

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks on United States Trade Negotiations With China and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Minneapolis, Minnesota

October 9, 2019

Q. Mr. President, do you have—do think you have blood on your hands in Syria?

The President. So we just completed a negotiation with China. We're doing very well. We're having another one tomorrow. I'm meeting with the Vice Premier over at the White House. And I think it's going really well, I will say. I think it's going really well.

So we had a very, very good negotiation with China. They'll be speaking a little bit later, but they're basically wrapping it up, and we're going to see them tomorrow, right here. And it's going very well.

Q. Do think you have blood on your hands in Syria, sir? Do think that you have blood on your hands in Syria?

Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Q. What about the story about former President—Vice President Joe Biden and Ukraine, that he received \$900,000 to himself, from Burisma Holdings? Do you think that's true?

The President. What happened? Who took \$900,000?

Q. There's a story out there that your personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, said on "Sean Hannity" last night that there is a possibility that Joe Biden took \$900,000—

The President. I hope it's not true that—Joe Biden took \$900,000? I haven't heard that. I hope it's not true.

Q. Giuliani has called for the DOJ to—

Q. Do you know the whistleblower's name?

The President. For the sake of the country, I hope that's not true. But I don't know anything about it.

Q. Have you spoken to Rudy Giuliani today?

Q. Mr. President—

Intelligence Community Whistleblower/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine

Q. Do you know the whistleblower's name?

The President. What?

Q. Do you know the whistleblower's name?

The President. Who?

Q. The whistleblower.

Q. Do you know the whistleblower's name?

The President. I don't know. But I know the whistleblower has been very inaccurate because when we released the transcript of the conversation that I had with the President of Ukraine—who, frankly, today, was very good; somewhere in Ukraine, I guess, gave a news conference on

unrelated things—was asked a question, and he said: "President Trump behaved in a perfectly fine manner. There was nothing wrong in any way, shape, or form." Something to that effect. So I appreciate that.

But the President of Ukraine, that should be case over, because the President of Ukraine said that the call was absolutely fine. I think he said that it resembled very much—and he remembered it—it was just like the transcript.

Now, the transcript is a perfect transcript. There shouldn't be any further questions. But the President of Ukraine just made that statement, so that's good.

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken to Mitch McConnell? Do you continue to——

The President's Interaction With Associates of Personal Attorney to the President Rudolph W. Giuliani

Q. Mr. President, what conversations have you had with Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman?

The President. I don't know those gentlemen.

Q. You were in pictures with them.

The President. Now, it's possible I have a picture with them, because I have a picture with everybody. I have a picture with everybody here. But somebody said there may be a picture or something where—at a fundraiser or somewhere. And so—but I have pictures with everybody.

Q. Have you talked with them?

The President. I don't know if there's anybody I don't have pictures with.

I don't know them. I don't know about them, I don't know what they do. But I don't know, maybe they were clients of Rudy. You'd have to ask Rudy. I just don't know.

Personal Attorney to the President Rudolph W. Giuliani

Q. And have you spoken with Rudy Giuliani today, sir? Have you spoken to him?

The President. No.

Q. Mr. President——

Impeachment Inquiry in the House of Representatives/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/The President's Communication With Foreign Leaders

Q. Mr. President, should the Senate allow a full trial if the House does impeach? The Republican—[inaudible]—Mitch McConnell said he would.

The President. Well, I don't know how you can impeach on a conversation with the President of a country—in this case, Ukraine—which was a perfect conversation, where the President of Ukraine just said there was no pressure put on him whatsoever, that we had a absolutely perfect conversation. Then, on top of that—and maybe less importantly, frankly, but on top of that—we have a transcript of the conversation, fortunately, that's perfect.

And I do think this: I think it's very unfair to heads of countries when they think every time they make a conversation or have a conversation with the President of the United States, it's going to be on, you know, all over the world. I think that's very unfair.

Q. Has the——

The President. But in the case of what we're talking about, we released a perfect conversation. The President of Ukraine just confirmed that. And that should be case over.

