

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City
September 23, 2019

President Trump. Thank you very much. It's a great honor to be with my friend, the Prime Minister of Pakistan. And we have some great discussions going on with Pakistan about a lot of things, including the Taliban and Afghanistan and many other things. And trade, I think, maybe is one of the most important. We're going to increase trade with Pakistan by a tremendous margin.

We do a very small amount of trade with them, and they want to do a large, and so do we. And we should be able to do that, I think, Wilbur, very easily. So we're going to double, triple, quadruple the trade. It will be very easy to do. They make great product, and so do we.

And I was really shocked when I saw the original numbers from last year and the year before and for many years, that the trade with Pakistan isn't much greater. But it could be many times the number.

So we'll be talking about trade and other things. And it's an honor to be with you. Thank you very much.

Prime Minister Khan. Thank you.

President Trump. Please.

Prime Minister Khan. I look forward, Mr. President, to talk to you about, obviously, Afghanistan, which is a big issue for us Pakistanis, because stability in Afghanistan means stability in Pakistan. We also want to talk about all three neighbors: Afghanistan, India—Kashmir, and of course, Iran. It's just—we will discuss the situation there because all—these all three neighbors of Pakistan. And I——

President Trump. He lives in a very friendly neighborhood. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Khan. I mean, as if there are not already enough challenges. You know, it——

Kashmir/India-Pakistan Relations

Q. Mr. President, after your last meeting with the Prime Minister, you offered to mediate between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. And since then, the situation has gotten more complicated, and India continues to deny our access and mediation. So where does the offer stand now, and don't you think it will——

President Trump. It would always stand. If I can help, I would certainly do that. And it will be dependent on both of these gentlemen. One without the other doesn't work, if you're going to do mediation or if you're going to do an arbitration.

But certainly, I would be willing to help if both wanted. If both Pakistan, let's say, and India wanted me to do that, I am ready, willing, and able. It's a complex issue. It's been going on for a long time. But if both wanted it, I would be ready to do it.

Q. And, Mr. President, with all the things—reverting back to my question in the Oval Office on Kashmir——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. —you know, the thing is, you are asking both the parties to accept and agree: one is aggressor—[inaudible]—these U.N. resolutions. And that's noncompliant, plus—in the, you know, merging Kashmir into its own territory.

President Trump. This is the kind of reporter I like. [Laughter]

Kashmir/India-Pakistan Relations

Q. Which is—[inaudible]—U.N. resolution.

President Trump. I like this reporter. [Laughter]

Q. And how can you——

President Trump. Are you a member of this team? Or are you a——

Q. I'm a member of—I'm not a member of this team. I'm an independent journalist.

President Trump. You know what? You're saying what you think.

Q. No, let me complete my question, Mr. President.

President Trump. No, but I have to be requested——

Q. How can you make——

President Trump. Excuse me.

Q. —an aggressor and an aggressed meet and——

President Trump. That's okay. I understand.

Q. —in violation of the U.N. resolutions?

President Trump. Very fair question, or statement. I'll—let me put that one down as a statement, if you don't mind.

Q. Thank you.

President Trump. But you're right, you have to have a—you have to have two parties that want to agree. And if they—when they come—and, at some point, India may come. I have a very good relationship with Prime Minister Modi. I have a very good relationship with Prime Minister Khan.

And if at any time they say, "You know, we have some points that we think we can maybe iron out," I think I'd be an extremely good arbitrator. I've done it before, believe it or not, and I've never failed as an arbitrator. I've been asked to arbitrate disputes—pretty big ones—from friends. And I've done it in a good, successful fashion.

If I can be of help—you know that—if I can be of help, let me know. But you'd have to have the assent also from the other side.

[At this point, several reporters began speaking at once.]

Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom/Iran/Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

Q. Prime Minister Johnson has now called for a new deal, just moments ago—for a new Iran deal. This is the first time he's called for that. I wonder what your reaction to it. And have you discussed that with him previously?

President Trump. Well, I think that's why he's a winner. That's why he's a man that's going to be successful in the U.K. And I think that's great. You're talking about Boris, right?

