

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

The President's News Conference With President Jair Messias Bolsonaro of Brazil

March 19, 2019

President Trump. Thank you very much, everyone. Thank you. Today I'm very thrilled to welcome President Bolsonaro of Brazil for his first visit to the White House. President Bolsonaro, I want to congratulate you again on your tremendous election victory last October. It was an incredible feat and, really, a truly incredible challenge. And the end result was something the whole world was talking about.

I also know that we're going to have a fantastic working relationship. We have many views that are similar. And we certainly feel very, very true to each other on trade. I think Brazil's relationship with the United States, because of our friendship, is probably better than it's ever been by far.

I also want to congratulate you on your recovery from a truly horrible ordeal. It was an incredible recovery, and the people of your country know it. The great bravery you've shown—tremendous bravery.

For two centuries, the American and Brazilian people have been united by shared values, including an enduring love of faith and family and country. The United States was the first nation to recognize Brazil's independence in 1822. And in the Second World War, Brazil was the only South American country to contribute troops to the Allied war effort.

Today, the United States and Brazil are the two largest democracies and economies in the Western Hemisphere. We're in close agreement on the incredible opportunities and continuing challenges facing our region. And we have a truly historic chance to forge even stronger ties between our two great nations.

This afternoon the President and I discussed many of our mutual priorities, including Venezuela. Brazil has been an extraordinary leader in supporting the Venezuelan people's efforts to reclaim their liberty and their democracy. Brazil has helped so much. Along with the United States, Brazil was one of the first nations to recognize Venezuela's legitimate Interim President, Juan Guaidó.

I also want to express our profound gratitude to President Bolsonaro and all the Brazilian people for their efforts to provide humanitarian aid. We also thank you for allowing the United States to station extensive assistance and massive aid on the Brazilian border. The Brazilian people have been incredible.

Together, we could—and have been, really, very happy to—feed thousands and thousands of starving Venezuelans. The Venezuelan people have appreciated it. And if the Maduro forces would step aside, it could be a truly great and successful humanitarian project. We call on members of the Venezuelan military to end their support for Maduro, who is really nothing more than a Cuban puppet, and finally set their people free.

The United States and Brazil are also united in support of the long-suffering people of Cuba and Nicaragua. The twilight hour of socialism has arrived in our hemisphere. And hopefully, by the way, it's also arrived—that twilight hour—in our great country, which is doing

better than it's ever done economically. The last thing we want in the United States is socialism.

So, President Bolsonaro, I will tell you that we'll be consulting and talking a lot. We'll be working on all of our both problems and assets. And we're making tremendous strides. We had a great meeting today.

As I told President Bolsonaro, I also intend to designate Brazil as a "major non-NATO ally," or even possibly, if you start thinking about it, maybe a NATO ally—have to talk to a lot of people, but maybe a NATO ally—which will greatly advance security and cooperation between our countries.

Our nations are already working together to protect our people from terrorism, transnational crime, and drugs and weapons trafficking. Also, human trafficking, which has really become something that has come to the forefront of crime. Horrible, horrible situation. We look forward to an even deeper partnership and working together.

In our meetings, we also discussed the strong economic ties between our nations, grounded in the principles of fairness and reciprocity. My favorite word: reciprocity. President Bolsonaro and I are both committed to reducing trade barriers, facilitating investment, and supporting innovation across a range of industries, particularly energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and technology.

The President's vision for freeing the private sector and opening the economy is the right way for Brazil to achieve strong economic growth. And our great companies are ready to go when that table is flat and free.

To improve our business relationships, we have revived the U.S.-Brazil CEO Forum, and we have started a new U.S.-Brazil Energy Forum. We welcome Brazil's aspirations to join Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a laudable goal and one that will make Brazil's status as a developing and developed country. We also hope that all of us will be able to work together, all nations.

I'm also pleased to announce that after 20 years of talks, we are finalizing a Technology Safeguards Agreement to allow U.S. companies to conduct space launches from Brazil. It's actually an incredible location when you study it and when you see it. We won't go into it now. But because of the location, tremendous amounts of money would be saved. To put it very simply: The flights are a lot shorter.

