

Four Heartbeats Away: Trump Picks His Secretary of State

This might be the first pick President-elect Donald Trump has made that almost no one will like.

He announced Tuesday morning he will nominate ExxonMobil Chairman and CEO Rex Tillerson to serve as his secretary of state. But the chorus of acclaim over the pick is yet to be forthcoming.

“Rex Tillerson’s career is the embodiment of the American Dream,” Trump said. “Through hard work, dedication and smart deal-making, Rex rose through the ranks to become CEO of ExxonMobil, one of the world’s largest and most respected companies. His tenacity, broad experience and deep understanding of geopolitics make him an excellent choice for secretary of state.”

That may be, but in the midst of the media-manufactured “Russiagate” controversy, Tillerson—who has a very “friendly” relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin—will have liberals screaming. And environmentalists will be howling over the pick of a Texas oil man.

Even conservatives are lukewarm, at best, over Tillerson. Shortly after the nomination was announced, Heritage Foundation President Jim DeMint issued the following statement:

For too long, the United States has acted from a position of weakness on the world stage, and Mr. Tillerson must work to reverse this dangerous decline. The Trump administration has the opportunity to reinvigorate American leadership abroad by projecting the strength and stability that have been the bedrock of our diplomacy for more than two centuries.

Mr. Tillerson must defend American interests, stand resolute in the face of challenges from adversarial powers such as Russia, Iran and China and reassure our allies that the United States will continue to stand with them in an increasingly dangerous and complex world.

That was a warning, not an endorsement.

Evangelical Christians won't be too crazy about the pick, either. Although Tillerson is described as a "staunch conservative," he's also single-handedly responsible for pushing the Boy Scouts of America to allow homosexual troop leaders. But at least he's not former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney?

This is one where we're going to have to pray and trust the Lord.

So, here's what the Trump Administration would like you to know about Tillerson and why Trump picked him to lead the Department of State:

Among the most accomplished business leaders and international dealmakers in the world, Mr. Tillerson has spent his career protecting the jobs of his employees, who number more than 70,000. Guiding operations around the world that include more than 200 offices, Mr. Tillerson knows how to manage a global organization and successfully navigate the complex architecture of world affairs and diverse foreign leaders. As secretary of state, he will be a forceful and clear-eyed advocate for America's vital national interests and help reverse years of misguided foreign policies and actions that have weakened America's security and standing in the world. The American people will once again have a world-class leader working on their behalf, enhancing the prospects for peace and prosperity among nations ...

Rex Tillerson is a native Texan who earned a Bachelor of

Science degree in civil engineering at the University of Texas at Austin. He began his career at Exxon Company, . in 1975 as a production engineer.

After years of hard work and dedication to his company, Rex then became general manager of Exxon Company, .'s central production division, responsible for oil and gas production operations throughout a large portion of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas.

In 1992, Mr. Tillerson was named production advisor to Exxon Corporation. Three years later, he was named president of Exxon Yemen Inc. and Esso Exploration and Production Khorat Inc.; and in January 1998, he was promoted to vice president of Exxon Ventures (CIS) Inc. and president of Exxon Neftegas Limited. In those roles, he was responsible for Exxon's holdings in Russia and the Caspian Sea as well as the Sakhalin I consortium operations offshore Sakhalin Island, Russia.

In December 1999, he became executive vice president of Exxon Mobil Development Company. Mr. Tillerson was then named senior vice president of Exxon Mobil Corporation in August 2001 and was elected president of the corporation and member of the board of directors on March 1, 2004. Nearly two years after he was elected, Mr. Tillerson was named as chairman and CEO of the board on January 1, 2006.

Mr. Tillerson is not only a stalwart in his professional life but also in the community. He is a member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers and a trustee of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is the vice chairman of the Ford's Theatre Society and a recipient of the Lincoln Medal, immediate past national president of the Boy Scouts of America, a Distinguished Eagle Scout and a former director of the United Negro College Fund. He was recognized as a distinguished alumnus of the University of Texas at Austin in 2006, and in 2013, was elected to the

National Academy of Engineering.

"I am honored by President-elect Trump's nomination and share his vision for restoring the credibility of the United States' foreign relations and advancing our country's national security," Tillerson said of his appointment. "We must focus on strengthening our alliances, pursuing shared national interests and enhancing the strength, security and sovereignty of the United States."

In a statement that accompanied the nomination announcement, Trump said Tillerson will promote regional stability and focus on the core national security interests of the United States.

"Rex knows how to manage a global enterprise, which is crucial to running a successful State Department, and his relationships with leaders all over the world are second to none," he added. "I can think of no one more prepared, and no one more dedicated, to serve as Secretary of State at this critical time in our history." {eo}