Q. Yes, I'm talking about Boris.

President Trump. Boris is a man who—number one, he's a friend of mine, and number two, he's very smart, very tough. And he does want a new deal because the other deal was ready to expire. It was at a very short number of years left. All that money paid and wasted. You didn't have the right to inspect the appropriate sites. You were looking at sites that would never be used to create nuclear. The sites that they would use, we weren't allowed to inspect. What kind of a deal is that? And ballistic missiles—they're allowed to test ballistic missiles and other things.

But one of the biggest things is the fact that the agreement is going to expire in a very short number of years. And what kind of a deal is that? We're dealing with countries. You have to go long term.

So I respect Boris a lot, and I am not at all surprised that he was the first one to come out and say that.

Pakistan-U.S. Relations/India-Pakistan Relations

Q. Mr. President, this is the first time—[inaudible]—from—[inaudible]—Pakistan. So this is the first time we get honest leadership like you in America. And in past——

President Trump. I agree with that. This is the first time you've had honesty.

Q. So, sir, in past——

President Trump. You've had a lot of dishonesty, and they've treated Pakistan very badly.

Q. And yes. In past——

President Trump. The people in my position have treated Pakistan very badly.

Q. Sir, in past—okay.

President Trump. I think that—I wouldn't say Pakistan has treated us too well either, but maybe there was a reason. And in fact, I think there was a reason for it.

Q. Sir, in past, you have said that you don't trust Pakistan. So when we have honest leadership in——

President Trump. I trust Pakistan. But people before me didn't, but they didn't know what they were doing. So it's just one of those little problems in life.

You know, I—you know what I do? I trust this gentleman right here. And I do trust Pakistan. I know—I have a lot of Pakistani friends living in New York. They're smart. Great negotiators, by the way, in case you had any questions. They're among the toughest negotiators in the world.

And you know what? It's all going to work out. But if I can help, I'd like to help. But I don't think you've ever had a President that felt the way I do, in a positive way, about Pakistan. I don't think you have. I've looked back, and I've seen where it was. And—but I also have a very good relationship with India. I have a good relationship with both.

So that—if they decide to use that feeling among both, I think we can help out. But this has been a longstanding—this has been going on for a long time.

Q. Mr. President——

Iran

Q. Mr. President, yesterday you shared the stage with PM Modi. He alleged that Pakistan is the hub of terrorism. Do you endorse that or do you disagree with that? Because you said that Pakistan has made a lot of progress.

President Trump. Well, I really have been pointing much more to Iran. I mean, Iran if you look at what, that's been really the state of terror. And I've been saying it's the number-one state of terror in the world. And the agreement we had does not cover that. It was not doing well. It was doing very poorly. And now Iran is doing very poorly. Iran is a different place than when I took over.

When I took over the United States—when I became President—Iran was a real threat to the entire Middle East and maybe beyond. And now they're having very, very big difficulties, to put it mildly. So we'll see.

Counterterrorism Efforts in Pakistan

Q. Are you happy with the progress that Pakistan has made countering terrorism, particularly eliminating terrorism—[inaudible]?

President Trump. I've heard they've made great progress. And under this leader—he's a great leader—I think he wants to make great progress because there's no solution the other way. The other way is only going to lead to death and chaos and poverty. It's all it's going to lead to. I mean, he understands it. Your Prime Minister understands it.

Q. Mr. President——

Kashmir/India-Pakistan Relations/Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India's Remarks in Houston, Texas

Q. Are you concerned about the human rights situation in Kashmir?

President Trump. About which?

Q. Human rights situation—human rights violations.

President Trump. Sure. I'd like to see everything work out.

Q. Have you talked with Modi?

President Trump. I want it to be humane. I want everybody to be treated well. You have two big countries, and they're warring countries, and they've been fighting.

And I mean, I heard a very aggressive statement yesterday. I don't have to say that. I was there. I didn't know I was going to hear that statement, I had said. But I was sitting there and I heard a very aggressive statement yesterday from India, from the Prime Minister, and I will say it was very well received within the rule—you know, within in the room. The statement itself. That was a big room; there were 59,000 people.

But it was a very aggressive statement, and I hope that they're going to be able to come together—India and Pakistan—and do something that's really smart and good for both. And I'm sure there could be—there's always a solution. And I really believe there's a solution for that.

[Several reporters began speaking at once.]

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Easy. Easy. You've asked one already. Go ahead. Quickly. Make a 1-second statement. Go ahead, make a statement.

