

Rex Tillerson

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Rex Wayne Tillerson (born March 23, 1952) is an American diplomat, civil engineer, and former energy executive who is the 69th and current United States Secretary of State, serving since February 1, 2017.^[1] Tillerson joined ExxonMobil in 1975 and rose to serve as the chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of the company from 2006 to 2016.

Tillerson began his career as an engineer and holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Austin. By 1989 he had become general manager of the Exxon USA central production division. In 1995, he became president of Exxon Yemen Inc. and Esso Exploration and Production Khorat Inc. In 2006, Tillerson was elected chairman and chief executive officer of Exxon, the world's 6th largest company by revenue.^{[2][3]} Tillerson retired from Exxon effective January 1, 2017, and was succeeded by Darren Woods.^[4] He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering.^[2]

Tillerson is a longtime volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America and earned the rank of Eagle Scout. From 2010 to 2012 he was the national president of the Boy Scouts, its highest non-executive position. He is a longtime contributor to Republican campaigns, although he did not donate to Donald Trump's presidential campaign. In 2014, Tillerson, who had made business deals on behalf of Exxon with Russian President Vladimir Putin, opposed the sanctions against Russia.^[5] He has previously been the director of the joint US-Russian oil company Exxon Neftegas.^{[6][7]}

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Rex Tillerson



69th United States Secretary of State

Incumbent

Assumed office

February 1, 2017

President Donald Trump

Deputy Tom Shannon (Acting)
John Sullivan

Preceded by John Kerry

Chairman and CEO of ExxonMobil

In office

January 1, 2006 – January 1, 2017

Preceded by Lee Raymond

Succeeded by Darren Woods

33rd President of the Boy Scouts of America

In office

May 26, 2010 – April 30, 2012

Preceded by John Gottschalk

Succeeded by Wayne Perry

Personal details

Born Rex Wayne Tillerson
March 23, 1952
Wichita Falls, Texas, U.S.

Political party Republican

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3.1.5 Government regulation 3.1.6 Education 3.2 Republican campaign fundraising and donations 4 Secretary of State 4.1 Nomination and confirmation 4.2 Tenure 5 Personal life 6 See also 7 References 8 Further reading 9 External links	Spouse(s) Renda St. Clair Children 4 Education University of Texas, Austin (BS) Net worth \$245 million (2016) Awards Eagle Scout (1965) Order of Friendship (Russia) (2013)	

Early life and education

Tillerson was born on March 23, 1952, in Wichita Falls, Texas, the son of Patty Sue (née Patton) and Bobby Joe Tillerson.^[8] He was raised in Vernon, Texas, Stillwater, Oklahoma, and Huntsville, Texas.^{[9][10]} He has two sisters.^[11] His sister Rae Ann Hamilton is a physician and resides in Abilene, Texas.^[12] The other, Jo Lynn Peters, is a high school educator.^[11]

Tillerson's father was an executive of the Boy Scouts of America organization, and this led to his family's move to Huntsville, Texas.^[13] Tillerson himself has been active in the Boy Scouts for most of his life, and in his youth he earned the rank of Eagle Scout^[14] in 1965. At 14 he began to work as a bus boy in the student union building at Oklahoma State University.^[15] Two years later in 1968 he became a janitor working in one of the engineering buildings at the University.^[15]

Tillerson graduated from Huntsville High School^[13] in 1970.^[10] He was a section leader for the percussion section of his high school band, in which he played the kettle drums and snare drum, and he earned spots in the all-district and all-region bands during his senior year.^[13] He received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in 1975.^[16] During his time at UT Austin, he was involved with the Tejas Club,^[17] and the Longhorn Band.^[17]

Career

Exxon

Tillerson joined Exxon Company USA in 1975 as a production engineer.^[2] In 1989, Tillerson became general manager of the central production division of Exxon USA. In 1995, he became President of Exxon Yemen Inc. and Esso Exploration and Production Khorat Inc.^[2]

In 1998, he became a vice president of Exxon Ventures (CIS) and president of Exxon Neftegas Limited with responsibility for Exxon's holdings in Russia and the Caspian Sea. In 1999, with the merger of Exxon and Mobil, he was named executive vice president of ExxonMobil Development Company. In 2004, he became president and director of ExxonMobil.^[18] Upon this appointment Tillerson's replacement of Lee Raymond as CEO of Exxon