Brazil's proximity to the equator makes it an ideal launch location. My administration is committed to reviving America's proud legacy in space. We're looking very strongly, as you know, and working together with everybody on Space Force. And we are grateful for Brazil's partnership.

Mr. President, thank you again for the honor of your visit today. A strong and thriving friendship between the United States and Brazil is essential to a future of security and prosperity for all of our citizens. It's been a wonderful time getting to know you. You're doing a fantastic job. You've brought the country together. And I look forward to working with you in a very close relationship for many years to come. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, thank you very much.

President Bolsonaro. Your Excellency, Mr. President, Donald Trump, the President of the United States of America; my Cabinet Ministers; members of the delegations joining us in this

session today, both from Brazil and from the U.S.; and ladies and gentlemen, media professionals, other guests: Thank you very much, President Trump, for your warm hospitality. It is an honor for us to be in Washington as part of my first bilateral trip ever since I was elected President of Brazil.

I would like to use the opportunity, by the way, to invite you to reciprocate this visit, because you will indeed be very welcomed by the Brazilian people, at large. We do share a great deal in common. I have always admired the United States of America. And this sense of admiration has just increased after you took office and the Presidency.

This meeting of ours today restores an old tradition of partnership. And at the same time, it starts a new chapter of cooperation between Brazil and the United States, inasmuch as today, we have revisited and have again decided to promote matters that were on our order of business for decades.

It is time to overcome old resistances and explore the very best potential that is there between Brazil and the United States. After all, it is fair to say that, today, Brazil does have a President who is not anti-American, which is really unprecedented in the past few decades.

The reforms we are currently undertaking have changed Brazil into an even more attractive country. We are strongly committed to striking a proper balance in Government accounts and also, of course, totally changing the business environment. U.S. support to Brazil's accession to the OECD will be clearly interpreted or construed as a gesture of mutual understanding, which will be very emblematic as part of the closer and closer ties we aspire to.

The private sectors of both countries should remain a high-profile player in our relations. And that is why we have decided to restore the CEO Forum between Brazil and the U.S. We also intend to attach priority to relaunching an energy forum with an emphasis on oil, gas, and other sources of energy. The Brazilian Government, as a sign of good will, has granted full visa exemption to U.S. nationals, with a view to further encouraging tourism and business travels.

On the defense and space cooperation work front, we have signed a Technology Safeguards Agreement, which will, in turn, enable the Alcântara Satellite Launch Center. Military cooperation has also expanded as we seek out partnerships in the development of defense systems. Science, technology, and innovation activity can certainly be expected to take on an increasing role as part of our bilateral agenda, hence our proposal to launch an innovation forum between Brazil and the U.S.

Efforts to tackle terrorism and organized crime is a matter of utmost urgency for our two peoples. We have decided to strengthen our bilateral security forum and do more against money laundering and drug trafficking.

Reestablishing democracy in Venezuela is also a shared interest between our two administrations. The dictatorial regime in Venezuela today is part of a broader international coalition, known as the São Paulo Forum, which nearly conquered power throughout the Latin America in recent times. However, by democratic means, we were able to rid ourselves from that project in Brazil.

In conclusion, may I say that Brazil and the United States stand side by side in their efforts to ensure liberties and respect to traditional family lifestyles, respect to God our Creator, against the gender ideology or the politically correct attitudes, and against fake news.

Drawing inspiration from Ronald Reagan, I wish to bring to Brazil his administration style, as summarized in the following citation: People should say what the government can do and not the other way around.

The United States changed in 2017, and Brazil has just started to change now, in 2019. We stand together, side by side, to the ultimate benefit of our two nations. We want to have a great America, yes, and we also want to have a great Brazil.

Once again, may I voice my admiration and recognition to President Donald Trump on this beautiful day where we seal a promising alliance between the two most promising and largest democracies in the Western Hemisphere. May God bless Brazil, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Trump. So we'll take a couple of questions.

Roberta Rampton, please. Roberta. Reuters. Thank you.

Venezuela

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. On Venezuela, you did the tough sanctions, and you sent the aid, but it seems like Maduro is no closer to leaving. And I'm wondering if you're getting worried about losing momentum. And how long are you being told that this going to take?

