

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters**

*February 7, 2025*

*President Trump.* Thank you very much. It's a great honor to be with Prime Minister Ishiba of Japan. He's a highly respected man, doing a fantastic job. The people of Japan like him a lot. That's good. And it's a real honor to have him in the Oval Office.

This is the first time he's been into the Oval Office. And when people come in here the first time, they say—they like to look for a little while, and—and he did. And it was—this represents some of our best Presidents and—but it represents a lot of other things also. But up on the wall, we have some of our best Presidents over the years. And people enjoy it very much, and they enjoy being here.

And it's a great honor to have you. Thank you very much.

*Prime Minister Ishiba.* Thank you. The Honorable Mr. President, thank you very much for inviting me to the White House today. From the bottom my heart, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the invitation.

Through Mrs. Akie Abe, you kindly delivered your photo book for me. And on that, you gave me an autograph. You wrote "peace" for me, and I was really touched by your message. And I realized that the word "peace" represents what you care.

And I vividly remember what you had to experience during the Presidential election. I remember that was last July. There was an assassination attempt, and I was very touched by your undaunted presence, that you stood up, and also you raised your fist high in the sky.

And behind you, there was a star-spangled banner with the blue sky. And that specific photo will be remembered, as it was one of the most unforgettable scene in the photo.

And as I looked at the photo, I realized that through that experience, you realize your mission—namely, you're going to win the election and, also, you're going to pursue your signature initiative of "Make America Great Again." And also, you will redouble your efforts to bring peace to the world, and that is why God saved you in that experience.

*President Trump.* Very nice. Thank you very much.

*Prime Minister Ishiba.* And I understand that you have been advocating the key signature initiative: Make America Great Again. And I understand that that actually reflects your deep compassion to the forgotten man and woman.

And just like you, since I took office as Prime Minister of Japan, I have been advocating my goal of regional revitalization and also local revitalization in Japan as well. In many of the suburban areas and rural areas, we do see many forgotten men and women, and I do hope to bring dream and hope for them.

At this juncture, I am proud of the very good relationship between Japan and the United States. There is a very close partnership, and I do believe that it is Mr. President and late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who laid the foundation for such robust relationship between our two countries.

So, as we move forward, together with Mr. President and also together with the United States, Japan and myself are determined to work hand in hand to bring peace to the world and also enable people to have their dream and their hope.

*President Trump.* Thank you very much. That was beautiful.

And I just want to say that Shinzo was a great friend of mine. So sad. I was—I couldn't have felt worse when that happened to him, that horrible event.

But he also was a friend of yours, and he had tremendous respect for you. And we would talk about the different people in Japan. He had tremendous respect for you, as does Mrs. Abe. And when she came and visited at Mar-a-Lago, she was terrifically impressed by the job you're doing, and I thought it was very nice.

But Shinzo had tremendous regard for you, and I know that you were a good friend of his too.

So it's just an honor—on his behalf, even, to say it's just an honor to be with all of you. He was a good friend of mine. He was a wonderful man.

*Prime Minister Ishiba.* Not only among politicians but also among general public, as well as business leaders, there are many that are anxiously waiting for your comeback.

And let me cite one example. Mr. Akio Toyoda, CEO of Toyota, is actually my friend from high school as well as college days, and he confessed to me that he was also anxiously waiting for your victory and your comeback.

And when I talked to him, he shared with me his future plan to announce more investment to the United States and also to create more jobs in the United States.

Another example is the SoftBank Group CEO Masayoshi Son—or "Masa"—who happens to be a longtime friend of my Foreign Minister, Minister Iwaya. He also had a chance to see me together with Mr. Altman, CEO of OpenAI, and Masa also shared his vision to bring more investment to the United States.

Japan has been the largest investor for the United States in the last 5 consecutive years. And building upon that, we are ready to further increase our investment to the United States.

And also, there is another good news that I would like to deliver to you. A Japanese automaker, Isuzu, has a plan to create a factory in the United States in the near future.

And as I touched upon the example of Toyota, they also have another plan to expand their factories, as well as start to operate new factories in the near future. And as far as I understand, there is one factory to be fully operational starting the month of April this year.

*President Trump.* Well, thank you very much. And we're going to be working on that. And I think your auto factories are going to do very well. We have a lot of companies coming into the United States to build autos because of what we've done with taxation, and I know they're going to do very well.

And say hello to Mr. Toyoda, who's somebody I met over there and became friendly with, a terrific man. All of these people, so great. Such a great country.

We do want to work on a deficit. We have about \$100 billion deficit with Japan, which I'm not surprised, because you're very good negotiators, I will say. But we want to work on that and get that down to even. Equality, I call it. Let's be equal.