Mobil was implicitly implied.^[19] His major competitor was Ed Galante, another Exxon executive.^[20] On January 1, 2006, Tillerson was elected chairman and chief executive officer (CEO), following the retirement of Lee Raymond.^[2]

Under Tillerson's leadership, ExxonMobil cooperated closely with Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter and a longtime U.S. ally, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.^[21] From 2003 to 2005, a European subsidiary of ExxonMobil, Infineum, operated in the Middle East providing sales to Iran, Sudan and Syria. ExxonMobil stated that they followed all legal framework and that such sales were minuscule compared to their annual revenue of \$371 billion at the time.^[22] In 2009, ExxonMobil acquired XTO Energy, a major natural gas producer, for \$31 billion in stock. Michael Corkery of the *Wall Street Journal* wrote that "Tillerson's legacy rides on the XTO Deal."^[23]

On January 4, 2017, *The Financial Times* reported that Tillerson would cut his ExxonMobil ties if he became Secretary of State.^[24] Walter Shaub, the director of the United States Office of Government Ethics, said he was proud of the ethics agreement developed for Tillerson, who was now "free of financial conflicts of interest. His ethics agreement serves as a sterling model for what we'd like to see with other nominees."^{[25][26]}

Ties with Russia

Tillerson has ties with President Vladimir Putin of Russia.^[6] They have been associates since Tillerson represented Exxon's interests in Russia, the world's largest producer of crude oil, during President Boris Yeltsin's tenure.^[27] John Hamre, the President and CEO of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, of which Tillerson is a board member, states that Tillerson "has had more interactive time with Vladimir Putin than probably any other American, with the exception of Dr. Henry Kissinger."^[27]

Tillerson was a friend of Igor Sechin,^[28] the Executive Chairman of Rosneft, the Russian state oil company, and leader of the Kremlin's *Siloviki* (security/military) faction,^[29] who has been described as "Russia's second-most powerful person" after Putin.^[30]



Tillerson with President Vladimir Putin and Igor Sechin, the head of state-controlled energy giant Rosneft, at the Tuapse, 2012

In 2011, on behalf of ExxonMobil, Tillerson signed an agreement with Russia for drilling in the Arctic that could be valued up to \$300 billion.^[31] The company began drilling in the Kara Sea in the summer of 2014, and a round of sanctions against Russia introduced in September that year due to the Ukrainian crisis was to have brought the project to a halt in mid-September.^{[32][33]} Nevertheless, the company was granted a reprieve that stretched the window to work until October 10, which enabled it to discover a major field with about 750 million barrels of new oil for Russia.^[34]

In 2013, Tillerson was awarded the Order of Friendship by Putin for his contribution to developing cooperation in the energy sector.^{[35][36]}

Compensation

In 2012, Tillerson's compensation package was \$40.5 million.^[37] It was \$28.1 million in 2013, \$33.1 million in 2014, and \$27.2 million in 2015.^[38] In late 2016, Tillerson held \$54 million of Exxon stock, and had a right to deferred stock worth approximately \$180 million over the next 10 years.^[39]

On January 3, 2017, ExxonMobil announced they had reached an agreement with Tillerson "to sever all ties with the company to comply with conflict-of-interest requirements associated with his nomination as secretary of state."^[40]

Wayne Tracker alias

While CEO of ExxonMobil, Tillerson used an alias email address—"Wayne Tracker"—for eight years and sent thousands of messages.^[41] In response to a subpoena issued by the New York State Attorney General's Office (part of a state investigation into whether Exxon had misled investors and the public about climate change), Exxon produced about 60 emails associated with the "Wayne Tracker" account, but did not inform investigators that they were Tillerson's.^[42] ExxonMobil stated that the account was "used for everyday business" needs such as "secure and expedited communications" between Tillerson and top company executives.^{[42][41]}

Tillerson's use of the alias became publicly known in March 2017, after New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman wrote in a letter to a judge that Tillerson had used the email for at least seven years.^[42] Later that month, Exxon revealed that emails from the "Wayne Tracker" account from September 2014 to September 2015 were missing; a further search recovered some emails, but none between September 5, 2014 and November 28, 2014. An attorney for Exxon said that a "unique issue" limited to that account lead to emails being automatically deleted.^{[43][44]}

