

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and an Exchange With Reporters

July 14, 2025

President Trump. Okay. Thank you very much.

It's a honor—great honor—to have a friend of mine. We've become very friendly over the last number of years. We knew each other before, but Mark is the head of NATO—Mark Rutte, Secretary General of NATO. Highly respected by everybody that knows him, but in particular, the European countries. They have great reliance on him, and he's done a fantastic job.

And we had a tremendous meeting. I guess it's about a month now——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——a month ago, and I think Mark will tell you that it was really—perhaps more important—the date of November 5. That was the election day. Maybe that was the most important, because we've made tremendous progress together.

And one of the reasons that you're here today is to hear that we are very unhappy—I am—with Russia, but we'll discuss that maybe a different day. But we're very, very unhappy with him, and we're going to be doing very severe tariffs if we don't have a deal in 50 days—tariffs at about 100 percent. You'd call them secondary tariffs. You know what that means.

But today we're going to talk about something else. And as you know, we've spent \$350 billion, approximately, on this war with Russia and Ukraine, and we'd like to see it end. It wasn't my war. It was Biden's war. It's not my war. I'm trying to get you out of it, and we want to see it end.

And I'm disappointed in President Putin, because I thought we would've had a deal 2 months ago, but it doesn't seem to get there. So, based on that, we're going to be doing secondary tariffs if we don't have a deal in 50 days. It's very simple. And they'll be at 100 percent, and that's the way it is. That couldn't be more simple. That's just the way it is. I hope we don't have to do it.

But regardless, we are going to be—we make the greatest military equipment in the world, whether it's missiles—you saw that recently in Iran, the way those planes flew in. They hit every single—14 bombs, hit every target. Then you had the helicopter shoot a total of 30 bombs, 30 missiles, and they hit every single—Marco, is that right?——

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. Yes.

President Trump. ——every single—Pete?—every single target.

Secretary of Defense Peter B. Hegseth. Yes, sir.

President Trump. And it was, I guess, on a scale of 0 to 10, they say it was about a 15. That's how successful it was. That's how lethal it was, a word they like to use nowadays.

But it was an amazing, well-organized attack that people in this country wanted to do for 24 years. You know, when we had the pilots in last week, they were saying, "Sir, we've been practicing this for 24 years"—meaning people, not them, but other people that are a little older now, but they too—"and you were the one that let us do it, but we've been practicing it three to four times a year for 22, 24 years," because they always knew they hadn't stopped Iran from doing what they were doing, which is trying to come up with a nuclear weapon, a nuclear bomb. And we did it very successfully.

And we make the best equipment, the best missiles, the best of everything. The European nations know that. And we've made a deal today—and I'm going to have Mark speak about it—but we've made a deal today where we are going to be sending them weapons, and they're going to be paying for them. We, the United States, will not be having any payment made. We are not buying it, but we will manufacture it, and they're going to be paying for it.

Our last meeting about a month ago was very successful in that they agreed to 5 percent——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——which is more than a trillion dollars a year, so they have a lot of money. And they—these are wealthy nations. They have a lot of money, and they want to do it. They feel very strongly about it. And we feel strongly about it too, but we're in for a lot of money, and we just—we don't want to do any more, and we can't.

But we make the best, and we're going to be sending the best to NATO and, in some cases, to maybe—at Mark's suggestion, if we go to Germany, where they're going to send, early on, missiles.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. And they'll be replaced, and NATO is going to take care of it. It's going to be coordinated by NATO, and they're going to work very much with Matt Whitaker, who's right here, who's a great Ambassador. And Matt is going to be coordinating—you'd better do a good job, Matt.

U.S. Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Matthew G. Whitaker. I will.

President Trump. But Matt is going to coordinate. He's a very talented guy. He's going to coordinate everything.

So, in a nutshell, we're going to make top-of-the-line weapons, and they'll be sent to NATO. NATO may choose to have certain of them sent to other countries, where we can get a little additional speed, where the country will release something and be—it will be mostly in the form of a replacement.

And I'd like to have Mark—and, again, just a highly respected, pretty young guy—pretty young guy for having had the career that he's had, because he had a—[laughter]——

[At this point, Secretary General Rutte addressed his Chief of Staff, Geoffrey Van Leeuwen.]

