

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters

November 13, 2019

President Trump. Okay. Thank you very much. It's a great honor to be with President Erdogan and Mrs. Erdogan. Thank you very much. We very much appreciate you being here. First Lady, thank you very much. And I know you're going to go out to lunch after this. Great honor to have you.

The border is holding very well. The cease-fire is holding very well. We've been speaking to the Kurds, and they seem to be very satisfied.

As you know, we've pulled back our troops quite a while ago, because I think it's time for us not to be worried about other people's borders. I want to worry about our borders. We've got plenty of borders to worry about.

I want to thank the President for the job they've done. Again, this has been thousands of years in the process, between borders, between these countries and other countries that we're involved with, 7,000 miles away. So we want to worry about our things.

We're keeping the oil. We have the oil. The oil is secure. We left troops behind, only for the oil.

And I have to just finish by saying that the President and I have been—we've been very good friends. We've been friends for a long time, almost from day one. And we understand each other's country. We understand where we're coming from. I understand the problems that they've had, including many people from Turkey being killed in the area that we're talking about. And he has to do something about that, also. It's not a one-way street.

So I just want to say it's a great honor to have you both, and thank you very much. Thank you.

President Erdogan. Thank you.

President Trump. You, go ahead, please.

[At this point, an interpreter translated President Trump's remarks into Turkish for President Erdogan.]

Hi, John [John Roberts, Fox News].

Would you like to say something?

President Erdogan. Thank you. Well, Mr. President, thank you. In a few moments, we shall be having a larger scale press meeting, that's why I don't feel the need to come up with longer statements here.

President Trump. Okay.

President Erdogan. Thank you.

President Trump. Okay, well, that was good. That's good. It's true. A lot of truth to that.

I will say, we're also talking about a trade deal. We do, proportionately, very little trade with Turkey. They make great product. We make the greatest product in the world. And frankly, we're going to be expanding our trade relationship very significantly. We think we could be doing \$100

billion with Turkey. And right now we're doing about \$20 billion. But we think that number should be easily \$100 billion, which would be great for Turkey and good for us.

So we're going to be expanding. We have our people from Commerce here. That's one of the meetings we'll be having. And having that big relationship, I think, is a very good one. So we think we can bring trade up very quickly to about \$100 billion between our countries. Okay?

Turkey's Purchase of Russian S-400 Anti-aircraft System/Turkey-U.S. Trade

Q. What do you do, Mr. President, about the S-400s, in terms of getting that trade deal?

President Trump. We'll be talking about it, John. We'll talking about the S-400. We'll be talking about that, and we'll be talking about the F-35 fighter jet too.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Terrorist Organization

Q. Are you satisfied with the ISIS fighters that Turkey is keeping an eye on? Are you happy so far with the progress?

President Trump. Turkey is watching the ISIS fighters. When I became President, ISIS was all over the place. I had no idea to the extent. In fact, it was shown to me about a month ago. We came in. It was a mess. And we took over a hundred percent of the caliphate.

And last week, as you know, we killed its leader and its founder. And we're very proud of that fact. And we've also knocked out number two. And we have our eye out on number three, who was supposed to become number one, but he's running right now. He's running for his life, but we have our sights right on him.

So we are—we're doing very well. ISIS is very much—very much a factor that's different than it was when I took over. When I took over, thousands and thousands of ISIS fighters were all over. Now they're mostly imprisoned.

I will say, the Kurds are watching over them, and Turkey is also watching over them. And Turkey recently has captured over a hundred ISIS fighters, and they are taking care of them.

Q. Mr. President——

Turkey's Purchase of Russian S-400 Anti-aircraft System/Turkey-U.S. Trade/Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Syria

Q. Is there any way, Mr. President, that Turkey can possess both S-400s and F-35s? Or are those things mutually exclusive?

President Trump. Well, John, we're going to be talking about that. So we'll talk about it. We may report to you later on about that, because we're having a second meeting in a little while.

So we'll see you in a little while. We're going to be having a press conference of sorts in a little while. It's an honor to have the President and Mrs. Erdogan with us, and they're highly respected in their country and in the region. And we'll see what we can do. But the relationship that we've had is good.

And you know, I've heard all the pundits—3, 4, 5 weeks ago—hey were against what I've—what I did. Now, all of a sudden, they're saying: "Wow. That's really working well. Why are we guarding other country's borders? We want to take care of our country." And they're saying it really is surprising what's happened. Plus, we have our troops out of there, and we'll be bringing a lot of them back home. But again, we're keeping the oil.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Impeachment Hearings

Q. Mr. President, did you watch the impeachment hearing? Did you watch any of the impeachment hearing?

President Trump. Thank you. No, I didn't.

Q. You didn't watch any of it at all?

President Trump. I didn't—I did not watch it.

Q. Have you been briefed on what's——

President Trump. I'm too busy to watch it. It's a witch hunt. It's a hoax. I'm too busy to watch it. So I'm sure I'll get a report.

Q. Have you been briefed?

President Trump. There's nothing—there's nothing—I have not been briefed, no. There's nothing there. I see they're using lawyers that are television lawyers. They took some guys off television, you know. I'm not surprised to see it, because Schiff can't do his own questions.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Automobile Tariffs

Q. Mr. President, have you decided to postpone auto tariffs? Are you postponing the decision on auto tariffs?

President Trump. I'll make a decision fairly soon. I was full briefed, and I'll make a decision fairly soon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:14 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Adam B. Schiff, in his capacity as chairman of the House of Representatives Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. President Erdogan spoke in Turkish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

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