So I think we'll be able to do that pretty easily. And that's pretty much what I want to do. I want to get other countries also to equality with the United States, in terms of deficits. And I think we'll be able to do that very routinely.

Okay.

#### *North Korea*

*Q.* To what extent will you discuss North Korea today, sir?

*President Trump.* That will always be a topic, especially with Japan. We will be discussing North Korea and many other things. We'll be spending pretty much the day. And—but that's always a topic.

#### *U.S. Steel Corporation*

*Q.* Mr. President, have you changed your mind about the sale of U.S. Steel?

*President Trump.* No. I think we're going to be discussing that today. No, I haven't, and I hear we'll have some pretty good information on that.

*[At this point, the President addressed an interpreter as follows.]*

You might want to go, please.

*Q.* Are tariffs an option, Mr. President?

*[He continued to address the interpreter as follows.]*

*President Trump.* Have you—okay.

#### *Japan-U.S. Trade Relations*

*Q.* Mr. President, are tariffs an option if the deficit doesn't get to equilibrium or to equality?

*President Trump.* Yes, they are.

#### *Reciprocal Trade Policy*

*Q.* Mr. President, can you discuss what your plan is for reciprocal trade? Are you signing an EO on that today?

*President Trump.* I'll be announcing that next week—reciprocal trade—so that we're treated evenly with other countries. We don't want any more or any less. So I'll be announcing that next week and many other things having to do not even with trade, but other things.

But I'll be talking about reciprocal trade sometime next week. We'll have a news conference, and we'll lay it out. Pretty simple.

*Q.* *[Inaudible]*—every single country?

*President Trump.* It affects everybody.

*Q.* So Japan too?

*President Trump.* Reciprocal, yes. We'll be talking about that next week.

*[A reporter spoke in Japanese; no translation was provided.]*

*Prime Minister Ishiba.* I understand that the key point in this regard is to make that for mutually beneficial, that means that would benefit the development of the United States, as well as the development of Japan. And I do hope that whatever measures and actions should meet this criteria, meaning that serving the interest of both countries. But, as to specifics, I understand that we are going to have further discussion.

*President Trump.* That's correct.

#### *Japan-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Mr. President, are there any specific concessions that you will be asking for from Japan that you can share?

*President Trump.* Oh, we'll be having—I think it'll be very easy for Japan. We have a fantastic relationship. I don't think we'll have any problem whatsoever. They want fairness also.

#### *White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk/U.S. Agency for International Development*

*Q.* Mr. President, do you have a reaction to the new TIME magazine cover that has Elon Musk sitting behind your Resolute Desk?

*President Trump.* No.

Is TIME magazine still in business? I didn't even know that. [*Laughter*]

Elon is doing a great job. He's finding tremendous fraud and corruption and waste. You see it with the USAID, but you're going to see it even more so with other agencies and other parts of Government. He's got a staff that's fantastic. He's wanted to be able to do this for a long time, and if—everybody else knew it was existent, but, I think, never so much.

When you look at USAID, that's a fraud. The whole thing is a fraud. Very little—very little being put to good use. Every single line that I look at in terms of events and transactions is either corrupt or ridiculous, and we're going to be doing that throughout government.

And I think we're going to be very close to balancing budgets for the first time in many years. I think we're going to be very close to—in addition to monies coming in from tariffs, et cetera, et cetera. But no, he's doing a very good job. I'm very happy with him.

#### *White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk*

*Q.* Will you put Elon Musk up on the podium for us to ask him some questions, Mr. President, at any point?

Will you put Elon Musk up on the podium for us to ask him some questions about what he's doing?

*President Trump.* Oh, sure. He'll be—he's not shy. Elon is not shy.

#### *Gaza, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* Any further deliberations on Gaza, sir, the timetable for a takeover?

*President Trump.* No. No deliberations. It's been very well received where, basically, the United States would view it as a real estate transaction, where we'll be an investor in that part of the world. And no rush to do anything. We wouldn't need anybody there. It would be supplied and given to us by Israel. They'll watch it, in terms of security. We're not talking about boots on the ground or anything. But I think we'll—the fact that we're there, that we have an investment there, I think would go a long way to creating peace.

We don't want to see everybody move back and then move out in 10 years. This has been going on for 50 years, much more than that. We just want to see stability.

That would be—having us have that particular piece in that particular location, I think, would show great stability and would—would lead to great stability in the area for very little money, very little price, and we wouldn't need soldiers at all. That will be taken care of by others. And the investments are taken care of by others also.