Secretary General Rutte. Don't laugh. [Laughter]

President Trump. ——he had an amazing career before going to NATO. So—and we spent a lot of time together over the last couple of months.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. And if you could say a few words, that would be great.

Secretary General Rutte. Absolutely.

President Trump. Thank you.

Secretary General Rutte. No, no, Mr. President, dear Donald, this is really big. This is really big. You called me on Thursday that you had taken a decision, and the decision is that you want Ukraine what it needs to have to maintain, to be able to defend itself against Russia, but you don't—want Europeans to pay for it, which is totally logical. And this is building on the tremendous success of the NATO summit——

President Trump. That's right.

Secretary General Rutte. —the 5 percent, but also the decision to keep Ukraine strong and the decision to increase our defense industrial production.

So, based on that, this is—that was Europe stepping up. This is again Europeans stepping up. So I've been in contact with many countries. I can tell you at this moment Germany, massively, but also Finland and Denmark and Sweden and Norway, we have Kingdom of the Netherlands, Canada—they all want to be part of this. And this is only the first wave. There will be more.

So what we will do is work through the NATO systems to make sure that we know what Ukrainians need so that we can make packages. Of course, in a way—we discussed it this morning with Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon—in a way that, of course, the U.S. will keep up its stockpiles necessary to defend this country. That's absolutely clear. But it will mean that Ukraine can get its hands on really massive numbers of military equipment, both for air defense, but also missiles, ammunition, et cetera, et cetera.

So, if I was Vladimir Putin today and hear you speaking about what you were planning to do in 50 days and this announcement, I would reconsider whether I should not take negotiations about Ukraine more seriously than I was doing at the moment—if I was Vladimir Putin. But when I'm Ukraine, I think this is really great news for them.

So I really want to thank you for that. And it means Europeans paying for it. And, again, I mentioned all these countries. We will deal with that.

And exactly as you said, it might also mean that countries will move equipment fast into Ukraine and then the U.S. later backfilling it——

President Trump. Good.

Secretary General Rutte. —because speed is of the essence here.

So, really, thank you.

President Trump. Great.

Secretary General Rutte. This is important. Thank you.

President Trump. You did a great job, and it's a really great job.

We've been very successful in settling wars. You have India-Pakistan. You have Rwanda and the Congo. That was going on for 30 years.

India, by the way, and Pakistan would have been a nuclear war within another week, the way that was going. That was going very badly. And we did that through trade. I said, "We're not going to talk to you about trade unless you get this thing settled," and they did. And they were both great. Great leaders. And they were great.

But Rwanda and the Congo, that was going on for 30 years and at least 7 million people killed, and killed with a lot of pretty rough weapons, like machetes. Heads chopped off. Going on for many years. You couldn't even get near the countries. Nobody wanted to get near, it's so frightening. And we got that one solved.

Serbia-Kosovo, got that solved. That was going to be one that was going to happen. And, again, that was something I used—I use trade for a lot of things, but it's great for settling wars. That was really very important.

We're working—Marco is working very hard with everybody here on the Strip, the Gaza Strip. I call it the Gaza Strip. One of the worst real estate deals ever made. *[Laughter]* They gave

up the oceanfront property. One of the worst deals ever made. But it was supposed to bring peace, and it didn't bring peace. It brought the opposite.

But we're doing pretty well on Gaza. Steve Witkoff is here, and I think we could have something fairly soon to talk about.

U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff. Yes.

President Trump. And we solved other one—one that we just seemed to have—Armenia and Azerbaijan. It looks like that's going to come to a conclusion—successful conclusion.

We worked on Egypt with their next-door neighbor, who is a good neighbor. They're friends of mine, but they happened to build a dam, which closed up water going into a thing called the Nile. I think if I'm Egypt, I want to have water in the Nile. And we're working on that one. It's a problem, but I—it's going to get solved. They built one of the biggest dams in the world a little bit outside of Egypt. You know about that?

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. You've been hearing about that one?

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. And that turned out to be a big problem. I don't know—I think the United States funded the dam. I don't know why they didn't solve the problem before they built the dam, but it's nice when the Nile River has water. They—you know, it's a very important source of income and life. It's the life of Egypt, and to take that away is pretty incredible. But we think we're going to have that solved very quickly.

