

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Barham Salih of Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City

September 24, 2019

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. We're glad to be joined by the President of Iraq and his representatives. And I will say that we've had a very good couple of meetings with Iraq. We're doing well with Iraq. It's been a very long and complicated, but friendly, relationship, especially over the last little while. I was in Iraq a little while ago, as you know. And it's fascinating what's taking place.

So we're going to—we have a lot to talk about. There's things to talk about that we can't talk about in front of you, but we have a lot of good things to talk about. And you're doing a fantastic job. Thank you very much.

President Salih. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you.

President Salih. Thank you.

President Trump. Please.

President Salih. It's an opportunity, Mr. President, to reaffirm our gratitude to the United States and the international coalition that has come to help us overcome the tyranny of ISIS and terrorism.

This was an amazing battle. And Iraqis were in the forefront of this battle, but your support has been absolutely crucial, and we appreciate it. Now, the task of rebuilding Iraq, reconstructing Iraq, affirming the sovereignty of Iraq, and being a partner in the neighborhood for a more stable Middle East is a hope and an aspiration that we look for the help of the United States and the help of the international community.

President Trump. Well, I understand. And it has been a great achievement. We took a hundred percent of the caliphate from ISIS. And ISIS—now we have thousands and thousands of people that we've captured. These people have done a lot of destruction, not only in that area, in a lot of other areas. But, as you know, we have thousands of people. We'll talk about that also, because we're going to have to do something, put them on trial, et cetera, et cetera.

But we've captured thousands of ISIS fighters and taken back a hundred percent of the caliphate. And when I first became President, it was a mess. It was a big mess. And we all worked together, and we got it done, but it was a great achievement, so we appreciate that. And we look forward to our discussion.

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

Q. Mr. President, will you ask Prime Minister——

Q. Speaker Pelosi——

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, good to see you. Iraq has declared that it won't allow its territory to be used as a launching pad against its neighbors. Can you assure us that you can control all the rogue elements, especially with the—[*inaudible*]*—especially that we have two rockets landing?*

President Salih. It's our sovereign responsibility. It's our sovereign responsibility to abide by our constitution and not—Iraq not to be used as a base for any threat against our neighbors. It is work in progress, and Iraq has been a constructive player in the neighborhood, trying to assure all our neighbors that the stability and sovereignty of Iraq is a common interest.

And a lot of things, in that regard, is happening, and I'm looking forward to talking to the President about it.

Q. Thank you. Mr. Trump—sorry.

Q. Mr. President——

Iran

Q. Mr. President, the French President just now said that it's time to negotiate with Iran. Do you believe that the time is now to negotiate with Iran? And are you going to meet with him today?

President Trump. Well, they would like to negotiate. We haven't really worked that out. They're here, we're here, but we have not agreed to that yet. But they would like to negotiate. And it would certainly make sense, but we have not agreed to that yet.

Q. Are you meeting with Mr. Macron?

President Trump. He's also talking to us. A number of people are. So is Prime Minister Khan of Pakistan and a lot of people; Chancellor Merkel—just left Chancellor Merkel. And she's very much involved. We have a lot of people involved. A lot of people would like to get us to the table. We'll see what happens. But so far, we have not agreed to a meeting.

Q. Have you asked——

Q. President Trump——

Pakistan-U.S. Relations/The President's Remarks to the U.N. General Assembly

Q. Have you asked Prime Minister Khan——

President Trump. Say it?

Q. Have you asked Prime Minister Khan to mediate with Iran?

President Trump. Well, he'd like to do that, and we have a very good relationship. And there's a chance that that could happen. But no, I haven't spoken. He actually asked me. He thought it would be a good idea to meet.

And we're here. We're in New York together. And we have the time to do it, although we've done a lot of bilats in the last 2 days. We've had tremendous success. I was treated very nicely on the speech. A lot of good reviews on what we had to say. And so I appreciate that. The media was actually very good on the speech.

Impeachment Inquiry in the House of Representatives/The President's Accomplishments/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine/Intelligence Community Whistleblower

Q. Mr. President, your reaction to Speaker Pelosi saying today that she is moving toward an impeachment announcement later this afternoon?

President Trump. Well, I haven't heard this. Look, it's just a continuation of the witch hunt. It's the worst witch hunt in political history. We have the strongest economy we've ever had. We have the best unemployment numbers we've ever had. African American, Asian American,

Hispanic American, lowest in history. Best numbers we've ever had. Our country is doing phenomenally well.

We have rebuilt our military to the tune of \$2½ trillion. We have the strongest military on Earth. If you look at the vets, if you look at any group, they're doing fantastically well.

So the country is doing the best it's ever done, and I just heard that she'd like to impeach. We also just had Rasmussen, as you heard, just came out with a poll. We're at 53, and they say 53 plus maybe 10. A lot of people say that, because you add about 10 percent to the Trump polls because some people don't want to talk; they just want to go out and do it, and they know what's good.

Our country is doing the best it's ever done. They're going to lose the election, and they figure this is a thing to do. This never happened where we're in the election, and I mean, if she does that, they all say that's a positive for me, from the election. You could also say, "Who needs it?" It's bad for the country. Then, they wonder why they don't get gun legislation done. Then, they wonder why they don't get drug prices lowered. Because all they do is talk nonsense. No more infrastructure bills. No more anything. All they do—that's all they do.

You watch Jerry Nadler and Schiff—you know, Schiff has been doing this stuff for 3½ years. It's the craziest thing anybody has ever seen. And other countries—like today we're with Iraq, and we were with other countries during the day, and every one of them says how crazy it is. We have the strongest country in the world, the best economy we've ever had. And she's talking impeachment.

So I think that—and by the way, she hasn't even seen the phone call. The phone call was perfect. The call that wasn't perfect, and the words that weren't perfect were Joe Biden with respect to his son. And his son takes away millions of dollars out of Ukraine and millions of dollars out of China, and you don't talk about that. It's a real disgrace.

But the good news is, the voters get it. This is why they say it's good for the election. But you know what? It's bad for the country. What she's doing is very bad—if it's true. I can't even believe that it's true. How can you do this and you haven't even seen the phone call?

The whistleblower, they'd say, was second-hand or third-hand. And it was reported—I have no idea who the whistleblower is. I guess I could find out. Maybe I couldn't find out. But they say it was a very partisan person, the whistleblower. But it was second- or third-hand. Never heard the call.

But I have better than that. We have the whole transcript of the call, which will be released tomorrow. And comments will be put with respect. It was a perfect call. There was no quid pro quo, unlike Biden. There was no nothing. It was a perfect call, a very nice call. And in fact, I thought this was very nice. Ukraine just came out and made a very good statement. It was a very good call. There was no pressure put on them whatsoever.

Thank you all very much. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:32 p.m. at the Lotte New York Palace hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Emmanuel Macron of France; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Reps. Jerrold L. Nadler and Adam B. Schiff; and former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and his son Hunter. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

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