



1. *Why Secretary Tillerson Should Resign*
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## Why Secretary Tillerson Should Resign

By ELZA HARB  
STAFF WRITER

After his appointment in January, many American diplomats were optimistic about the new Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson. They hoped he would use his extensive managerial experience as CEO of ExxonMobil to bring much-needed reform to the State Department. Instead, he has done long-lasting damage to the department and continues to tear apart the values and goals of American diplomacy.

Secretary Tillerson's restructuring of the department borders on obsession. He hired two consulting groups, Deloitte and Insigniam, to send out a survey to more than 30,000 State Department employees on their thoughts and opinions. Tillerson's State Department paid \$1.1 million for this, receiving survey results which, as reported by a major Washington news publication, *The Hill*, question his leadership and the department's future under him. The survey finds that career employees "question if [Trump and Tillerson] understand the role the Department of State plays in forwarding the interests of the United States in the

world," and consequently fear the "militarization of foreign policy" because of that lack of understanding.

Secretary Tillerson's restructuring plan includes three major elements that have caused concern among State Department employees, and for anyone who understands the department's importance in American foreign policy. His plan includes reducing the department's budget, not allowing new talent to join it, and not filling some key diplomatic positions.

In February, President Trump on the advice of Secretary Tillerson announced a proposed 30 percent budget cut for the State Department, which was met with worldwide outrage. The 37 billion dollar reduction sparked bipartisan opposition. Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), agreeing with that sentiment, said in committee that he stopped reading the line items due to the high improbability that the committee will approve the proposed budget. Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.) argued correctly that "We can't build a Fortress America," meaning we cannot

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## South African Safari

By CLAIRE ANASTASIA KITZ  
STAFF WRITER

Karen Blixen wrote: "There is something about safari life that makes you forget all your sorrows and feel as if you have drunk half a bottle of champagne -- bubbling over with the heartfelt gratitude for being alive." My travels to the eastern province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa this summer affirmed Baroness Blixen's assessment. An African safari contains a special gift; it can brush away the cobwebs and heal the broken-hearted. One can believe that all is well with the world and that "this is where I ought to be."

Going on safari at Zulu Nyala and Phinda Game Reserves was the sum of all things enchanting. There were incredible vistas and tremendously knowledgeable and affable guides. There were kind and open-hearted South Africans, fellow travelers who made the journey even lovelier, and my aunt, who made the trip possible. Viewing lions, elephants, cheetahs, white and black rhinoceroses, zebras, impalas, nyalas, monkeys, wild dogs,

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and hippopotamuses in their natural element – I gained a more fine-tuned perspective on my smallness and fleeting time on the planet. Because of this, I vowed to be a better version of myself from that time forward.

I entered into the rhythm of Africa out in the bush – an instinctive empathy with the wild and created world. The human clamor and tumult receded. Silence and calm used to be a part of the human repository. We in the West have lost stillness. We no longer move with our senses attuned

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### This Week's News in 140 Characters

#### EDITORIAL REPORT

-  **Thomas Sowell** @ThomasSowell · Aug 30  
"Those who say that all cultures are equal never explain why the results of those cultures are so grossly unequal."
-  **Molly Ball** @mollyesque · Sep 1  
Why isn't there already a pro-Trump print publication called MAGA Zine?
-  **Dave Portnoy** @stoolpresidente · Sep 5  
Breaking: Red Sox caught cheating. Goodell strips Pats of all draft picks for next decade
-  **Neil deGrasse Tyson** @neiltyson · Sep 7  
In school, curiosity is hardly ever taught or nurtured, breeding legions of students who've lost all love of learning.
-  **Sean Spicier** @sean\_spicier · Sep 3  
Obama would've done something about North Korea but between doing the Tango in Argentina and selfies at Mandela's funeral, who has the time?

withdraw from the rest of the world.