So we do good. The only one we haven't been able to get to yet is Russia, and I'm not happy. And I will tell you that Ukraine wants to do something.

Again, it's a war that should have never started. If I were President, it never would have happened. I used to speak to President Putin about it a lot. It was the apple of his eye.

But once I saw what was going on, I said, "You know, they're going to have a war here." I was outside—the election was rigged, and I was outside looking in, and I said, "You know, that thing is going to be a war." Couldn't believe it, because what Biden said was the exact opposite of what should have been said.

And it started, and it's a real mess. We're losing—I guess they're losing 5- or 6,000 people a day. It's actually now more. I used to—I was saying 5,000 a day. It's actually more now. Mostly soldiers, but a lot of people in cities and towns that are getting blown up too. It's a horrible war, and it should be stopped.

And so, if it's not done, if we don't have an agreement in 50 days, that's what we're doing: secondary tariffs, and they're biting. And I hope we don't get to the point where we do, but I—I've been hearing so much talk. It's all talk. It's all talk, and then missiles go into Kyiv and kill 60 people.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. It's got to stop. It's got to stop.

But the purpose of this is to say that there's a very big deal we've made. This is—billions of dollars' worth of military equipment is going to be purchased from the United States, going to NATO, et cetera, and that's going to be quickly distributed to the battlefield.

Secretary General Rutte. Exactly.

President Trump. Ukraine will take it up. And you know, say what you want about Ukraine; when the war started, they had no chance, and they still would have had no chance if the equipment they used—they had the best equipment, because we do make the best planes and missiles, and we make the best military equipment in the world, by far. And we have new things coming out that are beyond belief.

And I'm very excited about the Golden Dome. It's going to give us very strong protection. We're—we've already started that.

But they had courage, because somebody has to use that equipment. And they fought with tremendous courage, and they continue to fight——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——with tremendous courage, but they don't have—they're losing on equipment. And Russia has really taken a very positive—very, very strong—I mean, what they've done the last couple of weeks——

Secretary General Rutte. Without military reasons, as to what they are doing.

President Trump. That's right.

Secretary General Rutte. Several hundred drones a day, missiles——

President Trump. That's right.

Secretary General Rutte. ——bombing cities.

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. This is not because of military goals.

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. It is just creating panic, keeping people——

President Trump. They're hitting towns.

Secretary General Rutte. ——out of their sleeps, hitting towns.

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. It's really terrible, and it is meaning a lot of people lose their lives, but also the infrastructure, whole cities being destroyed.

President Trump. They're wiping out the electric. It's going to take years to rebuild it. This is a—that's going to be the next problem because——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. Because—but that's going to take a long time. Cities—many of the cities are knocked down to the ground. Many of the people have left, but many have stayed. I don't know. They actually stay.

Secretary General Rutte. True. Yes.

President Trump. And most have stayed, actually. It's incredible that they stay and—knowing that a missile could be hitting your apartment house, and your apartment house that you're sitting in could collapse on top of you.

And they do very heavy construction. They don't use rebar. They do very thick concrete construction. That's a—those are heavy buildings, big buildings and heavy buildings, and they

collapse like—like they're made out of paper. It's unbelievable to see this happening with people—so many people being killed.

So we think we're going to make progress, and we hope we're going to make progress.

In the meantime, we're going to get you good service on what you need.

Secretary General Rutte. Thank you.

President Trump. And then, we really became friendly with NATO this last meeting. You know, we went from 2 percent to 5 percent——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——which everyone said was not even a possibility. They weren't paying 2 percent. Many of them were paying——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——much less than 2 percent.

Secretary General Rutte. But even those, since you became President, all committed to the 2 percent before the summit.

President Trump. Right. Right. That's right.

Secretary General Rutte. And now, collectively, they committed to the 5 percent.

President Trump. That's right. They did, and they've been very good. And I think I made a lot of friends over there.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. We had a couple of days of very intensive talks, and they're great people. They're leaders of countries—leaders of countries. Many of them great countries, some of them smaller countries. But for the most part——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——I'd say very solid, strong countries. And very successful—some of them are among the most successful countries in the world.

So that's the story. We hope that's going to have an impact on Vladimir Putin, and we hope it's going to have an impact on Ukraine also. We want to make sure that Ukraine does what they have to do.