Other affiliations

Tillerson is a trustee of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the American Petroleum Institute.^[45] He is also a member of the Business Roundtable.^[2] In 2013 he became a member of the National Academy of Engineering.^[46] He was a member of the executive committee of The Business Council for 2011 and 2012.^[47]

Tillerson is a longtime volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), and from 2010 to 2012 was their national president, its highest non-executive position.^{[48][49]} Tillerson is a Distinguished Eagle Scout, and his father was a BSA executive. Tillerson is a long time supporter of the BSA and has said, "I think the highlight of my youth and adolescent years were my achievements in Scouting." In 2009, Tillerson was inducted into the Eagle Scout Hall of Fame of the Greater New York Councils.^[50] Ray L. Hunt, a close friend and the Chairman of Hunt Consolidated, told the Dallas Morning News, "To understand Rex Tillerson, you need to understand Scouting."^[49]

After the end of his term as BSA president, he remained on the organization's National Executive Board. There he played a significant role in the board's 2013 decision to rescind the long-standing ban on openly gay youth as members. According to Center for Strategic and International Studies president John Hamre, Tillerson was instrumental in the change and "a key leader in helping the group come to a consensus."^{[49][51]}

Political involvement

Political views

Russia and Saudi Arabia

In 2014, Tillerson expressed opposition to the sanctions against Russia in response to the annexation of Crimea at an Exxon shareholder meeting.^[52] He told the meeting "We do not support sanctions, generally, because we don't find them to be effective unless they are very well implemented comprehensively and that's a very hard thing to

do."^[53] In 2016, Tillerson said that the US should have deployed military units to neighboring states next to Russia in a more "muscular" response.^{[54][55]} In 2017, Tillerson said that Russia's annexation of Crimea was illegal.^[56] He also compared China's controversial island-building in the South China Sea to Russia's annexation of Crimea.^[57]

During his Secretary of State confirmation hearings, Marco Rubio asked Tillerson if he would label Saudi Arabia as a "human rights violator." Tillerson declined to do so, saying: "When you designate someone or label someone, is that the most effective way to have progress be able to be made in Saudi Arabia or any other country?"^[58] He supported the Saudi Arabian-led intervention in Yemen.^[59]

Climate change and carbon tax

In 2010, Tillerson said that while he acknowledged that humans were affecting the climate through greenhouse gas emissions to some degree, it was not yet clear "to what extent and therefore what can you do about it."^{[60][61]}

Tillerson also stated, "The world is going to have to continue using fossil fuels, whether they like it or not."^[62]

Tillerson announced in 2009 that ExxonMobil favored a carbon tax as "the most efficient means of reflecting the cost of carbon in all economic decisions—from investments made by companies to fuel their requirements to the product choices made by consumers."^[63] In October 2016, less than two months before his nomination as Secretary of State, he reaffirmed that ExxonMobil believed a carbon tax would be "the best policy of those being considered. Replacing the hodge-podge of current, largely ineffective regulations with a revenue-neutral carbon tax would ensure a uniform and predictable cost of carbon across the economy ... allow market forces to drive solutions ... maximize transparency, reduce administrative complexity, promote global participation and easily adjust" to new knowledge in climate science and in the policy consequences of various courses of action.^[64]

An article in *The New York Times* suggested that ExxonMobil's embrace of a carbon tax in October 2009 may have simply been an effort to avoid cap and trade legislation that was then being considered by the U.S. Congress as an alternative method of carbon pricing.^[65] A *Time* magazine article in December 2016 asserted that since Tillerson announced his company's preference for a carbon tax, ExxonMobil "has not made a carbon tax a focus of its massive lobbying efforts and has supported a number of candidates and organizations that oppose measures to tackle the [climate change] issue."^[66]

Support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

In 2013, Tillerson outlined his support for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), stating at the Global Security Forum: "One of the most promising developments on this front is the ongoing effort for the Trans-Pacific Partnership ... The 11 nations that have been working to lower trade barriers and end protectionist policies under this partnership are a diverse mix of developed and developing economies. But all of them understand the value of open markets to growth and progress for every nation."^[67]



Tillerson greets German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, Washington, D.C., February 2, 2017



Tillerson and Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, Washington, D.C., March 23, 2017

Free trade

Speaking in March 2007 at a Council on Foreign Relations event, Tillerson said:

