

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mahmoud Abbas of the
Palestinian Authority in New York City and an Exchange With Reporters**
September 20, 2017

President Trump. Thank you very much. It's a great honor to have President Abbas from the Palestinian Authority with us and his representatives, who have been working very hard with everybody involved toward peace. I mean, we're looking seriously at peace and maybe, ultimately, peace in the whole of the Middle East. And I think we have a pretty good shot—maybe the best shot ever—and that's what we're looking to do.

And I just want to thank you for all of the time, all of the meetings, all of the work. It's a complex subject, always been considered the toughest deal of all: peace between Israel and the Palestinians—the toughest of all. But I think we have a very, very good chance, and I certainly will devote everything within my heart and within my soul to get that deal made. Our team is expert; your team is expert. Israel is working very hard toward the same goal, and I must tell you, Saudi Arabia and many of the different nations are working also hard.

So we'll see if we can put it together. Who knows? Stranger things have happened. But I think we have a good chance, and it's a great honor to have you with us. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

President Abbas. I'm very delighted to be here with President Trump, and I thank you very heartfully for allowing us this opportunity to meet with you for the first time this year.

And if this is any proof to anything, it means—it attests to the seriousness of Your Excellency, Mr. President, to achieve the deal of the century in the Middle East during this year or in the coming months, God willing. And we are very certain that you, Mr. President, are determined to reach real peace in the Middle East. And this gives us the assurance and the confidence that we are on the verge of real peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

And I would not be giving away any secrets if I say we have met with your brave and active delegation more than 20 times since your accession to power in the White House. And if this is an indication to anything, it indicates how serious you are about peace in the Middle East. And I'm very thankful for these efforts, and you will find utmost seriousness on our part to achieve peace, because peace serves our interests and the interests of the Israeli people.

And allow me, Mr. President, to use this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Jewish people on the occasion of the—of Rosh Hashanah today and to the Muslim people on the occasion of the new Islamic year tomorrow. And this is a very sweet coincidence that we can celebrate the new year together within a 24-hour period, and if this is an indication to anything, it means that we can coexist peacefully together.

Once again, Mr. President, we count on you.

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. That's very nice of you. A very great sentiment, frankly. And I have to say, from the time I'm a little boy, I've been hearing about peace in the Middle East. And for so many years, I've been hearing about peace between Israel and the Palestinians. And we're at a very important juncture—there's a small period of time—and we're going to see what we can do. There can be no promises, obviously. So many people have talked about it, and it's never happened.

But we're fighting very hard. We are trying very hard. We're all getting along together well. We'll see if we can do it. And if we do do it, it would be a great, great legacy for everybody—for everybody. So let's see what happens. Good luck, everybody. Good luck. And you have millions of people rooting for you, that I can say.

Thank you. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action To Prevent Iran From Obtaining a Nuclear Weapon

Q. Mr. President, have you decided what to do about the Iran deal? Have you already made up your mind?

Q. Is there any decision on Iran?

President Trump. I have decided.

Q. You have?

Q. You have decided?

President Trump. I have decided.

Q. Will you remain in the deal, Mr. President?

Q. Have you decided to stay or to leave?

President Trump. Well, I have decided.

Q. When will we know?

Q. When's your decision?

President Trump. I'll let you know. I'll let you know.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. in the Hubbard I meeting room at the Lotte New York Palace hotel. President Abbas spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: New York City; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Palestinian Authority, President Abbas.

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