

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters in Palm Beach, Florida

April 17, 2018

The President. Well, thank you very much, everybody. It's an honor to have Prime Minister Abe with us. The Japanese people greeted me so warmly when I was there and actually even before becoming President. It's a very, very special country, special place, with a very, very extraordinary leader. So it's an honor to have you in Florida with us, it's an honor to have you at Mar-a-Lago, and an honor to have you in the United States. It's really something special.

We're going to be discussing trade with Japan. We are going to be discussing military. We're going to be discussing security. And we will, I am sure at the outset, we're going to get along. And when it's all over, we're going to get along even better. So thank you all very much for being here.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Abe. I'd like to express my appreciation for Donald, who kindly invited me back to Mar-a-Lago, which is a gorgeous place. And I'm very happy to be back. So, for today and tomorrow, I am going to have an in-depth discussion with Donald, and I very much look forward to having our discussion, mainly on the two topics, which includes North Korea and the economy.

For the North Korean issue, I'd like to underscore the importance of achieving the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization, as well as the abandonment of missile programs of North Korea. And on this specific point, I would like to share understanding and recommendation with Donald. So both Japan and the United States have been demonstrating leadership in applying the maximum pressure campaign against North Korea, which actually successfully made North Korean side to start seeking dialogue with us. So it is fair to say that our approach has been proved to be successful and the right one.

And also, on this occasion, I would like to commend Donald's courage in his decision to have the upcoming summit meeting with the North Korean leader. So I look forward to having a thorough discussion on the issue of North Korea, including both nuclear as well as missile issues, and also the abductions issue, which is a priority issue for Japan.

So we have the gorgeous setting for both of us to have today's discussion. And I very much feel both delighted and also privileged to have a discussion with Donald today to talk about our cooperation to achieve the development of both Japan and the United States, and also how we can collaborate together to realize peace in the region, as well as in the entire international community.

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. Many of the world's great leaders request to come to Mar-a-Lago and Palm Beach. They like it; I like it. We're comfortable. We have great relationships. As you remember, we were here, and President Xi of China was here. And when we do it—it was originally built as the southern White House. It was called the southern White House. It was given to the United States, and then Jimmy Carter decided it was too expensive for the United States. So they, fortunately for me, gave it back, and I bought it. But we are—who would have thought? It was a circuitous route. But now it is, indeed, the southern White

House. And again, many, many people want to be here. Many of the leaders want to be here. They request specifically.

North Korea is coming along. South Korea is meeting, and has plans to meet, with North Korea to see if they can end the war. And they have my blessing on that. And they've been very generous that without us and without me in particular, I guess, you would have to say, that they wouldn't be discussing anything, including the Olympics would have been a failure. Instead, it was a great success. They would have had a real problem.

But as you know, North Korea participated in the Olympics, and it made it, really, it was quite an Olympics. It was quite a success. That would not have happened. And they do have my blessing to discuss the end to the war. People don't realize the Korean war has not ended. It's going on right now. And they are discussing an end to the war. So, subject to a deal, they would certainly have my blessing. And they do have my blessing to discuss that.

Japan and ourselves are locked, and we are very unified on the subject of North Korea. We will probably be, depending on various meetings and conversations, we'll be having meetings with Kim Jong Un very soon. It will be—that will be taking place probably in early June or a little before that—assuming things go well. It's possible, things won't go well, and we won't have the meetings, and we'll just continue to go along this very strong path that we've taken. But we will see what happens.

Tomorrow we'll have further discussions on trade, on North Korea, on our military. Japan is buying a tremendous amount of military equipment from the United States, which is good. And as you know, we're buying a lot of cars and a lot of other things from Japan. But we are each buying a lot. But we still have to talk about trade, and the Prime Minister understands that.

We're going to sneak out tomorrow morning and play a round of golf, if possible and if we have the time. When I was in Japan, the Prime Minister took me out too, and we played with a great golfer, Matsuyama. Right? Matsuyama. He's one of the top three or four golfers in the world. And I always thought I was okay at golf, but then I realized we're not so good. [Laughter] So he was really great and very special. And I also, just in ending, I want to congratulate you. It wasn't Matsuyama, but another great golfer from Japan won the big PGA event this weekend. And it's been a long time. So I just want to congratulate you on that. That's a big honor. It's a great honor. Thank you.

[At this point, an interpreter translated President Trump's remarks into Japanese.]

Did he do a good job?

[Prime Minister Abe spoke in English as follows.]

Prime Minister Abe. Very good. Very. [Laughter] Good memory.

President Trump. I think so. Very good. Thank you.

I just want to conclude by saying that our house, this great house, is filled with people from Japan, representatives from Japan, and from the U.S. And they've been negotiating for weeks, actually. And hopefully, this will be the conclusion of some very good transactions for both, including tremendous purchases from the United States and also from Japan.

So I want to thank everybody for being here. And, Mr. Prime Minister, it's a great honor to have you. Thank you so much.

Prime Minister Abe. Thank you.

*President Trump's Upcoming Meeting With Chairman of the Korean Worker's Party
Kim Jong Un of North Korea*

Q. [Inaudible]—direct talks with Kim Jong Un. Where would you like the summit to be with Kim Jong Un?

President Trump. We're looking at five—five different locations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. at the Mar-a-Lago Club. In his remarks, he referred to former President Jimmy Carter; and Japanese professional golfers Hideki Matsuyama and Satoshi Kodaira. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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