

《White House plays down Trump-Tillerson ‘ American values ’ s》

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson caused a stir at the weekend by dodging a question about whether Donald Trump represents American values, but the White House on Tuesday insisted that the men retain a “ very strong ” relationship.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said on Tuesday that Tillerson and economic adviser Gary Cohn were not distancing themselves from the president despite recent comments about Trump’s response to the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia.



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Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on whether the President's response to the violence in Charlottesville represented "American values": "The President speaks for himself." See the entire exclusive interview on Fox News at 2pm & 11pm ET.



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson refused to say whether President Trump's response to the Charlottesville violence represented American values. /Fox News Sunday Facebook

She said Trump's relationship with Tillerson was "very strong" and that Cohn was committed to working on tax reform. "I think that ... at moments you have people that disagree, I think that's a healthy thing," she told reporters on Air Force One.

Asked by Fox on Sunday host Chris Wallace whether the US president's response to the Charlottesville violence made it more difficult to espouse American values around the world, Tillerson would only say that Trump "speaks for himself."



The White House on Tuesday played down talks of a split between Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and President Donald Trump. /AFP Photo

Wallace noted that United Nations human rights experts had called on US political leaders "at all levels" to combat rising racist violence and xenophobia and urged prosecution of perpetrators of hate crimes.

Tillerson: "Chris, we express America's values from the State Department. We represent the American people. We represent America's values, our commitment to freedom, our commitment to equal treatment of people the world over, and that message has never changed."

Wallace: "And when the president gets into the kind of controversy he does and the UN committee responds the way it does, it seems to say they begin to doubt our – whether we're living those values."

Tillerson: "I don't believe anyone doubts the American people's values or the commitment of the American government or the government's agencies to advancing those values and defending those values."

Wallace: “And the president’s values?”

Tillerson: “The president speaks for himself, Chris.”

Wallace: “Are you separating yourself from that, sir?”

Tillerson: “I’ve spoken – I’ve made my own comments as to our values as well in a speech I gave to the State Department this past week.”

Cohn, who was standing near the president this month when Trump said there were “very fine people” on both sides of the demonstration that was sponsored by neo-Nazis and white supremacists, told the Financial Times in an interview last week that citizens standing up for freedom could never be equated with such groups.



US President Donald Trump answers questions about protests in Charlottesville after his statement on the infrastructure discussion in the lobby at Trump Tower in New York on August 15, 2017. /AFP Photo

Trump stated that both left- and right-wing extremists bore responsibility for violence during a rally by white nationalists in Virginia, reigniting a political firestorm over race relations in the United States and his own leadership of a national crisis.

After clashes, a car ploughed into opponents of the gathering, killing one woman and injuring many others. A 20-year-old Ohio man, James Fields, said to have harbored Nazi sympathies, was charged with murder.