Should the United States seek so-called energy independence in an elusive effort to insulate this country from the impact of world events on the economy, or should Americans pursue the path of international engagement, seeking ways to better compete within the global market for energy? Like the Council's founders, I believe we must choose the course of greater international engagement ... The central reality is this: The global free market for energy provides the most effective means of achieving U.S. energy security by promoting resource development, enabling diversification, multiplying our supply channels, encouraging efficiency, and spurring innovation.^[68]



Tillerson, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, February 16, 2017

Government regulation

In 2012 in an interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, Tillerson expressed his impatience with government regulation, stating "there are a thousand ways you can be told 'no' in this country."^[69]



Tillerson with China's President Xi Jinping before their bilateral meeting in Beijing, March 19, 2017

Education

In September 2013, Tillerson wrote an op-ed piece in *The Wall Street Journal* defending Common Core.^[70]

Republican campaign fundraising and donations

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, Tillerson has made tens of thousands of dollars of political donations to Republican groups and candidates.^[71] According to FEC records, he gave a total of \$468,970 in contributions to Republican candidates and committees from 2000 to 2016.^[72]

He has contributed to the political campaigns of George W. Bush,^[71] as well as Mitt Romney in 2012, and Mitch McConnell.^[73] He did not donate to Donald Trump's campaign.^[71] He donated to Jeb Bush's campaign during the 2016 Republican primaries.^{[71][74]}

Secretary of State

Nomination and confirmation

Tillerson was first recommended to Trump for the Secretary of State role by former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, during her meeting with Trump in late November 2016.^[75] Rice's recommendation of Tillerson to Trump was backed up by Robert Gates, three days later.^[75] Media speculation that he was being considered for the position began on December 5, 2016.^[76] On December 9, transition officials reported that Tillerson was the top candidate

for the position, surpassing Mitt Romney and David Petraeus.^[77] His nomination was reportedly advocated by Steve Bannon and Jared Kushner.^[78]

On the evening of December 10, the BBC cited NBC reports that "sources close to Mr Trump [were] ... saying that Mr Tillerson is likely to be named next week" as US Secretary of State. There were also reports that former UN ambassador John Bolton would serve as Deputy Secretary of State, however Bolton was not chosen for this position.^[79] On December 12, *The New York Times* reported that Tillerson had been chosen as Secretary of State.^[80] On December 13, 2016, President-elect Donald Trump announced that Tillerson would be his nominee for Secretary of State.^{[80][81]} On January 20, 2017, shortly after being sworn in as President of the United States, Trump formally sent his nomination of Tillerson as Secretary of State to the United States Senate.^[82]

In response to Tillerson's comments on blocking access to man-made islands in the South China Sea, China's state-controlled media warned of a "large-scale war" between the U.S. and China.^{[57][83]}

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved Tillerson's nomination 11–10, a strict party line vote on January 23, 2017.^[84]

The Senate confirmed Tillerson as Secretary of State on February 1, 2017. The Senate voted 56 to 43, with all 52 Republicans in support of his nomination as well as 3 Democrats and 1 independent.^[85] He was sworn in the same day.^[86]

Confirmation Process		
Voting Body	Vote Date	Vote Results
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations	January 23, 2017	11–10
Full Senate	February 1, 2017	56–43

Tenure

On February 15, 2017, Tillerson embarked on his first overseas trip as Secretary of State to Bonn, Germany, meeting with foreign ministers from the G20.^{[87][88]} In Bonn, Tillerson had meetings with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson,^[89] as well as his counterparts from Italy, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates.^{[90][91]} Tillerson urged Russia to withdraw from eastern Ukraine, stating that "the United States will consider working with Russia when we can find areas of practical cooperation that will benefit the American people. Where we do not see eye to eye, the United States will stand up for the interests and values of America and her allies. As we search for new common ground, we expect Russia to honor its commitment to the Minsk agreements and work to de-escalate the violence in Ukraine." Tillerson also reaffirmed U.S. commitment to defending South Korea and Japan.^[92]



Tillerson at his confirmation hearing on January 11, 2017



Tillerson being sworn in as Secretary of State on February 1, 2017



Tillerson delivering welcome remarks at the State Department on his first official day as Secretary of State



Tillerson with Turkish President Erdoğan at the Presidential Complex in Ankara, March 30, 2017

Tillerson made his first visit to Mexico on February 23, 2017, traveling with Secretary of Homeland Security John F. Kelly. When meeting with Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Affairs Luis Videgaray Caso, Tillerson acknowledged differences between the U.S. and Mexico on views of border security, but also acknowledged the need for cooperation in addressing migration, as well as arms trafficking.^{[93][94]} Tillerson recused himself from TransCanada's application for a presidential permit for the proposed Keystone XL pipeline.^[95]

In mid-March 2017, Tillerson made his first trip to Asia, traveling to Japan, South Korea, and China.^{[96][97]} Tillerson remarked that diplomatic efforts in the past 20 years to stop North Korea's nuclear development had "failed."

