

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Palm Beach, Florida

February 28, 2025

[At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Q. Mr. President, will you talk to President Zelenskyy again?

The President. So thank you very much. So I just want to say we're going down to Florida. We have a big event tomorrow night. A big MAGA event: "Make America Great Again." And it's setting records. And otherwise, I'd rather be, right now, at the White House, but we're doing the big event tomorrow night.

We had some big news this week, as you know, because Apple is investing \$500 billion. Think of that. And that's going to be a lot. It's going to be a tremendous investment—I guess, the biggest investment anybody has ever made in the country at one time. But they're going to be investing a lot of money—\$500 billion.

We have—many other companies have just announced they're coming in. A lot of it's because of how we're doing. We've done a great turnaround in a little more than 30 days. But the country is really doing well. We're respected again all over the world.

If you look, we had the Japanese Prime Minister. We had the Prime Minister, yesterday, of U.K., as you know. We had the Prime Minister of India. We have another 20 Prime Ministers and Presidents wanting to come. And it's very good. Very good feeling. I think our country has really turned around.

We had a meeting today, as you know, with President Zelenskyy, and I would say it didn't work out exactly great from his standpoint. I think he very much overplayed his hand.

We're looking for peace. We're not looking for somebody that's going to sign up a strong power and then not make peace because they feel emboldened. And that's what I saw happening.

I'm looking for peace. We're not looking to go into a 10-year war and play games. We want peace. And it was just my impression that if we do that, if we sign up, he's looking for something that I'm not looking for. He's looking to go on and fight, fight, fight.

We're looking to end the death. Two thousand people died this week—soldiers. More than that, but 2,000, approximately, people died this week. Young Ukrainians and Russians.

And somebody would say, "Why do you care about Ukraine and Russian soldiers?" I care about them. I care about everybody.

And we're not doing that. Now, if we don't do anything, he's going to have to make peace. But he's dealing with a very weak set of cards. If we sign, he's dealing with a very strong set of cards, and then he doesn't want to make peace.

So that's where we are. It's very simple. I'm not looking to get into anything protracted. I want immediate peace. President Putin is going to want to make—and he wants to make—he wants to end it.

And you saw what I saw today. This is a man that wants to get us signed up and keep fighting, and we're not doing that. Not for this country. So we're setting a lot of records. Economically, we're setting records. And I think, every way, we're setting records.

One of the best is the right track, wrong track. You saw that. We're on the right track for the first time in over 27 years. People are impressed with that.

Q. Sir, what——

The President. The other thing is the feeling about our country. The feeling is great. It's up 48 percent on feeling on business, and that's the record. We've never had—there's never been a record where we've ever gone up that much in such a short period of time. So we're doing really well.

And I guess some of you are coming with us. And if you are, I hope you're going to have a good flight.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Sir, what does Zelenskyy need to do to restart——

The President. What?

Q. What does Zelenskyy need to do to restart talks with you?

The President. He's got to say, "I want to make peace." He doesn't have to stand there and say about Putin this, Putin that. All negative things. He's got to say: "I want to make peace. I don't want to fight a war any longer."

His people are dying. He doesn't have the cards, just so you understand it. Okay? I can tell you.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Is your relationship with him beyond repair?

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Sir, would you ever meet with Zelenskyy again at the White House?

Q. Mr. President, did you tell Zelenskyy to leave the White House?

The President. I don't have to tell you that.

Go ahead.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. I think you know the answer to that.

Q. Do you trust Putin or Zelenskyy——

Q. Mr. President——

Q. ——would you ever——

The President. What? Wait, wait, wait.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Do you trust Putin—do trust Putin or Zelenskyy more?

The President. Look, I don't trust or distrust anybody. I just want to get a deal done. And if the deal happens, good. But you can't embolden somebody that does not have the cards, and, all of a sudden, that person says: "Oh, well, now I can keep fighting. I can"—we're not going to keep

fighting. You're going to get the war done, or let them go and see what happens. Let them fight it out.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Do you want Zelenskyy to step down?

Q. Mr. President, do you want President Zelenskyy gone?

The President. I want anybody that's going to make peace. If he's capable of making peace, which he may or may not be, but I want somebody that's going to make peace.

Q. Mr. President, you——

The President. Again, he doesn't have the cards. When we sign up, he's got all of the cards. That doesn't mean he can fight. He's got to stop the fighting, stop the death. He's losing hundreds of thousands of soldiers. It's time to stop the death.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, how long do you think it will take for——

The President. Say it.

Q. How long do you think it will take for Zelenskyy to want peace and be invited back to the White House?

The President. Well, he says he wants it now. He wants to come back right now. But I can't do that. I can't.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Ukraine/Russia

Q. Are you going to end all shipments to Ukraine?

Q. Do you want immediate cease-fire——?

Q. Are you cutting off military aid?

Q. Do you want immediate cease-fire, Mr. President?

Q. Mr. President, do you want——

The President. They should have an immediate cease-fire. That was the other thing. He didn't want to do about ceasefire. A cease-fire could take place immediately. A contract, if you want to end the war, you sign up an agreement. That's going to take a period of time. It takes time.

I want it to end immediately. And I think if you had a cease-fire, it would be a cease-fire—a real one—that would end it. But he doesn't want to do that? That's fine. Do a better deal.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Will you continue sending——

Q. Are you cutting off military——

Q. Mr. President, are you ending all shipments to Ukraine?

The President. I want it to end immediately. I want a cease-fire now. He says, "Oh, I don't want a cease-fire." Well, all of a sudden, he's a big shot, because he has the U.S. on his side.

Either we're going to end it or let him fight it out. And if he fights it out, it's not going to be pretty, because without it—without us, he doesn't win, let me tell you.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, are you demanding the same cease-fire——

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Are you considering cutting off military aid? Are you considering cutting off military aid to Ukraine?

The President. It doesn't matter what I'm considering. I'm just telling you: You saw what I saw today. That was not a man that wanted to make peace. And I'm only interested if he wants to end the bloodshed.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to boarding Marine One. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba of Japan; Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Ishiba, Shigeru; Modi, Narendra; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Starmer, Keir; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: India, Prime Minister; Japan, Prime Minister; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; News media, Presidential interviews; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; United Kingdom, Prime Minister.

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