President Trump. I'm not being told any specific time. They've been there a long time, between him and his predecessor. At some point, I would imagine, things will change. But we really haven't done the really tough sanctions yet. We can do the tough sanctions. And all options are open, so we may be doing that. But we haven't done the toughest of sanctions, as you know. We've done, I would say, right down the middle. But we can go a lot tougher if we need to do that.

But it's a very sad thing, and we're not looking for anything other than taking care of a lot of people that are starving and dying in the streets. What's happening there is a disgrace. This was one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and all of a sudden, it's just—it's grief stricken, poverty stricken, no food, no water, no air conditioning, no anything. No power for a long time last week. No power. And that's going to break down again, because it's being held together by threads.

So it's very sad, Roberta. Very sad to see. Okay?

Q. May I ask President Bolsonaro? President Bolsonaro, are you open to the idea of allowing a U.S. base or U.S. military personnel, a military presence in Brazil to provide support on the border with Venezuela? And is that something that you talked about with President Trump today?

President Bolsonaro. Yes, we have discussed the possibility of Brazil, becoming a great allied extra-NATO. Recently, we requested that food was sent through Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima State, through our friends from America, so that humanitarian aid was provided to Venezuela.

At this point in time, this is where we stand. So for as much as it is possible for us to do together to sort out the issue of the Venezuelan dictatorship, Brazil will be more than willing and ready to fulfill this mission and take freedom and democracy to that country, which up until recently was one of the wealthiest countries in South America. But nowadays, people are starving to death; they are suffering violence, lack of medication. They're—it's something

terrible that's going on in there. And we need to put an end to this issue, which is pervasive to the whole wide world.

President Trump. Mr. President, please.

Q. Hello. Simone Iglesias from Bloomberg. I would like to know, if the U.S. actually have a military intervention in Venezuela, what's the position of Brazil?

President Bolsonaro. Well, there are a few issues that, if you speak, they are no longer strategic. Therefore, these reserved issues, which may be discussed if they have not yet, will not become public, evidently.

I remember on a debate here in the United States when a candidate asked another candidate what he would do to fight the Islamic State. He said, "If I say, I will no longer be able to beat it." So it's a matter of strategy. For everything that we discuss here will be honored, but unfortunately, certain pieces of information, if are to come to the table, may not be debated publicly.

Venezuela

Q. President Trump, regarding the military intervention, do you think about this possibility of fighting Venezuela to remove Maduro from power?

President Trump. So, as I said, all options are open. I think of all possibilities. All options are open. We'll see what happens.

And by the way, I see in the audience the son of the President who has been fantastic. Would you please stand up? The job you've done during a very tough period of time is just fantastic. And I know your father appreciates it, that I can tell you. Okay? Thank you very much. Fantastic job.

Saagar Enjeti, from Daily Caller. Saagar.

Q. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. Thank you.

U.S. Supreme Court

Q. I have two questions for you, sir, if I may, the first on the 2020 election. There's a growing number of Democratic candidates who have endorsed the idea of adding seats to the Supreme Court. Is that an idea that you would entertain in the remainder of your term or possible next term? Or is that not something that you agree with?

President Trump. No, I wouldn't entertain that. The only reason is—that they're doing that is they want to try and catch up. So if they can't catch up through the ballot box by winning an election, they want to try doing it in a different way. No, we would have no interest in that whatsoever. It will never happen. It won't happen—I guarantee it won't happen—for 6 years.

Social Media/News Media

Q. Another question for you on social media. You tweeted in support of Congressman Nunes's suit against Twitter. There's part of a larger discussion that Senator Josh Hawley has been leading about making social media companies liable for the content that is on their platform, which they're not currently. Is that an idea or a change in law that you would support?

President Trump. Well, we have to do something. I tell you, I have many, many millions of followers on Twitter. And it's different than it used to be. Things are happening, names are taken off, people aren't getting through. You've heard the same complaints. And it seems to be, if they're conservative, if they're Republicans, if they're in a certain group, there's discrimination and big discrimination. I see it absolutely on Twitter and Facebook, which I have also, and others I see.

But I really focus more on the one platform. And I have many different platforms. It's—I guess we have 60 million—almost 60 million on Twitter. And if you add them all up, it's way over 100 million people. And I get to see firsthand what's going on, and it's not good.