Secretary General Rutte. Exactly.

President Trump. All of a sudden, they have—they may feel emboldened, and maybe they don't want—you know, this is a very difficult situation.

Secretary General Rutte. Ukraine wants a peace deal.

President Trump. I think so.

Secretary General Rutte. And they will stay committed to that. There's no doubt they want this.

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. But the Russians have to become serious.

President Trump. They have to continue to want it, though, you know?

Secretary General Rutte. Yes, I agree.

President Trump. Yes, because——

Secretary General Rutte. But we will—you and I will make sure of that.

President Trump. ——all of a sudden—all of a sudden, they're getting all of these weapons.

Secretary General Rutte. But you and I will make sure of that.

President Trump. We'll make sure. I feel confident that they will do what has to be done.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. Plus, we have certain parameters that both sides know, and we already know what—what should be done, so I think that's going to be—it's going to be very strong. We want everlasting peace.

Any questions, please?

Yes.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. What was the tipping point for you in making this decision? Was it a conversation with President Putin? Was it a piece of intelligence? And why are you giving 50 more days?

President Trump. I think the—well, I think it's a very short period of time. I think—don't forget, I've just really been involved in this for not very long, and it wasn't initial focus. This is—again, this is a Biden war. This is a Democrat war, not a Republican or Trump war. This is a war that would have never happened. It shouldn't have happened.

A lot of people being killed. When the final numbers come in, you're going to see a lot more people are being killed in this war than—than you think, than you've been writing about. It's a very deadly war. Very—they're all bad, but this is a very deadly war. Very—the numbers are going to be far greater. When a——

Secretary General Rutte. [Inaudible]

President Trump. ——an apartment house comes down, and they say two people were slightly injured—no, many people were killed.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. And those numbers will be, at some point, accurately reported. So far, they're not. It's a deadly war.

I think that you're just going to see very—I think you're going to see strong movement. I hope so. I hope so.

Q. And what about the tariffs——

President Trump. You know, the secondary tariffs are very, very powerful.

Q. What about the tariffs that the Republicans in the House and the Senate have ready?

President Trump. Yes.

Q. Those are 500 percent.

President Trump. Sure.

Q. Why are you doing 100 percent?

President Trump. Well, the Republicans are moving very strongly in the Senate, giving us total control of it. But I don't—I'm not sure we need it, but it's certainly good that they're doing it. And Lindsey Graham is working hard. The whole—John Thune, all of them—they're all working hard. And they're in coordination with Mike Johnson, the Speaker in the House. And I think they are—they've actually crafted a pretty good piece of legislation. It's probably going to pass very easily. And that includes Democrats. And there are some little tweaks.

But I don't want to say I don't need it, because I don't want them to waste their time. It could be very useful. We'll have to see.

But we can do secondary. We're probably talking about 100 percent or something like that.

Q. Can you clarify for me——

President Trump. We could do secondary tariffs without the Senate, without the House. But what they're crafting also could be very good.

Russia/U.S. Sanctions

Q. So, are you suggesting, then, that the—that Congress should move forward with those sanctions, the 500 percent, and that your 100 would be a separate, additional package?

President Trump. Yes. I mean, the 500 is, you know, sort of meaningless after a while because, at a certain point, it doesn't matter. It's not going to be—you know, it's—a hundred is going to serve the same function.

But yes, I have it at 100 percent. They may have it—I don't know what they're going to end up with. They may have it at 100 too. They may have it at 500. But they're doing some good work in the House, and I think—in the House and the Senate. And as you know, they're coordinated, and they can have it done quickly. They said they'll have it as quickly as I need it.

So we'll see. We're talking to them. In fact, John Thune is coming over later on to talk.

Q. Did you call for it yet?

President Trump. Yes, he's going to come over.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Is it your view that Vladimir Putin mischaracterized his dedication to——

President Trump. What?

Q. Is it your view that Vladimir Putin misguided—did not clarify——

President Trump. Did he misguide us?

Q. ——did not clarify his intention——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——to a peace deal?

President Trump. Well——

Q. And what happens now in the next phase? Is there——

President Trump. You're going to see. I mean, we're going to go for a period of time. Maybe he'll start negotiating—I don't—I think we felt—I felt—I don't know about you, Mark, but I felt that we had a deal about four times.

