

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks During a Teleconference Call With United States Astronauts Outside the International Space Station Participating in the First All-Women Spacewalk and an Exchange With Reporters

October 18, 2019

The President. Hello, everybody. Okay. Thank you very much. I think we're getting ready to do something very exciting. Jim, do you want to take over?

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Administrator James F. Bridenstine. Sure. So this is a——

Operator. Christina and Jessica, please stand by for a call from the President of the United States.

The President. Where's my camera?

Administrator Bridenstine. [Laughter] I guess it's over to you at this point, sir.

The President. Where's my camera? You tell me. [Laughter] There are a lot of cameras.

Administrator Bridenstine. It is. It's an exciting day.

The President. It is.

Administrator Bridenstine. The first all-women spacewalk underway right now. They're doing very important work. Just so everybody knows, we're—this is a short window for the downlink, and also they've got very busy work to do. They're on the outside of the station. But what a big day. We're thrilled to be here, Mr. President. It's over to you for communicating with them.

The President. Well, I'm thrilled also. And if they're ready, I'm ready.

Administrator Bridenstine. Okay.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Can we confirm that the link is live?

Administrator Bridenstine. Sir, the link is live.

White House aide. The link is live.

Administrator Bridenstine. The link is live. They're listening. They are on the outside of the Space Station.

The President. Station, this is President Donald Trump. Do you hear me?

NASA flight engineer Christina H. Koch. We can hear you.

The President. That's great. [Laughter]

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Yes!

The President. That's great. I was starting to get worried about you. I was starting to get worried about you. [Laughter] You're in an interesting place.

I thought we may have to be—a little emergency work. I don't think that will ever be necessary with you. The job that you do is incredible.

And I'm here with Vice President Mike Pence, NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine, and my daughter Ivanka. We're thrilled to be speaking live with two brave American astronauts who are making history.

Joining us during their spacewalk outside the International Space Station—and this is the first time for a woman outside of the Space Station—are Flight Engineers Christina Koch and Flight Engineer Jessica Meir. And I just want to congratulate you. What you do is incredible. It's so—you're very brave people. I don't think I want to do it, I must tell you that. But you are amazing people.

They're conducting the first-ever female spacewalk to replace an exterior part of the Space Station. They're doing some work, and they're doing it in a very high altitude—an altitude that very few people will ever see.

Congratulations, Christina and Jessica, on this historic event. This is truly historic. And you're right now on television all over the world, so don't get nervous. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to ask you a question: What would you like to tell everyone listening and watching today, especially young women—

NASA flight engineer Jessica U. Meir. You know—*[Inaudible]*

The President. —who are interested in space?

Administrator Bridenstine. There's about a 4- or 5-second delay.

The President. Ah, okay.

Flight engineer Meir. Hello. Thank you. First of all, we don't want to take too much credit, because there have been many other female spacewalkers before us. This is just the first time that there have been two women outside at the same time.

And it's really interesting for us. We've talked a lot about it up here. You know, for us, this is really just us doing our job. It's something we've been training for for 6 years and preparing for. And so it didn't really, you know—for us, it's just coming out here and doing our job today. And we were the—we were the crew that was tasked with this assignment.

At the same time, we recognize that it is a historic achievement, and we do, of course, want to give credit to all of those that came before us. There has been a long line of female scientists, explorers, engineers, and astronauts, and we have followed in their footsteps to get us where we are today.

We hope that we can provide an inspiration to everybody, not only—*[inaudible]*—but to everybody that has a dream and has a big dream and that is willing to work hard to make that dream come true, something that all of us that have made our way up here have done all throughout our lives. And I can tell you, the hard work certainly did pay off.

I've only been up here a few weeks, actually—about 3 weeks I've been in space—and this is my first flight and my very first spacewalk. So it is a pretty incredible feeling—I'm sure you can all imagine—and it's one that I will never forget.

I'm extremely fortunate to be sharing this moment with Christina Koch, who's not only my colleague, but also a very, very close and dear friend.

So it's really our honor to be out here working today and to be representing whatever it is that's significant to whatever—whatever individuals' desires and hearts.

Thank you.