And we use the word "collusion" very loosely all the time. And I will tell you, there is collusion with respect to that, because something has to be going on. And when you get the back-scene, back-office statements made by executives of the various companies and you see the level of, in many cases, hatred they have for a certain group of people that happen to be in power, that happen to have won the election, you say that's really unfair.

So something is happening with those groups of folks that are running Facebook and Google and Twitter. And I do think we have to get to the bottom of it. It's very fair—it's collusive, and it's very, very fair to say that we have to do something about it. And if we don't—you know, the incredible thing is that we can win an election and we have such a stacked deck.

And that includes networks, frankly. You look at the networks, you look at the news, you look at the newscasts—I call it "fake news." I'm very proud to hear the President use the term "fake news." But you look at what's happening with the networks. You look at what's happening with different shows. And it's hard to believe we win.

But you know, I'll tell you what it really shows: The people are smart. The people get it. They'll go through all of that—whatever it is they're fed—and in the end, they pull the right lever. It's a very, very dangerous situation. So I think I agree. I think something has to be looked at very closely.

Q. Thank you, sir. President Bolsonaro, and another question on the 2020 election: If a number of the Democrats who are running to replace the President have embraced or have considered socialist ideas—you've spoken critically of that in the past—if a Socialist or a candidate who embraced socialism were to replace the President, how would it affect your relations with the United States?

President Bolsonaro. Well, it's an internal affair. We will respect whatever the ballots tell us on 2020, but I do believe Donald Trump is going to be reelected fully.

President Trump. Thank you. I agree. [*Laughter*]

President Bolsonaro. Yes. This was the same, what happened to me. I think everyone will repeat their vote here in America.

So, every day, more and more people that are prone to socialism, and even communism, slowly are going to be opening their minds to the reality. And you can see the border with Venezuela and Brazil was recently closed, not for Brazilians, which are prosocialism, to go into Venezuela, but the other way around, so that Venezuelans who support democracy wouldn't go into Brazil. This feeling most certainly is going to be very much seen when 2020 comes.

President Trump. Mr. President, thank you very much. Our——

Q. Sorry——

President Trump. Go ahead. You want to go?

Q. Yes.

President Trump. You look like a very nice person.

Q. Yes.

President Trump. Go ahead. Watch, this will be the killer of all time. Watch. [*Laughter*]

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Q. [*Laughter*] Thank you, Mr. President. Beatriz Bulla from Estadão. The USTR is not supporting the entry of Brazil in the OECD. Is the U.S. Government going to formally support Brazil's entry on the OECD? And what have you asked as a tradeoff?

President Trump. We will be supporting. We're going to have a great relationship in so many different ways. That's just a—just something that we're going to be doing in honor of the President and in honor of Brazil. We will be asking for things, but not necessarily having to do with that. I think we're just going to have a very fair relationship. Okay?

Q. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you.

Q. And President Bolsonaro——

[*At this point, President Bolsonaro spoke briefly in English as follows.*]

President Bolsonaro. Thank you! [*Laughter*]

President Trump. Okay.

[*President Trump shook President Bolsonaro's hand.*]

Q. President Bolsonaro, does the United States expect the influence of China into Brazil? Yesterday Paulo Guedes mentioned that it's going to incentivize relations with China. How does the U.S. see that, and what you said about President Trump, about the Chinese in Brazil?

President Bolsonaro. Well, like I said, Brazil is going to keep on making as much business with as many countries as possible. No longer businesses are going to be found into the ideology, as it used to be. We are also following this objective for the good of our peoples.

President Trump. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I appreciate it. Thank you very much. And thank you, everybody. Thank you very much.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Another round of trade talks with China, Mr. President?

President Trump. China is going very well. Talks with China are going very well.

Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 1:54 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to former President Nicolás Maduro Moros of Venezuela, whose legitimacy was challenged by the U.S. Government, which recognized National Assembly President Juan Gerardo Guaidó Márquez as Interim President of Venezuela on January 23; and Federal Deputy for São Paulo and Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies' Foreign Affairs Committee Eduardo Bolsonaro of Brazil, son of President Bolsonaro. A

reporter referred to Minister of the Economy Paulo Guedes of Brazil. President Bolsonaro and two reporters spoke in Portuguese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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