

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks During a Meeting With President James Ernesto Morales Cabrera of Guatemala and an Exchange With Reporters

December 17, 2019

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's a great honor to have President Jimmy Morales and Mrs. Morales——

Hilda Patricia Marroquín Argueta de Morales. Thank you.

President Trump. ——from Guatemala with us. We've had a tremendous relationship over the last two years, on the border. We've signed agreements with Guatemala that have been tremendous in terms of really both countries, but our country, with respect to illegals coming into our country. We just can't have it. And it's been very much slowed up. Guatemala has been terrific. Honduras, El Salvador, likewise, have been excellent.

And, as you know, we have 27,000 Mexican soldiers on our border right now protecting our border. So it's been, really, very good. The results are very good.

The wall is being built. We're building a very big wall. We're up to almost 100 miles already. And we should have over 400 miles, hopefully, by the end of next year, if everything keeps going on the same path, or shortly thereafter. But we should have pretty close to 400 miles—maybe more than that—up by the end of next year.

So we're really doing a job in mostly immigration, I would say, with Guatemala, but we also do trade. They're also buying some military equipment. And the relationship is very good. It's a very important country from the standpoint of the border and trade. And we do a lot through Guatemala. A lot of things run through Guatemala.

Please.

Do you want to interpret? Yes.

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

President Trump. Please.

President Morales. For us, it's an honor to be again in the U.S.A., the main partner and ally of Guatemala, both in security and trade. We have achieved a lot of great success, and we have a great relationship. We have been able to work with migration, and we're trying to make it legal, because by no means we can endanger minors or populations, who are vulnerable, to coming to the border illegally.

We have signed different agreements with the U.S.A., including things related with trade and security. And we want to be able to negotiate temporary visas both for agriculture and construction sector.

And we are really honored to be right here at the White House. Thank you very much.

President Trump. Thank you very much.

One of the big things that's happened with Guatemala—and Honduras, El Salvador, and some others—is that, in past administrations, they and others would not take people back. So if we had very dangerous people in our country and they came from Guatemala or another country that we now have agreements with—we never had agreements with anybody—they just wouldn't take them back. And now they have to take them back, and they take them back with open arms.

And by doing this, we're getting rid of the most dangerous people. The people that are most dangerous, we're getting them out of the United States, because they don't belong here. They didn't come from here, and we're getting them out. We're taking them out by the thousands.

Thank you all very much. Appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to the Americans——

President Trump. Go ahead.

Impeachment Proceedings/The President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/The President's Support Among Republicans

Q. Are you going to watch—are you going to watch the House proceedings tomorrow?

President Trump. I'm not watching. I have not—I have not seen it.

Look, it's a hoax. The whole impeachment thing is a hoax. We look forward to getting on to the Senate. We're not entitled to lawyers. We're not entitled to witnesses. We're not entitled to anything in the House. It's a total sham when you have a guy like Shifty Schiff go out and make up a statement that I've made. He said, "This is what he said." But I never said it. He totally made it up. In Guatemala, they handle things much more difficult—much tougher than that. [Laughter]

And because of immunity—he has House immunity—because of immunity, he can't be prosecuted. He took a statement and totally made it up. It was a lie. It was a fraud. And you just can't do those things. So you know, look, this has been a total sham from the beginning. Everybody knows it.

I've never seen the Republican Party so united. We got—on our last vote, as you know, we got a hundred percent of the vote. I believe the Senate is equally as well united. I watched Mitch McConnell this morning. I watched numerous people last night—Senators—and I think we're equally well united.

They know it's a hoax. It's a witch hunt. And it's just a continuation. It's been going on now for almost 3 years. And it probably started before I even won the election, based on what we're finding out with the insurance policy quotes and other things. So it's a disgrace.

Yes, Steve [Steven A. Holland, Reuters].

Potential Impeachment Trial in the Senate/U.S.-Mexico-Canada Trade Agreement

Q. Are you going to let Senator McConnell decide on witnesses and all of that?

President Trump. Yes. He can decide.

And we'll also have to decide on when we're taking the vote for the USMCA, a very big, a very important deal, a very, very important deal with Mexico, Canada, ourselves. We're going to have to decide whether or not that comes first or second. To me, I'd let the Senate decide on that.

Impeachment/Transcript of the President's July 25 Telephone Conversation With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine/The President's Accomplishments

Q. And, Mr. President, do you take any responsibility for the fact that you're about to be impeached?

President Trump. No. I don't take any, zero, to put it mildly. They took a perfect phone call that I had with the President of Ukraine, an absolutely perfect call. You know it; they all know it. Nothing was said wrong on that call. To impeach the President of the United States for that is a disgrace, and it's a mark on our country.

And I'll tell you what: Other Presidents, in the future—unless they do something about this—other Presidents are going to have to live with this. And every time they do something that's a little bit unpopular or a little bit strong—even if they're a hundred-percent right——

Because I've done a great job, when you look at the kind of jobs we've created, when you look at the economy that we've created, when you look at rebuilding the military, taking care of the vets. You just take a look at what we've done with choice, Veterans Choice; with accountability and the vets; with what we've done to protect our Second Amendment; and so many other things. Nobody has done as much as I've done in the first 3 years.

Thank you all very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Guatemala-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, on Guatemala—on Guatemala, are you planning to withhold aid if the new President-elect of Guatemala does not implement your immigration agreement, Mr. President?

President Trump. Guatemala is terrific.

Q. But what if they—the President——

President Trump. Guatemala has been terrific. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 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 Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. President Morales spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. 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 : Guatemala, President Cabrera.

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