Nobody knows better than apolitical Foreign Service Officers (FSOs, the American diplomatic corps) the importance of peaceful American leadership abroad. Yet the State Department is hemorrhaging capable officers, while not hiring anyone new. FSOs who have worked under Democratic and Republican presidents alike are resigning, citing moral reasons and an inability to get work done under Tillerson's leadership. At the same time, the administration began a hiring freeze, stopping any new foreign-service professionals from filling these numerous vacant positions. Also, the department is cutting programs that traditionally recruit the best-of-the-best (mainly minorities) to become diplomats, such as the Pickering Fellowship.

In addition, Secretary Tillerson and President Trump are simply not

filling many leadership positions, until a "management overview" can be done. In the meantime, Foggy Bottom lacks enough personnel to accomplish anything. Max Boot, a scholar of national security studies writing in *Foreign Policy*, put it best: "Tillerson's refusal to fill senior jobs means that the U.S. government is facing a nuclear crisis in

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North Korea without an undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, an assistant secretary of state for East Asia, or an ambassador in Seoul." How do we avoid a nuclear war without such key diplomats in place to help negotiate? Do we go to war? To what end?

Secretary Tillerson's policies are making the department vulnerable and weak, which tends to leave the Trump administration's preference for "hard power" as our only foreign policy. If the President is not careful, this could lead to more unnecessary wars and loss of

American life. This precedent, coupled with the loss of talent in the Foreign Service, will likely affect not only the current administration, but those which come next. If the U.S. were to appear 'warmongering' and perhaps even undemocratic, it would hurt us with our allies and enemies alike.

One of the best examples of diplomacy's finest hours was the Cuban Missile Crisis, the closest the Cold War ever got to a nuclear war between the world's two superpowers. After thirteen long days of negotiations, President Kennedy and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev struck a deal to end the crisis and later set up a hotline that helped reduce tensions for the rest of the Cold War. Thanks to skilled diplomacy, the world avoided a potentially world-ending disaster, a result that "hard power" could never produce. Let's learn from our history and never have to reach a point like the Cuban Missile Crisis again. Mr. Tillerson, either save our State Department or do your patriotic duty and resign.

#### AFRICAN SAFARI cont.

to beauty. We move not as part of an ensemble, or in unison or solidarity, but set apart – in fact isolated, calculating, or contrary. South Africa caused me to reconnect with that lost thread.

One realizes that city life and technology, however substantial and transformative by the narrower standards of economic utility and mobility, can still fog one's thoughts. The deepest part of one's existence can go unexplored or unrecognized, a situation leading to inauthentic actions or artificial sentiments. This South African safari reawakened my sense of wonder and allowed me to focus on what is important; it pointed to the grace of what is possible and lovely in the natural world.

The South African scenery was enchanting and almost mythical; it sings. But like all enchanting

places, it illuminated what was hidden, pushing one to discover what constitutes a purposeful life. It pressed a person to query in echoes across the topography: "What is the meaning of this life? Where are you going?"

When one leaves this scenery, a permanent mark remains. One's travel c o m p a s s has been perceptibly c h a n g e d, and future plans are inexplicably a l t e r e d.

That was South Africa's power and gift. The 14th-century Moroccan traveler, writer, and scholar Ibn Battuta wrote: "Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller." I am not certain I qualify as a storyteller, but traveling to South Africa has left me speechless.

It has enlarged my conception of the world and influenced me in subtle and profound ways, whereby my story going forward will be different and hopefully worth telling to a future kindred soul.

The game reserves of KwaZulu-Natal are like fairy-tale kingdoms, with "All things counter, original, spare, strange," in the words of poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. It shows you that although (as Hopkins also wrote) God "plays in ten thousand places," he often paints, muses, and resides in these kingdoms of Africa.

There is so much more to explore. I know I will be back to South Africa, and I hope to visit other parts of Africa someday. A travel writer once urged: "If you only visit two continents in your lifetime, visit Africa twice." Based on my experience, I understand the sentiment.

## ENQUIRY

vol. V

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## CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

1. *Why Secretary Tillerson Should Resign*  
#TillersonShouldResign

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#SASafari