The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Ready to Work With New U.S. Secretary of State — Lavrov

December 13, 2016



Rex Tillerson **Evan Vucci / AP**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has expressed his readiness to work with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for Secretary of State, former Exxon-Mobil Chairman and CEO Rex Tillerson.

"We accept this as the decision of the elected president of the United States," Lavrov told journalists at a press conference in Belgrade on Tuesday.

"As President Putin has said multiple times, we are ready to work with any partners who are interested in the development of full-fledged relations with Russia."

Lavrov said he believes that Trump and Tillerson are both "pragmatic" people, and that this could form the basis of a mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and Russia.

Trump confirmed that he planned to appoint Rex Tillerson Secretary of State on his official

Twitter account on Tuesday. Later that day, a Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov told the Interfax news agency that Tillerson had "good relations" with President Putin.

According to Ushakov, Putin and other Russian government officials see Tillerson as a, "solid and very professional person."

Earlier this year, Tillerson spoke publicly about his positive attitude towards the Russian president.

"I have a very close relationship with Mr. Putin," he told students at the University of Texas, his alma mater in February.

The former Exxon-Mobil Chairman and CEO received the Order of Friendship - the highest award a foreigner can receive in Russia - from Putin personally in 2013.

"I don't agree with everything he's doing," Tillerson said. "I don't agree with everything that a lot of leaders are doing. But he understands that I am a businessman. And I have invested a lot of money, our company has invested a lot of money, in Russia, very successfully."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/12/13/russia-ready-to-work-with-new-us-secretary-of-state-lavrov-a56519