

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters

September 25, 2025

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's a pleasure to be with President Erdoğan of Turkey. And we've been friends for a long time, actually—even for 4 years when I was in exile, unfairly, as it turns out. Rigged election, you know? He knows about rigged elections better than anybody.

But when I was in exile, we were still friends. That's always a good way to find out, test a friendship.

But he's a highly respected man. He's respected very much in his country and all throughout Europe and throughout the world where they know him. He's built a tremendous military, powerful military—uses a lot of our equipment.

And it's an honor to have him at the White House. We're going to have a lunch together. We're going to have a discussion—big discussion.

We do a lot of trade with Turkey, and we're going to continue. We're going to do some additional trade. They want to buy F-16s, F-35s, and some other things, and we're going to talk to them about that.

And we're just going to have, I think, a very interesting couple of hours. We're going to get a lot done.

But I have great respect for this man, and we've had a very good relationship for a long time.

If you remember, he let Pastor Brunson—he freed Pastor Brunson. Pastor Brunson was put in jail for 35 years, before I got there. This was a group that should have stopped it.

And the President, after I called him, released him, which was a great thing for our Christian community—our evangelical community. The evangelicals really, really wanted that. It was very important to them, so I always remember that. But he released him from 35 years in prison, and Pastor Brunson now is healthy, happy, and well, and we're very happy about that.

But I—it's a great honor to have the President of Turkey with us.

And how are you?

President Erdogan. Fine.

President Trump. Say a few words.

President Erdogan. And you?

President Trump. Great guy.

[At this point, President Erdogan spoke in Turkish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

President Erdogan. First, Mr. President, I am very pleased that this visit actually coincides with the 80th UNGA. So I am very pleased to be here with my colleagues and friends.

And as we have said, during the first term of your Presidency and during your second term, we are able to carry Turkey and U.S. relations to a much different level and process. And as you've said, we have an opportunity here today to be able to discuss some of the issues regarding

the F-35, the F-16, and also the Halkbank case, and we will have an opportunity to thoroughly discuss them.

And based on what you have mentioned regarding the Heybeliada school, we are ready to do whatever we can that falls on our part. And I will, when I get back, try to discuss this issue with the esteemed Mr. Bartholomeos to discuss how we can move forward on that.

President Trump. Okay. Very good. And we'd like to be able to do that.

The Greek Orthodox Church was here, and they would really like to have some help. They need some help. And I said I'd mention it. We appreciate it.

So this is a tough man. This is a guy who's highly opinionated. Usually, I don't like opinionated people, but I always like this one. But he's a tough one, and he does an amazing job in his country. And we've had tremendous relationships, both having to do with war and having to do with trade. And I guess today we're talking about both.

I'd like to have him stop buying any oil from Russia while Russia continues this rampage against Ukraine. And they've been fighting. They've lost millions of lives already, and for what? You know, for what? It's disgraceful.

And I said yesterday, "Let it keep going," because their economy is absolutely terrible right now. And I think it's—I think it's a shame that they're doing that—killing a lot of people unnecessarily.

Seven thousand eight hundred and eighteen people were killed last week, mostly military people. Their people and Ukrainians. More Russians, actually, than Ukraine. A little bit more. But it's such a waste of human life, and so he ought to stop. You know, Putin ought to stop.

And with that, we'll get to a little bit of a discussion. We're going to make some great trade deals for both countries.

We do a lot of business with Turkey. They build great products. They build beautiful, great products. Really fantastic manufacturers, and we buy a lot from them, and they buy a lot from us.

Would you have any questions, please?

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Turkey-U.S. Security Cooperation

Q. Thank you very much. You repeatedly called out Obama and Biden administrations for their "stupid decisions." One example you gave was refusal to sell the Patriot missile defense systems to Türkiye, which resulted in the expulsion of the country from the F-35 program.

Now, you are known to be a great dealmaker in Turkey. What can you do to undo the stupidity?

President Trump. You're from Turkey?

Q. Yes, CNN Türk.

President Trump. CNN? Wow. Because you sounded like a nice guy, but—[laughter]—but CNN is fake news. I mean—but you sound like the real deal to me——

Q. Thank you.

President Trump. ——so I'll answer the question.

We're going to be discussing the Patriot system, which is the best system. We'll discuss that. We're going to discuss the F-35. We'll be discussing all of the things that you know about and

that—some of that you mentioned. And I think he'll be successful with buying the things he'd like to buy.

Q. What concrete steps can you take to make that——

President Trump. Well, we'll have to see that. We haven't even started yet. But I know he wants the F-35, and he's wanted that, and we're talking about that very seriously. And the F-16, we're in great shape. Certain other things he needed, as you know, and I'm going to see to it that we get that to him. He needs certain things, and we need certain things. And we're going to come to a conclusion. You'll know by the end of the day.

Go ahead, please.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Hold it. Hold it. Hold it. Go ahead.

[The reporter spoke in Turkish. President Erdogan then spoke in Turkish. Several reporters then spoke at once.]

President Trump. Hold it.

Q. May ——

President Trump. Because I haven't learned—I haven't learned his language yet.

