

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Sauli Niinistö of Finland and an Exchange With Reporters

October 2, 2019

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's a great honor to have a man that's become a friend of mine—we've gotten to know each other well—the President of Finland. And we have many things to discuss, including trade and military and purchases and lots of different very exciting events.

So we'll have a long time together today. We'll then be having lunch. And I think we're going to be seeing the media right afterwards and say a few words.

But it's an honor, Mr. President, to have you with us. Thank you.

President Niinistö. Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm waiting for our discussions.

President Trump. Yes. Yes. See? He's a man a few words, and he gets it done. [Laughter]
That's what I like about him. [Laughter]

President Niinistö. Hope so.

President Trump. That's what I like about him.

Anyway, okay, thank you all very much.

Q. President Trump——

Q. Sir, are you——

Intelligence Community Whistleblower/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/Impeachment Inquiry in the House of Representatives/Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi/News Media

Q. ——how do you respond to concerns that you are putting the whistleblower's life in danger?

President Trump. Well, the whistleblower was very inaccurate. The whistleblower started this whole thing by writing a report on the conversation I had with the President of Ukraine. And the conversation was perfect; it couldn't have been nicer.

I saw Rick Scott, I saw many of the Senators talking about it, many of the Congressmen talking about. Not a thing wrong. Unless you heard the Adam Schiff version, where he made up my conversation. He actually made it up. It should be criminal. It should be treasonous. He made it up—every word of it, made up—and read to Congress as though I said it.

And I'll tell you what: He should be forced to resign from Congress—Adam Schiff. He's a lowlife. He should be forced to resign. He took a perfect conversation, realized he couldn't read it to Congress, because it was perfect; it was a very nice conversation. I knew many people were on the phone. Not only were many people on the phone, we had stenographers on the phone taking it down, word for word.

He took that conversation, which was perfect; he said, "I can't read this." So he made up a conversation, and he reported it and said it to Congress and to the American people. And it was horrible was he said. And that was supposed to be coming from me, but it was all fabricated.

He should resign from office in disgrace. And frankly, they should look at him for treason, because he is making up the words of the President of the United States. Not only words, but the meaning. And it's a disgrace. It should not be allowed to happen.

Q. But your own DNI said the call transcript was consistent with the complaint. So should only whistleblowers——

President Trump. No, no, no, he didn't say that. You have to take a look.

Q. He did say that.

President Trump. No, no, no. He did not say that. And in fact, if you look at what he said, he found everything to be very normal. He's a good man, and—Joe. And he found it to be very normal. I saw Schiff trying to go 15—you know, we call him Shifty Schiff. We don't call him Shifty Schiff for nothing. He's a shifty, dishonest guy—who, by the way, was critical of one of the great Secretary of States. Graduated number one in his class at West Point. Graduated top of—one of the top in his class at Harvard Law School. The most honorable person, Mike Pompeo. And this guy was negative on Mike Pompeo.

He can't—you know, there's an expression: He couldn't carry his "blank" strap. I won't say it, because they'll say it was so terrible to say. But that guy couldn't carry his "blank" strap. You understand that?

So you're dealing with bad people. And you know, I watched China over the last few days, and I watched some of these other countries build up, build up, build up. And we've built up more than any of them because of me, but no help due to the Democrats. They're a disaster. They're the "do-nothing" Democrats. They don't do any work. All they want to do is try and win the election in 2020, so they come up with this impeachment nonsense.

And everyone knows the conversation—all based on a phone call that I had, where I'm talking to the President of Ukraine. You'll hear from our Ambassadors, you'll hear from some of the folks that know all about the call, why the call was set up and everything else. It's perfect. The call was perfect.

In fact, Lindsey Graham said, "I didn't know you could be so nice." There was no quid pro quo. Remember, before they saw—the only reason I put that out—and I did it with the approval of Ukraine, by the way; otherwise, I couldn't have done it—was because the whistleblower was so dishonest. The whistleblower said terrible things about the call, but he then—I then found out he was second-hand and third-hand. In other words, he didn't know what was on the call.

No, these are bad people. These are dishonest people. And when the American people find out what happened, it's going to be a great day. And you know what? We have to go back to building our country, because 99 percent of Nancy Pelosi's time is spent on this. She should worry about lowering the price of drugs, which I've done. But it's hard to do it without the help of Congress—about creating border security, which I've done.

