

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

The President's News Conference With President Moon Jae-in of South Korea in Seoul, South Korea

June 30, 2019

Moderator. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the Republic of Korea, accompanied by the President of the United States of America. President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea and President Donald Trump of the United States of America will begin their joint press conference. May I ask everyone to please take their seats?

We will first hear the opening remarks, then move on to questions and answers. Opening remarks will be given first by President Moon Jae-in, followed by President Trump. We will now hear from President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea.

President Moon. I extend my warmest welcome to President Trump to the Republic of Korea. Today the Korean Peninsula, together with President Trump, has become the land that is most noted on Earth. Since the Declaration of Armistice, in 66 years' time, the United States and North Korea will be meeting in Panmunjom. For the first time in history, the leaders of the United States and North Korea will be standing face to face in Panmunjom, the symbol of division, and make handshakes for peace.

If we continue to communicate and engage with each other in dialogue, we can move towards the best situation. This is something that we'll be able to see for ourselves today. South and North will be able to become confident about peace, and the world will provide their support and cheer on President Trump and Chairman Kim with high expectations.

What we need here is enduring peace on the Korean Peninsula. I hope that President Trump will go down in history as a President that has achieved peace on the Korean Peninsula. Peace requires more courage than conflict. I would like to extend my appreciation to the two leaders for being so brave, and I am very overwhelmed with emotions because we have been able to prove the way towards peace for the Korean Peninsula.

Continuous dialogue is the only viable option for achieving complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Today President Trump and I have reaffirmed that we're absolutely on the same page when it comes to denuclearization and that we share common goals. In particular, as complete denuclearization and peacebuilding on the Korean Peninsula and normalization of U.S.-D.P.R.K. relations were the goals committed to in the Singapore agreement, we concur that implementing this agreement simultaneously and in parallel will be vitally important.

To that end, I hope the dialogue between the U.S. and D.P.R.K. will resume as early as possible. And I hope that there will be progress made between the leaders of the two countries, together with the people of the Republic of Korea.

And not only the security for the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance has become a comprehensive strategic alliance that strengthens cooperation in not only security, but also economic, region, and global issues. Such steadfast R.O.K.-U.S. alliance is working as the lynchpin for regional peace, stability, and prosperity. And we have decided to continue in close coordination.

As President Trump has said, I believe that this is a victory for both countries, as we have established an institutional framework with the KORUS FTA amendment. Today our two leaders have agreed to further accelerate the momentum to expand trade and investments and further expand the KORUS alliance to a mutually reciprocal economic alliance as well. In regional and

global issues as well, our two countries will continue to work very closely together as strong allies.

The Asia-Pacific region is a core region for peace and prosperity for both countries. Under the regional cooperation principles of openness, inclusiveness, and transparency, I believe that Korea's "New Southern Policy" and the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy can find common ground.

Recently, we have shared in our concerns related to the attack on the oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman and the escalation of tension in the Middle East. Freedom of passage and freedom of transit in the Gulf of Oman is very important for the stability of the Middle East and security of international energy.

I have a high regard for the careful restraint showed by President Trump. But we have agreed to closely cooperate for stability in the Middle East. President Trump and I will not forget the history and the spirits of our great alliance. Our two countries will work very closely in cooperation as strong allies.

With this visit to the Republic of Korea, we have once again reaffirmed our common objectives and strategies. And I'm very glad and heartened by this. Going forward, we will continue to work very closely together and be frank and open in our discussions and communications to strongly solidify and develop the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance.

President Trump is the maker of peace on the Korean Peninsula. You really are the peacemaker of the Korean Peninsula. I hope that this meeting with Chairman Kim Jong Un at the Panmunjom will bring hope to the people of South and North Korea and that it will be a milestone in the history of humankind towards peace.

Again, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to President Trump to Korea. Our friendship will continue to grow deeper and greener as the leaves of early summer. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you very much. I'm just going to make a very short statement, because we're going to the DMZ border, and I'll be meeting with Chairman Kim. I look forward to it very much. I look forward to seeing him. We've developed a very good relationship. And we understand each other. I do believe he understands me, and I think I maybe understand him. And sometimes, that can lead to very good things.

