remains an Option

By Jason Ditz
March 17, 2017



Just 24 hours ago, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson sought to reassure North Korea that despite calls for a “new approach” in dealing with the nation, North Korea “has nothing to fear from the United States.” Today, he insisted that preemptively attacking North Korea remains an option the US is considering.

Tillerson was speaking after a visit to the border between North and South Korea, and declared that America's "policy of strategic patience has ended," adding that all options remain on the table in going after North Korea. This comes just days after the US deployed missile drones to the border with North Korea.

President Trump also added to the sense of rising tensions, declaring that North Korea has "behaved very badly," and complaining that "China has done little to help." This comes despite China having proposed a deal between the US and North Korea, and which the US quickly rejected.

The US had long been pressuring China to make economic moves against North Korea, while China sought US diplomatic efforts. While China did ultimately block the coal trade with North Korea, a significant blow to their limited international trade, the Trump Administration appears to be determined to rule out any diplomatic efforts under any circumstances, insisting that what little diplomacy the US tried amounted to a "failure" and that a new strategy is needed.

Tillerson reiterated the US opposition to diplomacy today, insisting North Korea would have to unilaterally disarm as a precondition to any future negotiations with the United States.