The President. Well, Christina and Jessica, I would like to, if I could, just thank you. Jessica, I know that you've been doing this, and you've been working hard. And, Christina, I've studied your résumé. It's really incredible what you've done, what you've both done. Your lives have been incredible. And now you're in a place that, as I said, very few people will ever get that experience. You're doing an incredible job.

This is a first step, because we're going to the Moon, and then we're going to Mars. We're launching from the Moon most likely. They seem to think that's the best way of doing it, Jim. So we're launching from the Moon.

And I just want to congratulate you both. You're very brave, brilliant women, and you represent this country so well. And our country is very proud of you, and we are very proud of you. Millions and millions of people are watching you right now. But I will tell you: What you do is really something very special.

So first the Moon, and then we go to Mars. *[Laughter]* Thank you both very much. Have a good time.

Administrator Bridenstine. I'm wondering if we might have lost the link at this time.

The President. I don't know. Maybe they didn't like my message. *[Laughter]* Could be.

Anyway, two great women. Two great people. And you know, it's a big danger. Not easy. It's not an easy thing to do. A lot of people would take a pass on that one. But they're great women.

Operator. That's it. Back to the scoop.

The President. I think I heard that.

Vice President Michael R. Pence. There's the link.

The President. That's the link.

Administrator Bridenstine. Oh, that's the link. Okay.

The President. That's the end of the link. So they heard my message, and they tried to respond and—*[laughter]*.

Administrator Bridenstine. It's space.

Ms. Trump. Not the easiest of phone calls. *[Laughter]*

The President. I assume they're okay.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. Yes.

The President. I assume they're okay. Anyway, they're actually outside of the ship. So that's something. Right? That's the first time it's—

Administrator Bridenstine. It's a big deal.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. The first time since 1969 that a President has spoken to astronauts outside of the spaceship. So it's incredible.

The President. That was a great—that was a great—it's a great thing. And when are they coming back? What's the timing?

Administrator Bridenstine. So each one is different. Christina Koch is actually going to be—
—

Operator. Thank you to all parties.

Administrator Bridenstine. —have the longest single endurance mission.

Operator. Christina and Jessica, we are resuming normal operational communications.

Administrator Bridenstine. Okay. So she's going to be on Space Station for, I think, it's a little—about 10 months, which the longest——

The President. Wow.

Administrator Bridenstine. ——we've ever had a woman on the Space Station ever.

The President. What's the longest for a man?

Administrator Bridenstine. Three hundred and forty five days. So——

The President. So why don't you have the woman break the record?

Administrator Bridenstine. Well, we have a very tight schedule when it comes to windows to get back and forth to the International Space Station. But that's within the realm of what is possible. We're working on schedules, sir.

Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump. And next, a woman on the Moon, right?

Administrator Bridenstine. That's right. The—by direction of the President, we will have the first man—or, I should say, the first woman and next man on the south pole of the Moon will be Americans.

The President. And what's your timing on that?

The President. Well, we'd better not say it too fast. Get it done before you talk about it.
[Laughter]

Administrator Bridenstine. Okay. Yes, sir.

The President. Okay. Go ahead.

Administrator Bridenstine. The goal is 2024, sir. We're at—if all things go according to plan, 2024 is in the—within the realm of what is possible.

Vice President Pence. That's true.

Administrator Bridenstine. And we're working hard to make that a reality.

The President. And because of the fact that we've been there, as I have said to you many times——

Administrator Bridenstine. Yes, sir.

The President. ——we've been there, long time ago—it's really being done as a launch for Mars. Is that correct?

Administrator Bridenstine. That's right. We're building a habitat in orbit around the Moon—a space station, in orbit around the Moon. And that will be launching in 2022.

And once that is deployed, that will be modified into a Mars ship that will take us all the way to Mars. And between now and then, we want to build a sustainable architecture at the Moon. We need to learn how to live and work on another world for long periods of time. And then, we go to Mars. Because when you go to Mars—Earth and Mars, we're only aligned on the same side of the Sun once every 24 months—or 26 months. What that means is, we have to be willing to stay.

The President. Right.

Administrator Bridenstine. We need to learn how to live and work on another world.

The President. Oh, I see. Yes. Right.

Administrator Bridenstine. So that's what the Moon is all about.