Secretary General Rutte. Mm-hmm.

President Trump. And here we are still talking about making a deal.

Secretary General Rutte. And he didn't send serious people to the negotiation.

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. So I remember that you were able, with Marco Rubio and with Steve Witkoff, to get these talks going in Istanbul.

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. I remember, I was, myself, in Türkiye for NATO business in May, and we really put pressure on the Ukrainians to send a senior team into Istanbul, and they did. But then the Russians came up with this historian, explaining history of Russia since 1250.

Q. Will the——

President Trump. We thought and I thought we should have had a deal done a long time ago.

Q. Will those measures now change?

President Trump. But it just keeps going on and on and on, and every night people are dying. A lot of people. A lot of Russian soldiers are dying, by the way, and a lot of Ukrainian soldiers too, but a lot of Russian soldiers are dying.

Secretary General Rutte. A hundred thousand Russian soldiers since 1st of January.

Secretary Rubio. Since January this year.

Secretary General Rutte. Since January. A hundred thousand Russian soldiers dead since January. So, if anybody in——

Q. Will this new strategy now change his view?

Secretary General Rutte. ——in Moscow is listening to this, again, 100,000 dead——

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. ——Russians since January. This is what President Putin is doing at the moment.

Q. Mr. President?

President Trump. Yes, please.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Will these be Patriot missiles, specifically, or Patriot batteries that you're planning? And when do you——

President Trump. Everything. It's everything.

Q. When do you expect——

President Trump. It's Patriots. It's all of them. It's a full complement with the batteries. Yeah.

Q. And when do you expect them to arrive in the Ukraine, sir?

President Trump. Well, we're going to have some come very soon, within days, actually, because a couple of the countries that have Patriots are going to swap over, and we'll replace the Patriots with the ones they have. And Matt will coordinate with NATO.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. But——so it's going to be——they're going to start arriving very soon.

Secretary General Rutte. And this afternoon, Boris Pistorius, the German Defense Minister, is visiting Pete Hegseth, the Secretary of Defense, and will discuss also, I think, on this whole Patriot thing. Norway is involved.

So that's on the Patriots, but this whole deal is also about missiles, about ammunition. So, it's broader than Patriots.

President Trump. We have one country that has 17 Patriots getting ready to be shipped. They're not going to need them for them, so we're going to work a deal where the 17 will go or a big portion of the 17——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——will go to the war site.

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

That can be done very quickly.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. Yes, please.

Ukraine/International Military Aid/Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Q. Could this transaction with NATO be viewed as a step towards achieving peace, letting Putin know that now Zelenskyy has a little bit more powerful tools in his tool chest, and maybe that brings him to the table to achieve peace? Because I know that you wanted to do that.

President Trump. Yes. Brian [Brian Glenn, Real America's Voice], that's what we've been saying. I think you might have expressed it better, if you want to know the truth.

Q. I'm just trying to explain for the people at home.

President Trump. That's exactly what——

Secretary General Rutte. That was a summary. [*Laughter*]

President Trump. That was a nice summary. You might—I think he said it better than us. He's a very good guy, I can tell you that.

But no, it's well said. Yes, I think this is a chance at getting peace, or it's just going to be the same thing.

And I have to tell you, Europe has a lot of spirit for this war. A lot of people—you know, when I first got involved, I really didn't think they did, but they do, and I saw that a month ago when——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——and you were there. Most of you—many of you were there. The level of esprit de corps, spirit that they have is amazing. They really think it's a very, very important thing to do, or they wouldn't be doing.

Look, they're agreeing to—just so you know, they're paying for everything. We're not paying anymore. We were—we're—we have an ocean separating us. I said: "We have a problem. We have—we make the best stuff, but we can't keep doing this."

And Biden should have done this years ago. He should have done it from the beginning, but he didn't. He didn't know he was there. This guy, what a horrible job they did for this country.

And I just hope, between the border and this and so many other—inflation—what a horrible administration. The worst administration in history, in my opinion. It's not my opinion. I think it's everybody's opinion.

Q. Could I——

President Trump. But this is something that shouldn't have happened, and we're going to see if we can end it.

