

US looks to work with Paris climate accord 'partners': Tillerson

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US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson says the US wants to be "helpful" on climate issues and wants to work with partners in the Paris climate accord

After a succession of mixed messages on the US stance on climate change, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday that the Trump administration was seeking "ways in which we can work with partners in the Paris climate accord."

"We want to be productive, we want to be helpful," Tillerson said on the CBS program "Face the Nation."

His comments did not amount to a reversal from US President Donald Trump's widely criticized decision in June to withdraw from the landmark pact, signed by nearly 200 countries.

But Tillerson did appear to signal a softening from Trump's earlier characterization of the deal as a "draconian" pact that impinged on American sovereignty and unfairly favored countries like China and India over the US.

When European environment officials suggested over the weekend that the United States might be ready to reengage with the pact, the White House said that its position was unchanged, and that it could stay only if more "favorable" terms were achieved.

But Tillerson said Trump's chief economics adviser, Gary Cohn, was studying ways the US could cooperate with other countries on what, he said, "is still a challenging issue."

Trump 'left the door open'

The remarks came days before Trump is to speak before world leaders at the UN General Assembly in New York, where [climate](#) change seems sure to be a major topic.

They also came after two devastating hurricanes struck the US mainland in recent weeks—made more intense, some scientists said, by waters warmed by [climate change](#).

Neither Tillerson nor Trump's national security adviser, H.R. McMaster, spoke of reopening negotiations over the Paris accord, an idea sharply

rejected by other signatories. But the accord is voluntary, and it appeared the US might be able to find a way, within the pact, to recast its position.

McMaster noted on ABC's "This Week" that Trump had "left the door open to reentering (the pact) at some later time if there can be a better deal for the United States," adding, "Of course, he's open to any discussions that will help us improve the environment."

The process to withdraw from the Paris [pact](#) is lengthy. If Trump sticks to his plan, the United States would not formally pull out until Nov. 4, 2020—a day after the next US presidential election.

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