The President. That's going to be very interesting. Well, it's very exciting. Exciting times. And that whole program was dead when I took it over, when we came into office. And something that Mike liked very much and I liked very much. And you're both doing a fantastic job. And everybody is doing a fantastic job. It's been totally reinvigorated, I think, to a level that it's never been at.

And we're also thinking in terms of defense. We have the Space Force happening. That's going along very nicely, as you know. We're creating a new force, and it's called the Space Force. And that's a big thing. And that will be working along very closely with you. So that's beyond going to the Moon and Mars. That's also defense of our Nation, which is very important.

Administrator Bridenstine. That's right. Anywhere there's commerce, it needs to be defended. And we are industrializing space. It's going to be an export for the United States. And that's going to be very positive. In fact, it already is. We need to grow it. And so we're working very hard to commercialize it, make it an export. And of course, that requires it to be defended just like the high seas for trade.

The President. That's fantastic.

Administrator Bridenstine. Yes, sir.

The President. Thank you very much. Great job.

Administrator Bridenstine. Thank you, sir.

The President. Well, thank you very much, everybody. That was very exciting. And these are two great people. And they put themselves at risk for our Nation and because they love doing it. And there are few people that have the ability to do something like that, I will say that. It takes a great ability.

So thank you all for being here. It's very nice. Thank you.

Impeachment Inquiry in the House of Representatives/Turkey's Incursion Into Northern Syria/Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Terrorist Organization/Kurds/U.S. Military Involvement in the Middle East/China-U.S. Trade Negotiations/Louis Vuitton Rochambeau Ranch in Keene, Texas

Q. Mr. President, do you mind clarifying what Mick Mulvaney said yesterday? Was the aid——

The President. I think he—I think he clarified it.

Q. ——to Ukraine contingent upon investigating the Democrats?

The President. And I do have to say this: We, yesterday, had a tremendous day in Texas. We opened a Louis Vuitton plant. One of the great brands of the world. And they opened it right in the heart of Texas. Lone Star State. And then, we went over to Dallas and had an event like few people have ever seen. We had a packed arena with thousands and thousands of people outside. It was an incredible evening. Got back very, very late.

I did actually get to hear about Ambassador Kent. This is the witch hunt, you know. Their Crooked Schiff is coming after the Republican Party. He's coming after the Republican Party as hard as he can, considering he's really—he's been compromised very sadly and badly because of the fact, as you know—I think, as the press knows—he made a statement, and he made a virtual speech about what I said, and then it turned out that I didn't say any of it, because he fraudulently made this statement to Congress.

I thought what he did was one of the worst things. I understand he has immunity, but he doesn't have immunity when he puts it on his Twitter, which he did. And he doesn't have immunity when he speaks to press, which he did. And he certainly won't have immunity if we ever get him into Congress and can swear him under oath. Because what he did was a very bad thing.

But what just happened is, Ambassador Kent—who I have never had the privilege, I don't believe, of meeting; I don't know him—and they brought him in as a witness against me, even though I don't know him. And he excoriated, from what they reported on the news—and of course, maybe, in this case, it won't be fake news—but he excoriated the Obama administration and Joe Biden and Joe Biden's son, saying that he has tremendous problems—tremendous problems—with Joe Biden's son and the Ukraine.

So he's got tremendous problems with Biden's son and Ukraine. And it's inappropriate. And all of the horrible things—I mean, you could get it; you could see it. It's been a big deal. And I heard Schiff is going: "No, no. We don't want to talk about that. We don't want to talk about that." But he talked about it. And it's one of those things. Look, this is a terrible witch hunt. This is so bad for our country.

I just spoke to President Erdogan of Turkey. We're doing very, very well with Turkey. There's a cease-fire, or a pause, or whatever you want to call it. There was some sniper fire this morning. There was mortar fire this morning that was eliminated quickly. And they're back to the full pause.

We have ISIS totally under guard. Turkey is also guarding, separately. They're watching over everything. So you have the Kurds, who we're dealing with and are very happy about the way things are going, I must say. The Kurds. And you also have the Turks watching, just secondarily watching. So we have ISIS under control.

We've taken control of the oil in the Middle East, the oil that we're talking about, the oil that everybody was worried about. We have—the U.S. has control of that. And there are no shots being fired. And a lot of people are doing a lot of things.