We've built—we now have hundreds of miles of wall under construction on the southern border. She should worry about infrastructure. She should worry about the USMCA. She's not doing it. I just saw a part of her press conference before the President came. And I'm sorry to bother you with this, Mr. President, because we have other things to talk about.

President Niinistö. Most people's time.

President Trump. But I will tell you, I just watched part—she says, "Oh, drug prices . . ." Well, she's been trying to get drug prices down for—how long has she been in Congress? For years. She should focus on her own district. Do you see what's happening to her district? We call

it "tent city." It's terrible. In fact, we just sent a violation to the city of San Francisco: unsafe water, unsafe conditions, environmental—EPA.

Our EPA, which is doing a great job, is sending Nancy Pelosi, with all the talk about EPA—there's needles and drugs all over the street. There's tents. There's people that are dying in squalor in the best location, in San Francisco. It used to be a great city. Now, you have to see what's happened to San Francisco. You happen to see what—what's—what the Democrats have allowed to happen. As an example, what they've allowed to happen, just take a look, to Los Angeles. Great cities.

One other thing: Yesterday, as you know, I was sued by the Governor, Gavin Newsom—he's another beauty. I was sued by him. He's a do-nothing. Sued by him so that I can't get on the ballot in the State of California. It was a massive story. It was the biggest story, Mr. President. It was headlines all over the place: "Trump gets sued by this do-nothing Governor in California." It was big.

Here's what happened: Yesterday I won the case, very convincingly. A very tough, smart, highly respected judge—not a Trump person at all—not appointed by Trump; appointed by somebody that you would call the opposition—came out with a scathing and tough opinion. I won the case. I didn't see one story that I won that case—not one story—from the fake news. I didn't see Steve [Steve A. Holland, Reuters] write it. I didn't see you write it. I didn't see anybody write it.

So let me just tell you, just to finish: Nancy Pelosi and Shifty Schiff—who should resign for—in disgrace, by the way—and Jerry Nadler and all of them, it's a disgrace what's going on. And we should be focused on making America great again and keeping America great, because that's what we have to do.

And when I look at that parade, with military and millions of people and everything else, we'd better get smart. We'd better start focusing on the right things. Because what they did with this nonsense—think of it: You have a perfect—I mean, perfect, conversation with a President of another country—Ukraine, in this case—and they try and say, "Oh, let's impeach him."

They've been trying to impeach me from the day I got elected. I've been going through this for 3 years. They've been trying to impeach me from the day I got elected. And you know what? They failed. And this is the easiest one of all, because this one is based on one conversation.

What about Obama's conversation with the President of Russia, where he says: "Hey, hey, tell Vlad I'll talk to him after the election is over. I'll talk to him . . ." Nobody reports that, right? That's stuff you should report.

But you people should be ashamed of yourself. We have the most dishonest media that you can imagine. And you should be ashamed of yourselves.

Okay, I think I've answered most of your questions. What do you think?

Yes.

Finland

Q. Finnish media here. Finland is the happiest country in the world.

President Trump. Finland is a happy country.

President Niinistö. Yes, for sure.

Q. What can you learn? What can you learn from Finland, which has a social-democratic tradition?

President Trump. Well, if you got rid of Pelosi and you got rid of Shifty Schiff.

President Niinistö. We have time to discuss about that.

President Trump. Finland is a happy country. He's a happy leader too. [Laughter]

Intelligence Community Whistleblower/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/Corruption Issues in Ukraine/Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election

Q. Some Republicans have raised concerns——

Q. Mr. President, are you going to cooperate when they——

President Trump. No Republicans have raised concerns.

Q. ——about the whistleblower, that their name—that the identity of the whistleblower should be protected.

President Trump. I don't care. Look, I think a whistleblower should be protected if the whistleblower is legitimate. But when the whistleblower makes a big report on the conversation I had with a President, of Ukraine, and it was a great conversation. It was—we talked mostly about "congratulations on your win." We talked about corruption. And we're really referring mostly to 2016, because what the Democrats did in 2016 was corrupt.

And let's see what happens. They're more concerned with that than they are with me and impeachment. They're trying to hide what maybe is coming. I let our great—if you look—I'll let our great law enforcement take care of it. Okay?

Q. Is the whistleblower——

President Trump. Attorney General Barr, I guess, is working on it. And I hope he's working on it. Because what happened in 2016 is a disgrace to this country. And they're more worried about that, because they know they're guilty as hell. All right?