I will say this: Adam Schiff took that conversation before he saw it and fabricated a conversation. To me, that's criminal. What he did is criminal.

Q. [Inaudible]—in the Senate, sir?

House of Representatives Impeachment Proceedings/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to block Ambassador Yovanovitch from testifying tomorrow?

The President. I just don't think—you're running country—I just don't think that you can have all of these people testifying about every conversation you've had. In this case, we have a transcript. And I've given it almost immediately. It's called "transparency." Nobody has been more transparent than me. So you have a transcript. And in this case, you also have the President of Ukraine confirming that, absolutely, it was a perfect conversation.

But the Democrats have committed crimes, because they made up the conversation. The whistleblower was wrong. You know, I don't think people should be allowed. You have to run a country. I don't think you should be allowed to do that.

United Kingdom-U.S. Relations/Diplomatic Immunity

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken to the U.S. diplomat's——

The President. Say it?

Q. Have you spoken to the U.S. diplomat's wife, Anne Sacoolas?

The President. I can't hear.

Q. Have you spoken to the U.S. diplomat's wife, Anne Sacoolas?

Q. Have you spoken with the U.S. diplomat's wife, Anne Sacoolas?

The President. Are you talking about in U.K.?

Q. Yes.

The President. They're in the process of being spoken to. We're working on that. I did have a conversation yesterday with Boris Johnson, a good one. And we're talking about diplomatic immunity. It's a very interesting situation. We are trying to work something out.

Q. Will you reconsider the decision?

The President. So we're going to work—we're going to try and work something out. I think we'll be able to.

House of Representatives Impeachment Proceedings/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/Intelligence Community Whistleblower

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President, sir, Secretary Perry was just subpoenaed by the House Intel Committee for documents related to the—to Ukraine, sir. Any response to that?

The President. How many people can they talk to? We had a simple conversation. Everybody knows what the conversation was because I gave it immediately when I heard about it.

The whistleblower, who seems to be a Democrat that's involved with a lot of people, gave a false interpretation of the conversation, because we have the conversation.

The President of Ukraine just said, just now, that the conversation was absolutely perfect. No problem. It was a very good conversation. So I don't know why they'd be calling Rick Perry. I don't know why they'd be calling all these people. It's a very bad situation for our country.

Intelligence Community Whistleblower

Q. How do you know that the whistleblower is a Democrat, sir? How do you know if the whistleblower is a Democrat, sir?

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned——

Q. You just said the whistleblower was a Democrat.

The President. It was reported.

Personal Attorney to the President Rudolph W. Giuliani

Q. Are you concerned that Rudy Giuliani could be indicted in all of this?

The President. Well, I hope not. Again, I don't know how he knows these people——

Q. They're his clients.

The President. What?

Q. They're his clients.

The President. Okay, well, then, they're clients. I mean, you know, he's got a lot of clients. So I just don't know. I haven't spoken to Rudy about it. I don't know.

Q. You said that—[inaudible]—China.

The President. I will say this: From what I heard—I just heard about this—they said: "We have nothing to do with it. We're totally—we have nothing to do with it."

China

Q. Were you joking when you asked China to investigate the Bidens?

The President. Was I what?

Q. Were you joking when you asked China to investigate? We want to know.

The President. China has to do whatever they want. If they want to look into something, they can look into it. If they don't want to look into it, they don't have to.

Q. So you're serious?

The President. Frankly, are far as I'm concerned, if China wants to look into something, I think that's great. And if they don't want to, I think that's great too. That's up to China.

Yes.

Q. Did you know—[inaudible]—Mr. President? What do you make of the fact that——

Former Representative Harold W. "Trey" Gowdy III

Q. Mr. President, thank you. Is it safe to say that Trey Gowdy is now your chief counsel and Rudy Giuliani is moving to the back?

The President. Well, Trey Gowdy is a terrific guy. I think there's a problem with, he can't start for another couple of months because of lobbying rules and regulations. So you'll have to ask about that.