This is a deal that should have been made 15 years ago, 10 years ago, over the last number of years, under the Obama administration. The real number is, over a million people were killed. We have lost no—not a drop of blood since we've started what I've started. And it was—so far, it's working out.

Look, it's a complicated region. Many, many people have gone down. I have to watch in great interest as I see people talking about what we should be doing. And these are the same people that have been failing for the last 20 years, didn't know what they were doing, especially when they went in and did what they did. They shouldn't have been there.

But we're doing a very, very significant amount of great work. We'll see if it works. It's very fragile. It's been fragile for years. They've been fighting each other for centuries. Literally, for centuries, they've been fighting each other. And years ago, we injected ourselves right into the middle of it. And we won't go into whether or not that was a good thing or a bad thing. You know how I feel about it.

But we've had tremendous success, I think, over the last couple of days. A little bit unconventional, a little bit of hard love. I told you that. A little—there was a lot of pain for a couple of days. And sometimes, you have to go through some pain before you can get a good solution. But the Kurds are very happy about it. President Erdogan in Turkey is satisfied with it. And we are in a very strong position.

We are also in a position where we can put tremendous, powerful sanctions on Turkey or whoever else we want to. Our country is a financially much stronger country than when I took it over. China would have been, right now, the strongest economy in the world, the number-one economy in the world. And right now China is way behind us. We picked up trillions of dollars in value, in worth. And they've lost trillions and trillions of dollars. And they're having the worst year they've had in 57 years.

With that being said, we're working with China very well. We've done, subject to getting it signed—and I think it will get signed quite easily, hopefully, by the summit in Chile, where President Xi and I will both be. But a lot of good things are happening. Our farmers are taken care of. Our bankers and financial services are going to have access, the likes of which they've never had to the largest or second largest, depending on your definitions—about 1.4 billion people, population, whether it's India or China. They're pretty close. And we've done some great things.

So we had—but, I just want to say, I want to thank the people of Dallas and the people of Fort Worth and the people of Texas, because yesterday was incredible.

I want to thank Bernard Arnault, one of the great businessmen of the world, for agreeing to do something that was a first. He's built this incredible plant right in our great State of Texas. And they're going to make super luxury and super product. They have already started. It's opened. A big investment. And we're very proud of it.

That was done with me and with the election with—even prior to the election, I said, "You have to open up a plant someplace in the United States." He said, "What do you think about Texas?" I said: "I love Texas. That would be good." And I said, "If you do it, I'll be there." And so I fulfilled that commitment. But he opened up a beautiful plant. We think over a thousand people will soon be working there.

So thank you all very much. Yesterday was a big day. We had a great talk with President Erdogan, and it's going very well. Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. How is it appropriate to have the G-7 at your resort, Mr. President?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:28 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Acting White House Chief of Staff John M. "Mick" Mulvaney; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs George P. Kent; Rep. Adam B. Schiff, in his capacity as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and his son Hunter; and Bernard Arnault, chairman and chief executive officer, LVMH Moët Hennessy–Louis Vuitton.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : International Space Station, teleconference with U.S. astronauts participating in first all-women spacewalk; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Arnault, Bernard; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Biden, R. Hunter; Bridenstine, James F.; Erdogan, Recep Tayyip; Kent, George P.; Koch, Christina H.; Meir, Jessica U.; Mulvaney, John M. "Mick"; Pence, Michael R.; Schiff, Adam B.; Trump, Ivanka M.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Agriculture : Domestic production, strengthening efforts; Air Force, Department of the : Space Force, U.S.; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; China : President; China : Trade with U.S.; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Communications :

News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Congress : House of Representatives :: Impeachment inquiry; Economy, national : Improvement; Space program : Aeronautics and Space Administration, National; Space program : Moon exploration; Space Station, International; State, Department of : European and Eurasian Affairs, Deputy Assistant Secretary for; Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Syria : International diplomatic efforts; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Texas : Louis Vuitton Rochambeau Ranch in Keene; Turkey : President; Turkey : Relations with U.S.; Turkey : Syria, role; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Adviser to the President; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Chief of Staff; White House Office : Vice President.

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