What did he say?

Interpreter. The gentleman is asking, "Mr. President, you have referred to President Trump's peace efforts, and you have also contact with many leaders in the region, and what do you think that you can do about this?"

And Mr. President has said that, "Yes, I believe in the peace efforts that President Trump is leading. And together, we will be able to overcome the challenges in the region."

President Trump. I think it's true. He's got tremendous influence in the region.

Yes, please.

Turkey/U.S. Sanctions

Q. Mr. President, when are you planning to make—cut the sanctions against Turkey?

President Trump. Against—sanctions against Turkey?

Q. Cut the sanctions.

President Trump. Could be very soon. If we have a good——

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. If we have a good meeting, almost immediately.

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to impose tougher sanctions on——

Turkey-U.S. Trade

Q. Erdoğan is renewing tariffs on U.S. goods. And what impact it will be in the U.S. production?

President Trump. Where are you from?

Q. Turkey.

President Trump. I see. We have a lot of people from Turkey here. *[Laughter]*

Q. We are—[inaudible]—journalists here.

President Trump. That's good. Because I like the questions very much, actually. They're very nice questions.

We'll see about tariffs. We're going to be talking about tariffs.

Q. You already removed them?

President Trump. Well, we're going to be talking about that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Europe/Russian Oil and Gas Supply/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to impose tougher sanctions on Russia even if not all even if not all NATO countries stop purchasing Russian oil?

President Trump. We're going to be seeing about that. The NATO countries were disappointing in that regard, but they've been very amazing in other ways. They did—as you know, they went from 2 percent to 5 percent GDP, and that's a big step. And it's paid. I mean, they have the money there.

And we're selling a tremendous amount of military equipment to NATO. We're selling. We're not giving like Biden did. We're selling it to NATO, and it's a lot. They're buying a lot, and I assume they're giving it to Ukraine. They could buy it for other reasons too, but I assume they're giving most of it to Ukraine.

But they're buying highly sophisticated weaponry, and they're paying for it full price, and that's how we're involved.

Biden gave \$350 billion. Look, this war would have never started if I were President. If I were President, this war would never be happening—would have never happened.

Yes.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Mr. President, I would like to ask about Gaza. Are you on the same page Mr. Erdoğan for Palestine-Israel?

President Trump. Well, I don't know his stance. I can't tell you about that. I just say that we want to get Gaza over with.

I had a great meeting with the leaders of that area, of that region—generally speaking, the Middle East. We had a great meeting the other day at UNGA, as you know, and I think we're—I think we're close to getting some kind of a deal done.

Yes, we want to—we want to get the hostages back. I have to get the hostages back. We're the ones that got the hostages—all of them that we have now. But it looks like there are 20 living hostages and probably 38 or so dead hostages. Pretty sad.

And the parents of those dead souls, those dead—mostly men, boys—many cases, like, literally boys. They want those bodies back so badly, as much as though they were alive.

And so we had a very good meeting with the representatives of the most powerful countries in the Middle East. And I think we're going to be close to a deal.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead. Yes, go ahead, please.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr. President, we've noticed that in the Ukrainian war and during the Israeli-Iran war, the airspace of the NATO countries is very fragile, and it needs to be stronger. And in that sense, Turkey being the second largest army in NATO, it needs to support its air force and air defense. How do you look at this issue in general, as a NATO—[inaudible]—because we're—[inaudible]?

President Trump. We're in NATO, —and you know, they're paying now 5 percent of GDP. Nobody thought that was possible, and they agreed to that 6 months ago, when I was there. And the relationship is very good.

The NATO countries are—I mean, with us, it's the strongest it's ever been. We used to complain that they're paying 2 percent but they're not paying. The United States was paying almost everything, and now they're paying 5 percent—and they pay.

And that's trillions of dollars. You know, we're talking about trillions of dollars, and they're spending that, giving that money to us, and we are giving them great defensive—you know, the Patriots and all of the different Javelins, all the different missile systems and everything else that they want. But it's—you know, it's trillions of dollars.

So we appreciate that they did that. So, they went from 2 percent to 5 percent of GDP, and that was something that nobody even would bring up. Biden should have brought it up a long time ago, because under Biden, we paid \$350 billion and all it did is make things worse.

So we'll see—[inaudible].

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead. Just finish—yes, go ahead.

Q. [Inaudible]—F-35s to Turkey. Fighter jets—F-35s.

President Trump. Yes, we're talking about fighter jets for Turkey. Yes, we are.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead, please.

Arab States/President Trump's Diplomatic Efforts/Israel

Q. Are we going to see—are we going to see any step is going to be taken today about the issue—about the things are that going on in the Gaza, Palestine? Are we going to—

President Trump. Could be today. Yes, it could be today.

We have a very strong dialogue going on with Saudi Arabia, with—I would say, you have four or five real leaders that are being good.

As you know, I met with Qatar, Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. We met with Jordan. The King of Jordan was there. We had great—we had a really great meeting. I think a lot was determined at that meeting.