I want to start by just thanking President Moon and, very importantly, First Lady Moon, who's a very special woman, a very special spirit. She loves your country very much, as does President Moon. And we had a great dinner last night, together, and spent a large part of the morning discussing lots of different things, including trade and military, frankly, and many other items.

But I thought I would just mention that when we came here, our great Ambassador—we arrived last night—our great Ambassador, who's here someplace—Harry—was talking about the turmoil going on because of the level of—it was the vitriol. A level of vitriol that was happening between North and South. But it was North, to a large extent, where there was a lot of risk and a lot of threat, and a lot of bad things were happening. That was before I became President.

And as you know—and the media knows very well because they covered it, frankly, very well and very fairly—at the beginning, there was a lot of anger between myself and Kim Jong Un, who since—something happened. There was a point at which it happened, and all of a sudden, we get along.

And I figured that when I was in Japan, where they hosted a fantastic G-20—and I want to just thank Prime Minister Abe because he really—they did a fantastic job, and a lot of good things came out of that. A lot of good meetings with other countries, I can tell you, from the standpoint of the United States.

But we decided to come here a while ago, as part of going to the G-20; I promised President Moon. And then, yesterday I was just thinking: "Hey, I'm here. Let's see whether or not we can say hello to Kim Jong Un." And I put out the word, and he got back, and he wanted to do it from the beginning, and so did I.

But there's a lot of good feeling. You know, when sometimes the media will say, "Gee, what's happened?" Well, they know what's happened. What's happened is, there was nuclear testing, there was ballistic missile testing. They had hostages of ours, as you know. Very tough situation. And now we're getting back our remains. We got back the hostages. There's been no ballistic missile tests. And there's been no nuclear tests.

And South Korea is a whole different place. And Japan. Prime Minister Abe was telling me Japan is a whole different place. They had missiles going over Japan on a very constant basis. You know that very well.

So I hate to hear the media, you know, give false information to the public when they say, "Oh, what's been done?" What's been done? A lot has been done. And there's also a good feeling. I can tell you, on behalf of President Moon, he feels much better about even Chairman Kim. I mean, he feels much better.

They couldn't have meetings. Nobody was going to meet. President Obama wanted to meet, and Chairman Kim would not meet him. The Obama administration was begging for a meeting. They were begging for meetings constantly. And Chairman Kim would not meet with him.

And for some reason, we have a certain chemistry or whatever. Now, let's see what happens. We have a long way to go. But I'm in no rush. The sanctions are on, and I'm in no rush. I'm in no rush with Iran. I'm never in a rush. If you're in a rush, you get yourself in trouble.

So I just want to say that we're going to be heading out to the DMZ, and it's something I planned long ago, but had the idea yesterday to maybe say hello, just shake hands quickly and say hello, because we haven't seen each other since Vietnam. We had a great meeting in Vietnam. People don't realize it. We had a—it's all part of the whole negotiation. But we had actually a great meeting in Vietnam. We had a great meeting in Singapore. Everyone gave us praise for Singapore and not for Vietnam. I think, frankly, the meeting in Vietnam, in terms of a deal, was more important than Singapore.

So I think what I'd like to do is, we'll take one or two questions, as I understand it. And then, I'm going to head out to the DMZ and pay my respects to everybody, including some soldiers. We have some—we have tremendous military here in South Korea, and we're going to see some of our great American soldiers. We'll be talking to them. And I'll be seeing Kim Jong Un.

And if you would, you could start with a question. Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you very much. We will now take questions from members of the media. I know this is a very busy time, so we will just take one question each. In terms of the order, the Blue House will first take a question from a reporter, which will be answered by President Moon, followed by the White House. And President Trump will answer that question.

The Q-and-A session will be interpreted consecutively, so please remove your earpieces. We'll now first take a question by the Blue House. CBS, Park—[inaudible], will you please.

North Korea

Q. Hello, Mr. President, I am Park from CBS. And I would like to, first of all, welcome President Trump upon your second visit to the Republic of Korea.

