

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Mario Abdo Benitez of Paraguay and an Exchange With Reporters

December 13, 2019

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's great to have the President of Paraguay here. We're doing a lot of work with Paraguay on terrorism, on drugs, on trade—a lot of different things. And we've had a great relationship. So, Mr. President, it's an honor to have you. Thank you very much.

President Abdo Benítez. Thank you very much, Mr. President. It is a great honor for us to be here, for my country; I believe also for the region, Mr. President—for the ones who stood firmly defending democracy in the region.

And the President of Paraguay here reaffirms our bilateral and our historic friendship.

President Trump. Great. Thank you very much.

President Abdo Benítez. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. Really tremendous. We look forward to the meeting.

I want to congratulate Boris Johnson on a terrific victory. I think that might be a harbinger of what's to come in our country; it was last time. I'm sure people will be thrilled to hear that, but a lot of people will be, actually, a very big percentage of people. Because this was a tremendous victory last night, and it's very interesting. The final votes are being tallied right now, but the numbers are tremendous. So I want to congratulate. He's a friend of mine. It's going to be a great thing for the United States also, because it means a lot of trade, a tremendous amount of trade. They want to do business with us so badly.

Under the European Union, it was very, very hard for them to do business with us. We just made our big deal, as you know, with Mexico, Canada. We have a tremendous trade deal that's going through the House now. It's going to be obviously approved. And it's tremendous for our country. It's really tremendous for the region, but it's fantastic for the U.S.

We have—the China deal, as you know, it was just approved a little while ago. And it's—to me, it's not complicated, but that's what I do. It's a phenomenal deal. The tariffs will largely remain at 25 percent on \$250 billion. And we'll use them for future negotiations on the phase two deal, because China would like to see the tariffs off, and we're okay with that. But they'll be used as a negotiating table for the phase two deal, which they would like to start immediately, and that's okay with me. We were going to wait until the after the election, but they'd like to start them sooner than that, and that's okay. So we'll start that negotiation soon.

This is a very large deal, the China deal. It covers tremendous manufacturing, farming, a lot of rules, regulations. A lot of things are covered. It's a phase one deal, but a lot of big things are covered. And I say, affectionately: The farmers are going to have to go out and buy much larger tractors, because it means a lot of business, a tremendous amount of business.

And we've had a very big week. A lot of things have done. Space Force, as you know, is approved. That's a tremendous—that's another branch of the military. I mean, very few people have that in their legacy. And we have that, just like the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines, the Coast Guard. We have another branch of the military, to think of what that means. But very vital. It's going to be—with time, it's going to be certainly one of the most important branches.

We'll have our own representative. It will have its own representative on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It's a big deal, something that a lot of people thought couldn't be done. But the Space Force will be a very important component of our defense and, frankly, our offense, and it will be very important for our country. So we're very honored by that.

And we had many other things that we've done this week. This has been a wild week. And if you have any questions, please go ahead.

Okay?

China-U.S. Trade/Articles of Impeachment/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/Ukraine-U.S. Relations/The President's Popularity/International Assistance to Ukraine/Department of Justice Investigation of Initial Investigation Into Russia's Interference in the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, your reaction to the vote in the House Judiciary this morning?

President Trump. Well, I was actually, believe it or not, finishing up the final—I was doing the final touches on the China deal. And that's going to be one of the great deals ever. And it's going to ultimately lead to the opening of China, which is something that is incredible, because that's a whole, big, untapped market of 1.5 billion people. And so I was actually doing the finals.

But I got to see enough of it, and certainly, I spoke to my people. It's a witch hunt. It's a sham. It's a hoax. Nothing was done wrong. Zero was done wrong. I think it's a horrible thing to be using the tool of impeachment, which is supposed to be used in an emergency. And it would seem many, many, many years apart.

To be using this for a perfect phone call, where the President of that country said there was no pressure whatsoever, didn't even know what we were talking about. It was perfect; the relationship is perfect. I've done much more for them than Obama did for them. It's a scam. It's something that shouldn't be allowed. And it's a very bad thing for our country.