I just heard Trey Gowdy can't start until sometime after January because of the lobbying rules and regulations. So I don't know.

Q. So Giuliani stays on?

Q. Are you going to hire—

The President. So we'll have to see. I haven't spoken to him. I haven't spoken.

Q. Mr. President, the majority—

The President. Go ahead.

Syria/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Terrorist Organization/Turkey

Q. Which of the three choices on Syria that you just articulated in a tweet do you think you will follow?

The President. Perhaps the last one, I hope. I hope the last one. Of the three, I hope it's going to be the last one. Look, we have no soldiers in Syria. We've won. We've beat ISIS. And we beat them badly and decisively. We have no soldiers. The last thing I want to do is bring thousands and thousands of soldiers in and defeat everybody again. We've already done that.

So what we have is really two choices: You have the choice of bringing in the military and defeating everybody again, or you have the choice of financially doing some very strong things to Turkey so that they take it a little bit easy on, really, competition that is—I don't think it's being fairly treated in many ways, okay? We have a very good relationship with Kurds. Or we can mediate. I hope we can mediate, John [John Roberts, Fox News]. I hope we can mediate.

Q. Mr. President, on sanctions?

Turkey's Military Operation in Northern Syria/U.S. Military Involvement in the Middle East

Q. Has Turkey gone beyond the limits, in your opinion, so far?

The President. Say it?

Q. Has Turkey gone beyond the limits you set up so far?

The President. Turkey knows where I stand. And the last thing—okay, very simple: We had a big victory. We left the area. I don't think the American people want to see us go back in with our military, go back into that area again.

We won. We left the area. I don't think we want to go back in. Let's see what happens. We are going to possibly do something very, very tough with respect to sanctions and other financial things.

Q. Do you have any regrets about your actions in Turkey?

The President's Travel to Minneapolis, Minnesota

Q. Mr. President, on Minnesota—you're headed to Minnesota. Do you think you can win in Minnesota? It's a long-time blue State.

The President. I think we can win. It's been a long time since a Republican won. We have a 20,000-seat auditorium. You know, we have the—it's essentially Madison Square Garden. And

it's sold out. Over 80,000 people requested tickets. It will be totally sold out. I don't know who's going, but it will be totally sold out. If you're not going to be there, I'm going to miss you. But they have a line now that's many blocks long. It's amazing.

Q. Is Ilhan——

The President. We have a line, right now in Minnesota, that's many blocks long. I think I can win in Minnesota, yes.

Representative Ilhan A. Omar

Q. Do you think Ilhan Omar is helping you win in Minnesota?

The President. I think Omar is helping us win in Minnesota and other places.

Q. Do you have any regrets on your actions in Turkey, sir?

The President. I'll see you all—I'll see you in Minnesota. I'll see you in Minnesota.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:32 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to boarding Marine One. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Premier Liu He of China; businessmen Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, who were arrested at Dulles International Airport, outside Washington, DC, on Oct. 9 on conspiracy and other charges related to campaign finance violations; Rep. Adam B. Schiff, in his capacity as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; and Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom. Reporters referred to Sean Hannity, host, Fox News's "Hannity" program; former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie L. Yovanovitch; Anne Sacoolas, a U.S. citizen who was involved in a wrong-way traffic collision near the Royal Air Force Croughton station, a U.S. Air Force facility in Northamptonshire, England, on August 27, in which British teenager Harry Dunn was killed; and R. Hunter Biden II, son of former Vice President Biden.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : China-U.S. trade negotiations; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

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Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Fruman, Igor; Giuliani, Rudolph W.; Gowdy, Harold W. "Trey," III; Johnson, Boris; Liu He; Omar, Ilhan A.; Parnas, Lev; Perry, J. Richard; Schiff, Adam B.; Zelenskiy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: China : Trade with U.S.; China : Vice Premier; Congress : House of Representatives :: Impeachment inquiry; Energy, Department of : Secretary; Syria : U.S. military forces, withdrawal; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Turkey : Syria, role; Ukraine : President; United Kingdom : Prime Minister.

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