Tillerson also stated the United States may need to take preemptive action,

remarking "Certainly, we do not want things to get to a military conflict ... but obviously, if North Korea takes actions that threatens the South Korean forces or our own forces, then that would be met with an appropriate response. If they elevate the threat of their weapons program to a level that we believe that requires action, that option is on the table."^{[98][99]}

On March 30, 2017, Tillerson met with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Turkey has criticized the United States over its support for Syria's Kurds.^[100] In May, non-violent protestors and Erdoğan's bodyguards clashed outside of the Turkish Ambassador's Residence in Washington, D.C. Tillerson said that the incident was "outrageous" and that the Trump administration has expressed "dismay" over it. He said the administration will await the outcome of an investigation before taking further action.^[101]

In mid-April 2017, Tillerson made his first trip to Russia as Secretary of State, meeting with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and President Vladimir Putin. At a news conference, Tillerson remarked that US-Russian relations were at a "low point."^{[102][103]} Tillerson also warned Russia of the risk of "becoming irrelevant in the Middle East" by continuing to support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.^[104]

In May 2017, Tillerson joined President Trump on the President's first overseas trip, with the first destination being Saudi Arabia.^[105] While in Saudi Arabia, Tillerson held a joint press conference with Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir.^[106]

Tillerson selected Margaret Peterlin to be his Chief of Staff.^{[107][108]}

Personal life

Rex Tillerson married twice. He divorced his first wife with whom he has twin boys.^{[13][109]} In 1986 Tillerson married Renda St. Clair, who has a son from her previous marriage.^[109] Tillerson also has a son, born in 1988, with St. Clair.^{[109][110]} Tillerson's twin sons are engineers and hold their bachelor's degree from the Cockrell School of Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin.^{[13][46]} In 2006, Tillerson was named a Distinguished Engineering Graduate.^[16]

Tillerson resides in Bartonville, Texas.^[111] Following his appointment as Secretary of State, Tillerson bought a home in Kalorama, Washington D.C.^[112]



Tillerson and Renda St. Clair in February 2017

He is a Congregationalist who holds a membership in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, a mainline Reformed denomination.^{[113][114]} He and his wife donated between \$5,000 and \$10,000 to the denomination's *The Congregationalist Magazine* in 2012.^{[115][116]}

Tillerson reported that Ayn Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) is his favorite book.^[18] On February 20, 2014, news outlets reported that Tillerson and his wife joined opponents of a proposed water tower that could lead to fracking-related traffic near their homes. Plaintiffs included former U.S. House of Representatives Majority Leader Dick Arney and his wife.^{[117][118]} The Tillersons dropped out of the lawsuit after a judge dismissed their claim in November 2014.^[119]

In 2015, Tillerson was named as the 25th most powerful person in the world by *Forbes*.^[12]

See also

- List of Secretaries of State of the United States
- List of foreign ministers in 2017
- List of current foreign ministers

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- Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (<https://www.state.gov/secretary/>)
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Boy Scouts of America		
Preceded by John Gottschalk	President of the Boy Scouts of America 2010–2012	Succeeded by Wayne M. Perry
Political offices		
Preceded by John Kerry	United States Secretary of State 2017–present	Incumbent
United States order of precedence (ceremonial)		
Preceded by Ambassadors from the United States (while at their posts)	Order of Precedence of the United States <i>as Secretary of State</i>	Succeeded by Ambassadors to the United States (in order of tenure)
Preceded by Otherwise Barack Obama <i>as Former President</i>		Succeeded by Otherwise António Guterres <i>as Secretary-General of the United Nations</i>
United States presidential line of succession		
Preceded by Orrin Hatch <i>as President pro tempore of the Senate</i>	4th in line <i>as Secretary of State</i>	Succeeded by Steve Mnuchin <i>as Secretary of the Treasury</i>

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