Q. If I could follow up with another——

President Trump. And I do want to make one statement though. Again, I said it before: This is not Trump's war. We're here to try and get it finished and settled and whatever. Because nobody wins with this, and this is a loser from every standpoint.

Secretary General Rutte. But from day one——

President Trump. This was Biden, and this was other people.

Secretary General Rutte. But from——

President Trump. And it's very sad. It's a very sad situation.

This gentleman is doing a great job. He's going to—I think he's going to get it. And Matt and everybody else that's working on it, I think you'll get this thing over with, hopefully.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes.

Tariff Rates/Trade Negotiations

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President, you've praised European countries today as standing up for Ukraine, as being strong. Will you allow them to continue to negotiate tariffs lower than 30 percent before August 1, or is the deal set at this point?

President Trump. What does that mean? You mean, you're talking about u- —the tariffs?

Q. On trade. On tariffs, yes, sir.

President Trump. Oh, you're back on tariffs. You're on a more friendly tariff, right? A little bit more friendly tariff. [Laughter]

Q. Perhaps.

President Trump. No, we're going to be talking to people. We have—you know, it's—I watched a show this morning, they were talking about, "Well, when is he going to make the deal?" The deals are already made. The letters are the deals. The deals are made. There are no deals to make.

They would like to do a different kind of a deal, and we're always open to talk. We are open to talk, including to Europe. The—in fact, they're coming over. They'd like to talk to us.

U.S. Munitions Stockpile

Q. Mr. President, is there any concern about the U.S.'s stockpiles? There was a pause in delivery of weaponry to Ukraine in order to evaluate, apparently, the U.S. stockpiles. What came out of that?

President Trump. Evaluation. I mean, this was a very big—what we're talking about today is a very, very big day, and what Pete was doing—and me, too; I knew what Pete was doing—was evaluation, because we knew this was going to happen. And now we actually announced it.

They voted on it. It's all been done. So, obviously, that has a big impact on—you know, when you say "a pause," obviously, you're not going to be doing things if you don't know what's going to happen here. But we were pretty sure this was going to happen, so we did a little bit of a pause.

But this is a very big event today. This is something very big.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, is there a ceiling on——

Q. If Putin escalates further, how far are you willing to go in response?

President Trump. In what?

Q. How far are you willing to go if Putin were to escalate, send more bombs in the coming days?

President Trump. Don't ask me a question like that. "How far?" I don't know. I—I want to get the war settled.

They're not Americans that are dying in it. And you know, I have a problem, and J.D. has a problem—it's a stance that he's had for a long time. They're not Americans dying, but there are a lot of people dying and on something that should be able to be settled, and we all agree with that. This group of people, you know, we want to defend our country.

But, you know, ultimately, having a strong Europe is a very good thing. It's a very good thing. So I'm okay with it.

Yes, please. In the back.

Ukraine/European Military Aid

Q. Yes, yes. Is there a ceiling on what the Europeans are willing to pay for? And it sounds like a—are you ruling out the U.S. paying for some—for additional weapons through drawdown authority?

Secretary General Rutte. Shall I try to answer that?

President Trump. Please, yes.

Secretary General Rutte. Because basically what the president is saying that he is willing—of course, taking consideration what the U.S. needs itself. And so, it's not that you can have a shopping list and you can order whatever you want, because U.S. has to make sure that the U.S. keeps its hands on what the U.S. needs also to keep the whole world safe. Because, in the end, you are the police agent of the whole world. You are the most powerful nation on Earth, the most powerful military on Earth.

But given that, the U.S. has decided to, indeed, massively supply Ukraine with what is necessary, through NATO. Europeans a hundred-percent paying for that. And what we have been doing over the last couple of days is talking with countries. And I just mentioned the ones who, in the first wave, immediately said, "We want to chip in."

And then you were talking—really talking about big numbers. Take Germany visiting today. They are really talking about big numbers.

Q. Can we get some clarity—can we get some clarity over——

President Trump. I will say that I spoke with Germany, spoke with most of the larger countries, and they are really enthusiastic about this. They want to—and they—you know, they're

willing to go very far, I will tell you. You know, as per your question, how far would I go: they—they want to go very far. They don't want this to happen.