And you're trivializing impeachment. And I tell you what: Someday, there'll be a Democrat President, and there'll be a Republican House, and I suspect they're going to remember it. Because when you do—when you use impeachment for absolutely nothing, other than to try and get political gain.

Now, with that being said, my poll numbers, as you know, have gone through the roof. Fundraising for the Republican Party has gone through the roof. We're setting records. We've never—nobody has ever seen anything like it, because the people are disgusted. The people are absolutely disgusted. Nobody has ever seen anything like this.

And I watched yesterday—I got to see quite a bit of it yesterday—and I watched these Democrats on the committee make fools out of themselves. Absolute fools out of themselves. And I also saw them quoting, all the time, incorrectly. They kept saying "me." It wasn't about me, it was about us. The word was "us." So they would—kept saying "me"; it said "us." "Can you do 'us' a favor?" "Our country," comma, "our country." Then, it talked about seeing the Attorney General of the United States.

For these people to say "me"—they would say "me." "You said, 'Do me a favor.'" No, it didn't say that. It said, "Do us a favor—our country." Talking about the past election. Talking about corruption.

The other thing nobody remembers and nobody likes to talk about—and I talk about it all the time—is, why isn't Germany, why isn't France, why aren't other European countries paying?

Because we're paying. The suckers. You know, for years, we've been the suckers. But we're not the suckers anymore. Big difference.

But why isn't Germany paying big money? They're the ones—I mean, they have a much bigger benefit than we do, because Ukraine is really a stoppage between Russia and parts of Europe—the major part of Europe. Why aren't European countries paying? Why isn't France paying a lot of money? Why is it always the United States? We're 7,000 miles away. Why is it always the suckers that pay? So we've changed that, but nobody brings that up.

I think that the whole impeachment thing—"hoax," I guess you could call it, because it is a hoax. And Nancy Pelosi knows it. By the way, they duped her yesterday. She was on an interview, and she said, "We've been working on this for 2½ years." So she's—she was working on it, in other words, 2 years before we ever spoke to Ukraine. She said, "We've been working on impeachment for 2½ years." And the reporter was shocked when they got this answer, because it showed she's a liar.

So it's a very sad thing for our country, but it seems to be very good for me politically. And again, those people—because I watched some of the dishonest, fake media—they're saying, "Well, the polls have remained the same." No, the polls have not remained the same. I think you understand that, John [John Roberts, Fox News]. The polls have gone through the roof for Trump. Because people—especially with independent voters, and especially in swing States. I could show you numbers that—nobody has ever seen numbers like this before.

So the impeachment is a hoax. It's a sham. It started a long time ago, probably before I came down the escalator with the future First Lady. It started a long time ago.

And when you look at the IG report and you look at these horrible FBI people talking about, "We've got to get him out," "insurance policies"—you know, the insurance policy is just in cases she loses—meaning, Crooked Hillary, who's crooked as a \$3 bill—"Just in case Crooked Hillary loses, we've got an insurance policy." But we've been going through the insurance policy now for 3 years, and it's a disgrace.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

China-U.S. Trade Commitments

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. Say it?

Q. Can you say how much China will be buying? Will they hit \$50 billion?

President Trump. I think they'll hit \$50 billion in agriculture.

Q. Can you say—

President Trump. No, much more than \$50 [billion]*, because it's also manufacturing and other. But I think, in agriculture, they will hit \$50 billion. Yes.

China-U.S. Trade Commitments

Q. Next year? Or when? What's the timeline for that?

President Trump. Pretty soon. They've already stepped it up. My deal with them was 2 months ago. We had it in pretty good form. I said: "Do me a favor: Start buying agriculture." And they started. If you look—I mean, they're already buying. Even before the deal is signed, they're buying.

* White House correction.

Q. Do you prefer a short——

Venezuela

Q. Are you going to speak about Venezuela, Mr. President?

President Trump. Well, we're with the people of Venezuela 100 percent. It's so important to us, and we're going to be discussing Venezuela today. It will be a big subject.

Okay?