So, on—for no investment—I mean, virtually no investment whatsoever, it would bring stability to the area. And others can invest in it later on. But we're in no rush on it. It's absolutely no rush.

### *Artificial Intelligence*

*Q.* President Trump, do you believe DeepSeek is a national security threat? And how do you plan to collaborate on AI initiatives here?

*President Trump.* On where?

*Q.* DeepSeek. Do you believe it's a national security threat?

*President Trump.* No, I think it's happening. I mean, it's a technology that's happening. It's very—it's actually—I think it's—I think we're going to benefit if it's correct what's going on now, that it will be a lot less expensive. The AI we're talking about will be a lot less expensive than people originally thought. That's a good thing. I view that as a very good development, not a bad development.

### *Automobile Industry*

*Q.* Mr. President—Mr. President, on autos, specifically. In your first term, you tried to tariff autos. Is that on the table still? Are you trying to do that in your second administration?

*President Trump.* Auto tariff?

*Q.* Auto tariffs.

*President Trump.* Oh, yes. Sure. That's on the table. That's always on the table. It's a very big deal because we are——

*Q.* Do you think Congress will go along with it?

*President Trump.* You know, we have cases where we don't supply autos and other countries do. And you know, we have to equalize it. We have to stabilize it and equalize it.

### *Ukraine/Russia/North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

*Q.* Will you have Vice President Vance meet with President Zelenskyy next week while he's in Europe?

*President Trump.* I will probably be meeting with President Zelenskyy next week, and I—I will probably be talking to President Putin. I'd like to see that war end for one primary reason: They're killing so many people.

You're losing millions of people on a battlefield—in this case, mostly the battlefield. You have 8- or 900,000 Russian soldiers are dead or—and very badly wounded, and the same thing with Ukraine. You have probably 700,000 with Ukraine. The numbers they gave a little bit lower than that, but I believe those numbers aren't correct.

I'd like to see it end, just on a human basis. It's terrible what's going on. They have open fields with no protection. The only thing a bullet can hit is a human body, and the human body dies as soon as it gets hit. No, I'd like to see that end. It's a ridiculous war. It would have never started if I were President.

That war would have never started. Putin would not have started that war if I were president. And by the way, you wouldn't have had October 7 if I was President either. That mess would not have started.

But no, I would very much like to help out. One of the things we're looking at with President Zelenskyy is having the security of their assets. They have assets underground, rare earth and other things, but primarily rare earth. And we want to have secure—really, we want security. Because, as you know, Europe is putting up much less money than us—much—NATO, Europe—call it whatever you want.

And we're at, probably, \$300-billion-plus. And they're at—probably, the real number is \$100 billion. That's a lot of money, but it's \$200 billion less than us, and there's an ocean in between. They need it more than us.

So we're asking them to equalize and get even, but we're also asking President Zelenskyy for the security of—you know, we're putting all this money up, and we're saying, "Where does it stop?" And yet we want to see it out to an end. We want to see it end.

But we are going to be asking for the security—and we've already told him—of an equal amount of something where our money—I mean, the American taxpayer is in for \$300 billion. Biden never negotiated. He never told Europe to put in more money, and it got out of hand, just like NATO.

NATO, we were in—we were paying almost 100 percent of NATO when I first came in. Everybody was taking advantage of the good old United States, but not anymore.

So what—and now, if you speak to the Secretary General of NATO, who was very nice when he was here 2 weeks ago, he said: "What Trump did was amazing. He got everybody to pay."

And to do that, you have to ask, and Biden never asked. So we're in for probably close to \$200 billion more than Europe. And yet, obviously, it affects Europe much more than us.

So we would like them to stay—to equalize. They have to go more. And from our standpoint, we do want security in all this money that we're putting up. Okay?

*President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine*

*Q.* And you're speaking with him next week, sir? Is that what you said?

*Q.* You're going to speak on the phone——

*President Trump.* He may—he may meet next week, yes. Whenever he'd like. I'm here. I'm here.

*Q.* Will he come to Washington?

*President Trump.* It could be Washington—well, I'm not going there. It——

*President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Ukraine*

*Q.* Are you planning to meet with President Putin or are you just planning a phone call?

*President Trump.* It could be, yes. It could be. We've always had a good relationship. President Putin and I have always had a good relationship. That's why it's so sad that it happened. This would have never happened if I were President. It's so sad to see it happen. So many dead people.

By the way, so many cities are demolished. They're like—you talk about Gaza. Well, take a look at Ukraine. So many of those cities are demolition sites, demolished. So sad. Should have never happened—all those beautiful golden domes, but, much more importantly, all those beautiful people are dead, and it should have never happened.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Prime Minister Ishiba spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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