Q. Is the whistleblower——

President Trump. They're much more worried about that.

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

Q. Is the whistleblower immediately illegitimate if they are reporting misconduct about you?

President Trump. When a whistleblower——

Q. About you, sir?

President Trump. Okay. Are you ready? I heard the whistleblower's report from you people, and how bad it was about just a simple conversation.

By the way, this whole thing revolves around a simple conversation. And if you remember at the beginning, it was "quid pro quo." That's all you heard about. And I think he said seven or eight times: "quid pro . . ."—in other words, "You're going to that or we're not going to give you money. You're going to do this or we're not going to . . ." I never said it.

But when I heard these horrible stories come out, I had no choice, but to release a conversation—which I hate to do, and I hope I don't have to do it again—with the leader of a country. I asked a certain person to call up a certain person in that country to get permission to do it; otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to do it. And if I didn't do it—and I appreciate Ukraine for

allowing us to release the conversation. But it was so innocent, it didn't hurt them. If anything, it helped them because it was a very innocent conversation.

But when a whistleblower takes that very nice, innocent—Lindsey Graham said, "I never knew you were that nice a person." He said: "You never asked him for anything. You were really, really nice." Lindsey was saying: "I never knew you were so nice. That was a perfect conversation."

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Trump. I heard Rick Scott today say: "That was a perfect conversation. How can they impeach him on that conversation?" He read it. He's a very smart guy from Florida—Rick Scott—and he said: "That was a perfect conversation. How can you impeach somebody on that conversation?"

But the whistleblower wrote not that conversation. He wrote a vicious conversation. In other words, he either got it totally wrong, made it up, or the person giving the information to the whistleblower was dishonest. And this country has to find out who that person was, because that person is a spy, in my opinion.

You ready? So when a whistleblower, purposely or not, gives something that's totally erroneous—now, here's where I fooled them. They never thought I'd release the conversation. They never thought in a million years that I'd release the conversation.

When Liddle' Adam Schiff saw the text, when he read it, he couldn't believe it. When Nancy Pelosi, who worked a day early—Nancy Pelosi called for essentially impeachment—"Let's impeach the President"—before she saw the transcript. And this is an exact word-for-word transcript of the conversation, right? Taken by very talented stenographers.

Q. Well, it wasn't.

President Trump. Listen to me.

So when she saw that, she was—she—I heard she went crazy. She said: "We can't impeach him on this conversation. That's a great conversation." She went by the whistleblower. And the whistleblower was so bad, I would even think about it.

But here's what happened: The whistleblower was wrong. The only thing that matters is the transcript of the actual conversation that I had with the President of Ukraine. It was perfect. We're looking at congratulations. We're looking at doing things together. And what are we looking at? We're looking at corruption.

And in, I believe, 1999, there was a corruption act or a corruption bill passed between both—and signed—between both countries, where I have a duty to report corruption. And let me tell you something: Biden's son is corrupt, and Biden is corrupt. And I'd rather run against Biden than almost any of those candidates. And I think they're all weak. But I think Biden has never been a smart guy, and he's less smart now than he ever was.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

Border Security/U.S.-Mexico Border Wall Construction/News Media

Q. Sir, have you actually wanted a moat on the border, sir? Sir, did you suggest a moat?

President Trump. Oh. Let me do that again; it's a fair question.

Q. Did you suggest a moat—

President Trump. So this morning and last night, my comms people came to me. Listen to this one, President. I'm glad they're interested in Finland, but what can you do? I'm interested in Finland much more.

But my comms people came to me, and they said, "Sir, there's a book or something being written." It's written by Washington Post people, so you know it's inaccurate. You know it's probably a fraud.

So two reporters from the Washington—and they said, "President Trump started screaming, ranting, and raving, that on the southern border . . ."—where we are right now building a tremendous wall; it's unbelievable what's going up. Army Corps of Engineers. It's—we're doing a lot. We have—we'll soon have over 100 miles under construction and completed. We're going to end up with over 400 to 500 miles.

Okay, ready? That I wanted a wall, but I wanted a moat. A moat, whatever that is. It's not a word I used, but they used it. A moat. And in the moat, I wanted alligators and snakes. And I wanted the wall to be a fence, and I wanted it to be electrified. And I wanted sharp spikes at the top, so if anyone gets it, it goes piercing through their skin—is somewhat the way they said it. Skin-piercing spikes. But I want the whole wall to be electrocuted.