Q. Now, if you can solve this outstanding issue of Kashmir——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——very likely and definitely you will be deserving a Nobel Prize on that.

President Trump. I think I'll get a Nobel Prize for a lot of things. [Laughter] I think I'm going to get a Nobel Prize for a lot of things, if they gave it out fairly, which they don't.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. They gave it out—well, they gave one to Obama immediately upon his ascent to the Presidency, and he had no idea why he got it. [Laughter] And you know what? That was the only thing I agreed with him on.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Come on.

Pakistani News Media

Q. Other than Pakistan and India, the Kashmiri people are suffering the last 50 days. They will talk later on, but right now there was human rights violation in Kashmir. Fifty days lockdown—no internet, no food, no nothing. So you know, what do you want do for the Kashmiri people?

President Trump. Where do you find reporters like this? [Laughter] These guys are fantastic. All right, go ahead.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Wait. Wait. Wait. He's talking. Let the American talk for a change. [Laughter]

Taliban-U.S. Peace Negotiations/Suicide Car Bombing in Kabul, Afghanistan

Q. Thank you, sir. Have talks with the Taliban resumed in any way? And have you looked to Pakistan leaders to help you in any way——

President Trump. No, we've hit the Taliban very hard.

Q. ——with assistance in Afghanistan.

President Trump. Yes, I have. And I think that the Pakistan—I think Pakistan will be a great help. I know the Prime Minister wants to be a help. But we've hit the Taliban harder than we've ever hit them, in all of the years. I guess we've been there now 19 years. How ridiculous is that? And when they killed 12 people—one of them an American soldier, as you know, and one a United Nations soldier—for the sake of going into the meeting with a little strength, they thought. They went in with weakness. And I canceled everything. We have hit them harder in the last 2 weeks than we've ever hit them before.

Q. When do you think talks could resume again, sir?

President Trump. We'll see what happens.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. But I will say that the Prime Minister has been very helpful, and he wants to do something. He wants to see something happen. So that's fine.

Kashmir

Q. My question is on Pakistan. Mr. Prime Minister, would you like to raise the issue of curfew and lockdown and the atrocities in Kashmir before the President of America?

Prime Minister Khan. You know, Mr. President, I was going to raise it in private, but it needs to be said that, for 50 days, 8 million people are under siege by 900,000 troops. And it's a humanitarian issue. And so I was going to say that——

President Trump. [Inaudible]

Prime Minister Khan. ——were you supposed to meet Narendra Modi now, I would have asked you to at least lift the siege. I mean, it's a huge humanitarian crisis taking place.

President Trump. Okay, so we're going to talking about that in a little while.

Prime Minister Khan. Yes. We'll discuss that.

Kashmir/Pakistan-India Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, what are your expectations from American President about the Kashmir issue?

Prime Minister Khan. My expectations: President Trump heads the most powerful country in the world, and the most powerful country in the world has a responsibility. And you know, this—you very kindly want to mediate on this, and you also said that two—both of us, first India and Pakistan has to agree to mediation.

But unfortunately, India is refusing to talk to us. So, in this situation, I feel that this is the beginning of a crisis. I honestly feel that this crisis is going to get much bigger, what is happening in Kashmir. So we would like to talk about that later.

But just the fact that the position of the United States—it's the most powerful country. It can affect the United Nations Security Council. It has a voice. So we look to the U.S. to put out flames in the world.

[Several reporters began asking questions.]

President Trump. And I will say this: Look, I have my respect for your Prime Minister, I will say that many countries wanted to meet with me and us—the United States—during this very short 3-day period, and we were unable to meet with many of them. One of the countries I wanted to meet with was Pakistan and your Prime Minister. And it's an honor to be here with you. And I think you should let us start talking now because——

Q. Thank you.

President Trump. ——but I do appreciate it. There's a tremendous spirit from your press. I don't see that. [Laughter] With us, they want to always tear our country down. And with your press, it's really—they would like to see something positive for your country.

And I will tell you this: You have a great leader. And he's a good man. He's a nice man. Happens to be a great athlete—not that that matters, but it's always nice.

Q. And you are a great leader too, sir. [Laughter]

President Trump. Thank you very much. You take care of yourselves. Thank you. Thank you. Thanks, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: New York City; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Pakistan, Prime Minister Khan.

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