That's why, I think, from Putin's standpoint, it would really be good. He gets—the country's economy is doing very poorly——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——and he's got to get his economy back. He's got to save his economy. He could save his country, in a sense. But the economy can destroy—it's destroyed a lot of countries over the years. He wants to get that economy back.

And you know, he's got a great country for trading and other things if they could use the assets instead of war. He's got some tremendous potential. That's what I would say.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. How did you deliver this news to Putin, sir?

President Trump. Say it.

Q. How did you tell Putin this was coming?

President Trump. I speak to him a lot about getting this thing done. And I always hang up and say, "Well, that was a nice phone call," and then missiles are launched into Kyiv or some other city. And I say, "That's strange."

And after that happens three or four times, you say, "The talk doesn't mean anything."

My conversations with him are always very pleasant. I say, "Isn't that a very lovely conversation?" And then the missiles go off that night. I go home, I tell the First Lady: "You know, I spoke with Vladimir today. We had a wonderful conversation." She said: "Oh, really? Another city was just hit."

So it's like, you—look, he's—I don't want to say he's an assassin, but he's a tough guy. It's been proven over the years. He's fooled a lot of people. He fooled Bush. He fooled a lot of people. He fooled Clinton, Bush, Obama, Biden. He didn't fool me. But what I do say is that, at a certain point, you know, ultimately, talk doesn't talk. It's got to be action. It's got to be results.

And I hope he does it. It's potentially such a great country to be wasting so many people on this and—and the money. And look at what's happened to his economy.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. Look at what's happened. So——

Secretary General Rutte. And with the threat in 50 days——

President Trump. Yes. So it's——

Secretary General Rutte. ——the economy will be hit very hard.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. The First Lady is focused on the civilian casualties?

President Trump. I mean, look, I hope he's going to do it. He knows the deal. He knows what a fair deal is, if there is such a thing as a fair deal. There can no—there's no winners here. This is a loser. This is a loser.

And I dealt with him from the beginning, and it wouldn't have happened, but I will say, it was—Ukraine was the apple of his eye. We'd talk about it. It was the apple of his eye, but it wasn't going to happen. And he understood that. It wasn't going to happen.

And then I noticed—after I was out, I noticed soldiers forming at the border.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. And then I heard horrible, stupid things being said from the other side. And I said, "They're really handling it very, very wrong." It's a shame.

Yes.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Secretary General Rutte. Can I—can I say—can I——

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. One thing, and it is about President Trump, because you came to office in January. On the 12th of February, you had your first phone call with Putin. I think you did exactly what I hoped you would do, that is breaking the deadlock, starting the conversation, because you have to test him.

I know Putin very well from the days when I was Prime Minister of the Netherlands. You have to test him. And you did this, and you really gave him a chance to be serious, to get to the table, to start negotiations.

Steve Witkoff, Marco Rubio, we're all trying to help you. But you have now come to a point where you say, "Well, hey"——

President Trump. We actually thought we had, probably——

Secretary General Rutte. ——"you have to get serious."

President Trump. ——four times, a deal.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes. Exactly.

President Trump. I mean, you were called and you said——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. "This looks good."

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. And then the deal wouldn't happen because bombs would be thrown out that night, and you'd say, "We're not making any deals." It was like—it's very——

Secretary General Rutte. But you breaking the deadlock was crucial, because you have to start that process. And you were the only one who was able to do that.

President Trump. I think we'll get it done.

Q. Do you think he's reasonable enough to negotiate an end to this?

President Trump. Yes, I think we're going to get it done. I think, look, he—this is a very powerful situation. You have very wealthy countries buying the best equipment in the world, and we have the best equipment in the world. We make equipment like no other.

You know, our submarines—nuclear submarines are so powerful. They are the most powerful weapon ever built, and we have the best in the world, by—they're 20 years behind, 25

years behind us. We have the greatest equipment anywhere in the world. I just hope we don't have to use it.

Yes, please.

Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr./U.S. National Economy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On a separate topic here, President Biden, of all people, spoke to the New York Times over the weekend. He did not speak to them on the record during his time in office at all, but he spoke to them recently, and he defended his use of the autopen and said that he signed off on every decision. But, at the same time, The Times report said he did not individually approve each name for the categorical pardons that applied to large numbers of people.

