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What Does Mike Pompeo Think About Russia, Iran And North Korea?

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With Mike Pompeo as U.S. Secretary of State, President Donald Trump is likely to get a more subservient top diplomat on the world stage than his predecessor Rex Tillerson, who has fallen foul of the president on numerous occasions over the past 14 months.

Tillerson was tipped for the sack as far back as November 2017 but the announcement Tuesday, just after he touched down from a trip to Africa and reportedly without speaking to Trump, was a surprise even by the roller-coaster standards of the current administration.

In Pompeo, Trump has someone in step with his policies on North Korea, Iran and Russia. As CIA director, Pompeo announced there would be a Korea Mission Center based in Langley, Virginia, which would be significant given the prospective high stakes diplomatic face-off in May between Trump and Kim Jong-un Un.

John Glaser, director of foreign policy studies at the Washington-based tank Cato, said Trump "did not want to continue to have a Secretary of State he didn't trust in that kind of environment. In Pompeo, he has a hard-line hawk who has frequently advocated the use of force and Trump likes that.

"Trump doesn't like this business about the importance of diplomacy, he wants a more top-down presidential approach to the world and he saw Tillerson's approach to diplomacy as outside of his orbit," Glaser told *Newsweek*.

On Moscow, Pompeo will likely be driven by political expediency rather than national security: such as when he criticized the Obama administration on the militant attack on Benghazi in Libya in 2012.

"Pompeo is a partisan. He will get right in line with Trump's Russia agenda and not ask questions and not be too skeptical about the Mueller investigation in Congress," Glaser said.

On Iran, when Pompeo was in Congress, he said in 2014 it would be easier to destroy Tehran's nuclear capacity by air in a move that would only require 2,000 sorties. "He has talked about

regime change, he has a very ideologically hard line on Iran and is deeply hostile to the joint comprehensive plan of action around the Iran nuclear deal,” he added.

Trump praised Pompeo in a statement but only had a single line for Tillerson, who once reportedly described the president as a “moron” and went a step further than the White House by naming Russia a suspect in the nerve agent assassination attempt of ex-spy Sergei Skripov.

Executive director of the London-based think tank, the Henry Jackson Society, Alan Mendoza, said that Pompeo would may even be better received internationally.

“Throughout his previous political career, Mike Pompeo took a principled stand in opposing the expansionist aims of Iran, Russia and North Korea.

“While President Trump will continue to make decisions on these issues, the change in personnel means the advice he’s receiving will change in favor of more robust responses to infractions. Secretary Pompeo will also command more respect abroad given his political and intelligence experience.”