Q. Mr. President——

Possible Impeachment Trial in the Senate/Intelligence Community Whistleblower/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/News Media/Ukraine-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, do you prefer a short process in the Senate or a more extended process?

President Trump. Well, I have heard Lindsey Graham, who's terrific, and I heard his statement, and I like that. And I could also—I can do—I'll do whatever I want.

Look, there is—we did nothing wrong. So I'll do long or short. I've heard Mitch. I've heard Lindsey. I think they are very much on agreement on some concept. I'll do whatever they want to do. It doesn't matter.

I wouldn't mind a long process, because I'd like to see the whistleblower, who's a fraud. The whistleblower wrote a false report, and I really blew it up when I released the transcript of the call. And then, Schiff gets up, and he—and I blew him up too—because he went up in front of Congress, and he made a statement about what I said that was totally false. And then, a long time after he made it, when he got caught, he said: "Oh, well, that was parody. Parody."

No, Schiff is a crooked—he's a corrupt politician and a disgrace. And because of the fact he's in Congress, he's got immunity, so you can't do anything. But he went up there—you know that—he made a totally false statement. The whistleblower wrote a totally false statement. So it's a fraud.

Then, I say, "Where is the informer?"—the one that informed the whistleblower? He had an informer. He disappeared. You know why he disappeared? Because I released the transcript. Had I not released that transcript, we would have had an informer; we would have had another whistleblower.

By the way, where is the second whistleblower? Remember they had—"We have a second whistleblower. We have breaking news."

Look, not all of it, but much of the media is corrupt. These are bad people, they're sick people, and they're corrupt. And we're fighting the Democrats, and we're fighting a lot of the corrupt media. But I ask the corrupt media: Where's the second whistleblower?

Now, had I not had a transcript—I'm lucky we had this transcript, which, by the way, has now been verified by the Lieutenant Colonel—Lieutenant Colonel, okay? He's another beauty.

So where is all of this stuff that was going to happen? Once I released it—and I released it quick, but—quickly. But once I released it, all of a sudden, the second whistleblower disappeared. The first whistleblower, who was all set to testify, he—all of a sudden, he becomes this saint-like figure that they don't need him anymore. The one that everybody wanted to see, including Schiff, was the whistleblower. Once I released the text of what happened—the transcript—that was the end. Everybody disappeared.

So now there's no informer. There's no second whistleblower. Everybody has gone. And, by the way, a guy like Sondland—nobody ever says it—he said very strongly that I said, "I want nothing" and "no quid pro quo." Nobody says that. That's what he said. He said it in Congress. Nobody ever says that.

So look, we're dealing with a lot of corrupt people. There was nothing done wrong. To use the power of impeachment on this nonsense is an embarrassment to this country. The President just said it. It's an embarrassment to our country.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom; Anna Palmer, senior Washington correspondent, Politico; 2016 Democratic Presidential nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton; Senate Majority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell; Rep. Adam B. Schiff, in his capacity as chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; National Security Council Director for European Affairs Alexander S. Vindman; and U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon D. Sondland.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abdo Benitez, Mario; Barr, William P.; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Graham, Lindsey O.; Johnson, Boris; McConnell, A. Mitchell; Obama, Barack; Palmer, Anna; Pelosi, Nancy; Schiff, Adam B.; Sondland, Gordon D.; Trump, Melania; Vindman, Alexander S.; Zelenskiy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Agriculture : Domestic production, strengthening efforts; Air Force, Department of the : Space Force, U.S., establishment; Canada : Free trade agreement with U.S.; China : Trade with U.S.; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Congress : House of Representatives : Articles of Impeachment; Congress : House of Representatives :: Judiciary Committee; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; Congress : Senate :: Majority leader; Europe : European Union :: U.S. Ambassador; Justice, Department of : Attorney General; Mexico : Free trade agreement with U.S.; Paraguay : President; Paraguay : Relations with U.S.; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; Ukraine : President; Ukraine : U.S. assistance; United Kingdom : Elections; United Kingdom : Prime Minister; United Kingdom : Trade with U.S.; Venezuela : Democracy efforts; White House Office : Security Council, National.

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