And, "Sir, you never said that." They came to me—the comms people. They came to me yesterday. And they said, "Did you say this?" I said, "Why are you asking that stupid question?" "Because the fake news media is saying that you said this in a book." I said, "What book?" And they said, "Washington Post." I said, "Well, obviously, it's fake because almost everything the Washington Post does is fake."

It's a fake newspaper. It's owned by a rich guy for the purposes of giving him power in Washington. It's really—I mean, it's a lobbyist—I call it the "Lobbyist Washington Post"—for Amazon. And he ought to be ashamed of himself, because what they do to his reputation—I think maybe it's probably no good anyway. But what they do to his reputation with the Washington Post is a disgrace.

So these two reporters wrote this book, and they said I want a moat with alligators, snakes, electrified fences so people get electrocuted if they so much as touch the fence, and spikes on top. Never said it. Never thought of it. And I actually put out something on social media today. I said, I'm tough on the border, but I'm not that tough.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. Okay. It was a lie. Just so you have it——

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. You asked the question. It was a total lie. It was corrupt reporting. Okay?

Q. Did you say——

President Trump. I don't even use "fake" anymore; I call the fake news now, "corrupt news." Because "fake" isn't tough enough, and I'm the one that came up with the term—I'm very proud of it—but I think I'm going to switch it largely to "corrupt news." Because the media in this country—not everybody; we have some great reporters, some great journalists. But much of it is corrupt. It's corrupt. You have corrupt media in this country. And it truly is the enemy of the people.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Q. Sir, are you going to——

Q. Mr. President, will you release the——

President Trump. Have a good day, everybody. Go write some phony stories. Go write some phony stories. Go write a Schiff-like story.

Just another day in paradise. Thank you, Steve. I hope I answered all your questions.

Q. I didn't get one in.

President Trump. Come here. Come here. Come here. What?

The President's Communications With Foreign Leaders/Impeachment Inquiry in the House of Representatives

Q. I was going to ask you—[inaudible]—limit the number of people who are listening on those phone calls——

President Trump. I might. I might. Yes. I—and by the way, I assume many people. I always do. When I speak to a leader—if I speak to Finland, I always assume that many people are listening.

Q. Yes.

President Trump. And the other thing is that Nancy Pelosi's account of my phone call is a total lie. I called her about guns, and then I heard her—she's talking about impeachment. I said, "What are you talking about—impeachment?" I called her to say I'm making big progress on guns, okay?

Fellas, I don't know if you're with us here.

Q. [Inaudible]—not here.

President Trump. But I'm saying that—and I think you have to put that out. That would be the only thing. All right. Good.

Q. Thank you, sir.

President Trump. Good. Thank you, Steve. It was a lie. Her statement was a lie. But you know, what else is new?

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sens. Richard L. Scott and Lindsey O. Graham; Rep. Adam B. Schiff, in his capacity as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph McGuire; Morrison C. England, Jr., judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California; former President George W. Bush; Rep. Jerrold L. Nadler, in his capacity as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee; former President Dmitriy Anatolyevich Medvedev of Russia; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia, in his former capacity as Prime Minister; former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and his son Hunter; Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Michael D. Shear, reporters, New York Times; and Jeffrey P. Bezos, president, chief executive officer, and chairman of the board, Amazon.com, Inc., parent company of the Washington Post. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Finland, President Niinistö.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Barr, William P.; Bezos, Jeffrey P.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Biden, R. Hunter; Bush, George W.; Davis, Julie Hirschfeld; England, Morrison C., Jr.; Graham, Lindsey O.; McGuire, Joseph; Medvedev, Dimitriy Anatolyevich; Nadler, Jerrold L.; Newsom, Gavin C.; Niinistö, Sauli; Obama, Barack; Pelosi, Nancy; Pompeo, Michael R.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Schiff, Adam B.; Scott, Richard L.; Shear, Michael D.; Zelenskiy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: California : Governor; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; Defense and national security : Border security; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Environmental Protection Agency; Finland : President; Finland : Relations with U.S.; Finland : Trade with U.S.; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Intelligence, Office of the Director of National; Justice, Department of : Attorney General; Law enforcement and crime : Gun violence, prevention efforts; Mexico : Border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Presidency, U.S. : Congressional impeachment inquiry; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; State, Department of : Secretary; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts; Ukraine : President; Ukraine : Relations with U.S.

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