At the restricted bilateral meeting this morning, President Moon, you had mentioned that you will be accompanying President Trump to the DMZ, but the focus of the dialogue that will happen at the DMZ will be between President Trump and Chairman Kim. And you said that you are looking forward to much progress being achieved there.

So at—once the contact is established between President Trump and Chairman Kim at the DMZ, what kind of progress do you expect in the subsequent negotiations? And is—how about the possibility of a third U.S.-North Korea summit happening before the end of the year?

And my third question relates to the written interview that you had given to various agencies recently. And in that interview, you had mentioned that if North Korea, under complete inspection verification from the international community—if North Korea dismantles the nuclear complex in Yongbyon—then the international community could explore the sanctions relief, a partial sanctions relief.

So has there been any discussions regarding this issue this morning? And what was the response from the U.S. side?

President Moon. Yes. To answer your question, yes, I have been invited to visit Panmunjom with President Trump this afternoon. However, as I had mentioned, the focus of the dialogue today will be the dialogue between the United States and North Korea. And of course, President Trump and Chairman Kim will have a reunion and have subsequent dialogue, and I hope that—and I do believe that this is vastly significant for the dialogue that will follow after the meeting today.

And also, today there will be a dialogue between the United States and North Korea. But as for the inter-Korean dialogue, this will happen at a later time.

As for the question regarding the third U.S.-North Korea summit, I believe that how the reunion and the dialogue and the meeting turns out this afternoon will have a great say on when and whether the U.S.-North Korea summit will happen for the third time. So I do expect some progress there.

As for the last question, the—what I had explained was that if North Korea goes through the dismantlement in a genuine way—dismantlement of the nuclear complex in Yongbyon—then this will mean that we will be entering—we will be arriving at the entrance of irreversible, substantive denuclearization. So if this indeed is implemented, then the international community will be able to discuss a partial sanctions relief. I—my words were in this context.

Moderator. Now we'll take a question for President Trump. Ms. Stephanie Grisham, the White House Press Secretary, will choose who will ask the question.

White House Press Secretary Stephanie A. Grisham. I'm going to let our President choose. Go ahead, Mr. President. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. Thank you. *[Laughter]* Thank you. She's learned very well. *[Laughter]* Thank you very much, Stephanie. I appreciate it.

Just to add one thing to your question from CBS: It's just a step. It might be an important step, and it might not. But what we're doing today is a step. And probably, it's a step in the right direction. There's a good feeling, so it could be very good.

As far as another meeting, I think let's see what happens today before we start thinking about that. But it could be very important.

Let's see, a question? Yes. Next time. Go ahead. Next time.

North Korea/China-U.S. Trade Relations

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, Mr. President. Margaret Talev with Bloomberg News. I hope you'll indulge me. Since we get one question, I'm going to try to make it count. Why do you want to step into North Korea and what do you think that handshake could actually accomplish? Nothing has substantively changed since Hanoi. North Korea has tested short-range missiles. Why does Kim Jong Un deserve this moment?

And how do you respond to the critics who say it's nothing more than a photo op or that you're legitimizing a nuclear state?

I also, quickly, need to get in one China clarification, which is: Your agreement with President Xi as of yesterday, does that bring you back to the point in April where they had made a lot of concessions on IP and that sort of stuff? Or are you back at November, back at the beginning of the process?

President Trump. Okay, so it's——

Q. And may I——

President Trump.——two very distinct questions. Hold it. Before you do a third——

Q. I've got one for Moon also.

President Trump. I know. You'll do that in a second.

Q. Okay. Thanks.

President Trump. No, we've made tremendous strides. Only the fake news says that they weren't. If you look again—I don't have to repeat it—but if you look again at where we were 2½ years ago, I think I can say, the hatred that everybody had for everybody and where it was going.

And I said that if President Obama's term was, for some reason, extended through any method, including having a successor that thought the way that that administration thought, you would be right now at war with North Korea. And it wouldn't be pretty. It would be tough.

