

**Remarks Prior to a Working Lunch With Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy  
and an Exchange With Reporters**

*April 17, 2025*

*President Trump.* Okay. Thank you very much. And we're going to be seeing you in a few minutes, right after lunch, for a press conference in the Oval Office. And I assume you'll all be there. It's the same group.

If you had a question or so for the Prime Minister, please—you could ask. Anybody have a question? Okay, good. Then we'll just end it right now. *[Laughter]*

*Q.* Prime Minister, you have said that the President's tariffs are wrong. Do you still believe that the United States—*[laughter]*—is a reliable trade partner?

*President Trump.* *[Laughter]* That's a——

*Prime Minister Meloni.* They always try to help, Donald.

*President Trump.* It could only be her.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* They always try to help.

*Italy-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Should the European Union still believe that the United States is a reliable trade partner?

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Well, I'm here exactly to work for—to make the West stronger, for I believe in the West's unity. And I think, simply, we have to talk, and find ourselves——

*President Trump.* She believes in the President. She believes in the President.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* *[Laughter]* Also.

And find ourselves in the best middle way to grow together. That's where I—that's why I'm here, so—if I wouldn't think it's a reliable partner, I wouldn't be here. *[Inaudible]*

*Q.* Mr.——

*President Trump.* We have a really good relationship. Together and as countries, we have a very good relationship.

*European Union*

*Q.* To follow up, Mr. President, what if there is not a trade deal with the EU by the time of the end of your 90-day pause on reciprocal tariffs?

*President Trump.* Oh, there'll be a trade deal, a hundred percent.

*Q.* Mr. President——

*President Trump.* Oh, why? You think there won't be? Of course, there'll be a trade deal. Very much—they want to make one very, very much, and we're going to make a trade deal. I fully expect it, but it will be a fair deal.

*Q.* Are they on your priority list?

*President Trump.* Everybody is on my priority list. Everybody.

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

Say it.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

Wait, wait, wait. One at a time, please.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Q.* Hi——

*President Trump.* No, no. First—no, no. You, and then we'll do you.

### *Trade Negotiations*

*Q.* Do you plan to meet with the President of the EU, Ursula von der Leyen? Do you plan to have other meetings with EU leaders as well?

*President Trump.* Many. We had a meeting yesterday with Japan. As you know, we've had numerous talks very, very—at the highest level, frankly, with other countries. Yes, we're doing very well, and we're moving along on trade very well.

The United States was ripped off and taken advantage of by every country in the world, practically. I mean, I have to say "practically," but just about everyone. That's not going to happen anymore, but we're going to make fairer deals.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

### *Trade Negotiations/U.S. Tariffs*

*Q.* President Trump, given talks with Japan and Italy this week, do you expect to announce an initial trade deal with any of these countries by next week?

*President Trump.* At a certain point, yes. We're in no rush. We're in a rush.

You have to understand, we're getting, right now, 25 percent on cars, 25 percent on steel, 25 percent on aluminum. And we're getting a 10-percent baseline. We took that down just because it was, you know, the appropriate thing to do until we decide what the number will be. And we're, you know, taking in a lot of money, which we've never done before, frankly. With Biden, we lost—we were losing a fortune on trade.

But we're—you know, we're moving along very nicely, and we're going to end up with a baseline of a substantial number, which we never got anything. You know, the United States never got anything until I came along, and then I put very substantial tariffs on China, if you remember, and we took in hundreds of billions of dollars.

But then we had a rigged election, and it was just one of those little things, and it got away from us because Biden allowed every country in the world to rip off the United States, and I'm here to save our country.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

Yes, please.

### *China*

*Q.* You have said in the past that you aren't worried about allies growing closer to China as a result of your tariffs. And this week, we saw Chinese President Xi Jinping visit with three of our allies. Should you be worried——

*President Trump.* No.

*Q.* ——that they're growing closer?

*President Trump.* No. No.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Nobody can compete with us. Nobody.

### *China-U.S. Trade*

*Q.* You said that you have a good relationship with President Xi. Why not pick up the phone and call him and make a deal?

*President Trump.* Oh, we're going to make a deal. We'll have a deal. I think we have a——

*Q.* Mr. President——

*President Trump.* I think we're going to make a very good deal with China.

*Q.* Do you plan to reach out to him and call him?

*President Trump.* I think that you will see we'll make a very good deal with China. Yes.

*Q.* Mr. President Trump—Mr. President——

*Q.* Prime Minister Meloni——

*Q.* ——you told me, boarding Marine One——

*Q.* How quickly—how quickly——

### *President Trump's Relationship With Prime Minister Meloni*

*Q.* ——a couple month ago, "I like her very much," regarding Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Will she be the one to mediate your relationship with Europe, do you think? [*Inaudible*]

*The President.* Well, I do like her very much. I think she's a great Prime Minister. I think she's doing a fantastic job in Italy. We're very proud of her. I knew her right from the beginning. I knew her as a very early Prime Minister, and I knew she had great talent. She's one of the real leaders of the world, and I'm very proud to be with her.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

I can't do better than that, right? [*Laughter*]

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Yes. That's fantastic. Thank you.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Yes, we can close the conference—the press conference. [*Laughter*]

*President Trump.* We should end the press conference. [*Laughter*]

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Yes, please. Go ahead.

### *Italian Defense Spending*

*Q.* Prime Minister, how quickly can you raise your defense spending?

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Oh, well, Italy is a—going to the next summit of the NATO announcing that it raised the 2 percent, as was request.

*President Trump.* It will go up.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* So it's—yes. And it——

*President Trump.* It will go up.

*Q.* Is 2 percent enough?

*Prime Minister Meloni.* And then Europe——

*Q.* Is it enough, Mr. President?

*Prime Minister Meloni.* ——as you know, is——

*Q.* Do we need more?

*President Trump.* It's never enough.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* And then Europe, as you know——

*President Trump.* It's never—[laughter].

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Europe, as you know, is committed to do more, is working on tools to allow the—and help the member states in increasing the defense spending. And we are convinced that everyone has to do more.

*Q.* Prime Minister, are you ready—are the retaliatory tariffs that were passed before and then suspended still on the table if you can't make a deal?

*Prime Minister Meloni.* No, sorry. Please repeat it.

#### *European Union*

*Q.* The retaliatory tariffs that the European Commission passed and then suspended, are they still on the table, if you cannot make a deal with President Trump?

*Prime Minister Meloni.* I'm sure we can make a deal. And I'm here to help on that. I cannot—look, deal in the name of the European Union. My goal would be: invite President Trump to pay an official visit to Italy and understand if there's a possibility when he comes to organize, also, such a meeting with Europe. For—I think the best way is that we simply speak frankly about the needs that every one of us has and find the results in the middle. For—that's useful for all.

I—really, somebody calls me a—such a western nationalism. I don't know if it is the right word. But I am sure that together we are stronger, and I have to find a way—I am here to find the best way to make us both stronger on the two shores of the Atlantic.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

*President Trump.* We're going to have very little problem making a deal with Europe or anybody else, because we have something that everybody wants. You know what that means, right? We have something that everybody wants. We're going to have very little problems.

So we'll see you in a couple of minutes. We'll be right there in the Oval Office.

Thank you very much.

*Q.* Thank you, Prime Minister.

*Prime Minister Meloni.* Thank you much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:09 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. 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 : Italy, Prime Minister Meloni.

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