What are your—is your take on that? Any new revelations from the autopen——

President Trump. Well, I mean, you're talking about the autopen. Look, the autopen, I think, is maybe one of the biggest scandals that we've had in 50 to 100 years. This is a tremendous scandal.

And I know the people on the other side of the—see that desk, that Resolute Desk? Unfortunately, he used it before me. But—you know, we have our choice of seven desks. They're all beautiful, but I chose the Resolute, and so did he, unfortunately.

But the people on the other side of the Resolute Desk, I know them—Lisa, the whole group—and they're no good. They're sick people. And I guarantee you, he knew nothing about what he was signing. I guarantee it.

So they're going to figure it out, and we'll see what happens.

But to me, the autopen—you know, you're elected President—you know what the autopen is supposed to do? Sign thousands of letters from young people that write—I get—we get thousands of letters a week, Susie, right? Thousands. I mean tens of thousands sometimes.

I look at a room—there's a room where we have many, many people working, responding and sending letters back. That's what an autopen is supposed to be—to write to a young 7-year-old boy that writes to the President, and he wants to be President someday, and he loves America. That's what the autopen is supposed to be. It's not supposed to be for signing major legislation and all other things.

No, the autopen—and I doubt he knew. I doubt they even spoke to him about it. I think they—they had—if—it's called the freewheeling autopen. Like, Biden was never for open borders. Biden was never for transgender for everyone. So I don't think he—I think the radical-left people that took—they took over the White House, and if I didn't win, our country was finished.

You know, when I was in—and I said this a couple of times. I hope I don't bore you with it. But when I was in Saudi Arabia, I was in Qatar, I was in U.A.E., and then I met with all of your leaders——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. ——including you, a great leader. He's now the leader of many countries, not just one.

Secretary General Rutte. [Laughter] No, no, no, no.

President Trump. But I met with a lot of leaders over the——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. —last 2 months—

Secretary General Rutte. [Inaudible]

President Trump. —in the Middle East and all the NATO—all of the NATO countries.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes. Yes.

President Trump. And I will tell you, they had one common phrase. They thought America was dead 1 year ago, and today they say—and they all say it, and I hope—I hope you'll back me up in this—but they say, "Now it's the hottest country anywhere in the world."

It is. Look at our numbers. Look at the numbers we made. Did you see we made \$25 billion last month? We don't—we didn't make that for years.

The tariffs are kicking in. The economy is very strong, even though we have a Fed person who's terrible. He doesn't know what the hell he's doing, but that's all right. We blew—we blow through interest rates. We're doing so well, we blow through it. It'd be nice, because people would be able to buy housing a lot easier.

But think of it. "We thought your country was dead." And they were dealing with China, because they really—they were really going to China, but not anymore. But "we thought your country was dead, and now you have the hottest country anywhere in the world."

So we've done a really good job, and it's an honor to have this man. This man is a star. And he's going to be dealing with another one of my stars, Matt.

And you're going to do a great job, Matt Whitaker. Okay?

Ambassador Whitaker. Thank you. I will.

President Trump. Thank you very much, everybody.

Secretary General Rutte. [Inaudible]

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. Thank you, Brian. Thank you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India; Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan; Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance; former Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco; White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles; and Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell. A reporter referred to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on July 15.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Secretary General Rutte.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bush, George W.; Clinton, William J.; Graham, Lindsey O.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Johnson, J. Michael; Modi, Narendra; Monaco, Lisa A.; Obama, Barack; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Rutte, Mark ; Sharif, Shehbaz; Thune, John R.; Trump, Melania; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Whitaker, Matthew G.; Witkoff, Steven C.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Armenia, relations with Azerbaijan; Azerbaijan, relations with Armenia; Congo, Democratic Republic of the, relations with Rwanda; Economic improvement; Egypt, relations with Ethiopia; Ethiopia, relations with Egypt; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project, regional negotiations; India, Prime Minister; India, relations with Pakistan; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Kosovo, relations with Serbia; Missile defense, modernization efforts; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pakistan, Prime Minister; Pakistan, relations with India; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Russia, U.S. sanctions; Rwanda, relations with Democratic Republic of the Congo; Secretary of Defense; Secretary of State; Senate majority leader; Serbia, relations with Kosovo; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Tariffs; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Vice President; White House Chief of Staff.

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