We have the greatest military in the world, by far. We have a much greater military now than we had 2½ years ago, as you know very well. You reported on it. We bought tremendous equipment, from jets, to ships, to equipment for soldiers.

But we are in a much different place right now, Margaret, than we were 2½ years ago. Much different. And the previous administration wanted to talk. I would ask people, "Why aren't they talking?" And not everything happens with talks. Some bad things happen with talk too. But in this case, we are so far advanced from where we were 2½ years ago that it's always insulting. And I think it's why the press, frankly, has lost such credibility. They've lost such credibility.

But to think that we're comparing where we are now to 2½ years ago is—in a way it's insulting, but we're doing well. Let's see what happens in the end. But we're doing well. A big difference.

And as far as China is concerned, we are where we are. We're collecting 25 percent on \$250 billion, and China is paying for it, as you know, because, as you notice, our inflation hasn't gone up. China has devalued their currency in order to pay for the tariffs.

And in addition to devaluing, they've also pumped a lot of money into their economic model. They've been pumping money in. We haven't. We've been retracting. We've been raising interest rates, and they've been lowering interest rates.

So we're not playing on a fair field. The Fed has not been of help to us at all. And despite that, we're winning, and we're winning big because we have created an economy that is second to none. Greatest in the world.

And one of the things that happened at the G-20—in fact, the President came up and said the same thing to me—President Moon: "Congratulations on the economy. What's happened in the last 2½ years is incredible. It's incredible."

If the other thought process would have won the election, we would have—instead of being up 3 percent, we would have been down 5 percent, in my opinion. And I think you would have had a stock market crash, because we were heading in that direction. It would have been very, very ugly.

Please.

Q. Thank you. Could I just ask the President—okay.

[At this point, the interpreter translated President Trump's above remarks into Korean. President Trump then continued his remarks as follows.]

President Trump. And just to complete: You have to value the stock market from the day after I won, because there was a tremendous surge after I won: because of the fact I won; because people want that thinking instead of the thinking that we had. If I hadn't won, right after the election, on November 9, you would have had a tremendous decrease in the stock market.

So I noticed that the previous administration was given credit for thousands of points of gain right after the election. No. It went up because I won, and we'll take the credit. And if you take that credit, we've increased the stock market values by more than 50 percent. You have to take that credit. It went up only because I won. And it went up a lot between election day and, you know, when we ultimately took office. And from there it went up a lot. It continues to go up a lot, and now we're setting records virtually every day.

And just to conclude on China: President Xi and I had a fantastic meeting. It was a great meeting. We get along. We also have a really, really good relationship. And he wants to see something happen, and so would I. And I think there's a really good chance of that happening. We had a great meeting. Thank you.

Q. [Inaudible]—thank you very much——

President Moon. I'm sorry, but we don't have much time, and it's time for us to go.

Q. ——North Korean—[inaudible]—says that they don't want you to be a mediator in this case. How do you respond? And do you trust President Trump?

And if you can take us to the moment when you are at the border, each of you—you are at the demarcation line—what do you believe that stepping over that line may represent for the United States and for the world?

Thank you very much.

Moderator. So your first question was to President Moon, right?

President Moon. First of all, we are indeed striving to achieve peace through a dialogue, but this does not necessarily mean that we will only travel in one direction. Sometimes, we'll go straight, but there—sometimes, we go through a long and winding road. There comes a time when we have to pause, and sometimes, we have to retreat.

However, I can reassure you that the only way that we can achieve peace is through dialogue. So either the meeting this afternoon at Panmunjom will become a truly historic—a great moment in the peace process on the Korean Peninsula.

President Trump. Thank you very much.

President Moon. Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you. This concludes the press conference given by President Moon and President Trump.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:10 p.m. at the Blue House. In his remarks, he referred to Kim Jung-sook, wife of President Moon; U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Harry B. Harris, Jr.; and Kim Hak-song, Tony Kim, and Kim Dong-chul, U.S. citizens formerly detained by North Korean officials who returned to the U.S. on May 10, 2018. President Moon, the moderator, and a reporter spoke in Korean, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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