And I have to meet with Israel, and I have to do that also. They know what I want, and we think—I think we can get that one done. I hope we can get it done. A lot of people are dying, but we want the hostages back. We don't want them back one this week, one in 2 months from now, three later, and—you know, like the way it's been going. We got them all back. We got a lot of them back. We got our American—the American, Alexander. We got the American hostages back.

But we have now 20 plus 38 bodies—dead bodies, and we want them all back. And we want them back at one time.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead.

Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Do you think President Erdoğan—do you think President—do you think President Erdoğan will help to release the hostages in—from——

President Trump. Do I think what?

Q. Do you think President Erdoğan will have to release the hostages in——

President Trump. I don't know if he'll help, in that I don't really think we have—I don't think it'll be necessary in this case. I think we're going to be in a pretty good position. There are a lot of people that want that done.

I met with great leaders. Look, over—you saw the people that were there. And great leaders. Egypt was also represented. We met with the leaders of that part of the world, and they want to see if they can get something done.

And I have—I'm going to have to tell Israel, "Let's go." We want to get the hostages back. They want—everybody wants to see that war over with, by the way. Everybody.

So we're going to see what happens.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead. Go ahead. Yes, please.

President Erdogan's Diplomatic Efforts/President Trump's Foreign Policy/Russia/Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, how do you see a joint initiative with President Erdoğan to bring the President of Russia—Putin—and President Zelenskyy to the negotiating table?

President Trump. Well, I can tell you that President Erdoğan is very respected by both of them. Everybody respects Erdoğan. They really respect Erdoğan. I do. And I think he could have a big influence if he wants to.

Right now he's very neutral. He likes being neutral. So do I—like being neutral. But he's somebody that if he got involved, I—the best thing he could do is not buy oil and gas from Russia. If he didn't—if he did that, that would be probably the best thing. He knows Putin like I know Putin.

I thought Putin—I've—I settled, as you know, seven wars—and it's probably more than that, if you really want to know the—the real facts. But seven wars, and I thought this would be among the easier ones to settle. But I'm very disappointed in Putin.

And he's been fighting hard, he's been fighting long, and they lost millions of—they lost, like, a million soldiers. And you know, they've—with all of the heavy bombardment over the last 2 weeks, they've gained almost no land. Think of that. They've gained almost no land.

And I'm not going to ever call anybody a paper tiger, but Russia has spent millions and millions of dollars in bombs, missiles, ammunition, and lives—their lives. And they've gained virtually no land.

I think it's time to stop. I really do.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead.

Azerbaijan/Armenia

Q. A few months ago, you met with Aliyev and Pashinyan. Can you follow up on——

President Trump. To where?

Q. You met with Aliyev and Pashinyan—Azerbaijan President Aliyev and Pashinyan. Can you follow up on what you want to say about Kirants process?

President Trump. No, I can't. I just——

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

I've—I can't say.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

I know—I like this guy. I like him. He's from CNN—fake news. The worst fake news, but I like him. [*Laughter*] So it's CNN Turkey.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

I like—oh, I'll get—I'll get Brian [Brian Glenn, Real America's Voice].

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Go ahead, go ahead, go ahead. Go, go, go.

Syria

Q. Syria has been a major issue between the two countries for——

President Trump. That's right.

Q. —the past decade. And you said the future, to Syria, is in Erdoğan's hands back in, I think, December and January. And the countries are in the process of integrating—[*inaudible*]—fractures into the main government. When do you want to see that happen?

President Trump. Well, I think President Erdoğan is the one responsible for Syria, for the— for the successful fight in ridding Syria of its past leader. And I think this man is responsible. He doesn't take the responsibility, but it's actually a great achievement. They've been trying to do it for 2,000 years.

I said: "He does it. He did it." I mean, they're your surrogates. I think he should take the credit for it. I told him: "Take the credit. For 2,000 years, you've been trying to take over Syria." He took over Syria, and he doesn't want to take the credit.

You know, all of those people are his surrogates. But the leader of Syria, the new leader—as you know, I took sanctions off in order to let them breathe, because the sanctions were very strong.

But I think we should have a major announcement today. He was responsible for that victory. It was a victory for Turkey, because they've been fighting, as you know, for, like, a thousand years. And it never went—you know, it was back and forth, but he's—responsible for that.

So he would have a lot to say with respect to Syria. But at his request, I took—and the request, also, of the King of Saudi Arabia. It's very interesting. And Qatar. They said, "If you could, take the sanctions." We had very strong sanctions. I don't—they couldn't have lived with those sanctions. And I took them off to give them a chance to breathe.

But the President was one of the people that was responsible for that. He asked me to do it, and I did it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Potential Lapse in Federal Government Appropriations/Tariff Revenue

Q. Mr. President, furloughs are very typical when the Government shuts down. Why is the administration directing Federal layoffs of Federal workers this time around?

President Trump. Well, this is all caused by the Democrats. They asked us to do something that's totally unreasonable. They never change. They want to give money away to illegals—illegally—people that entered our country illegally. They want to give them massive Federal money. And we don't want to do that, because it means everyone's going to just keep pouring back—right now we have absolutely perfect borders like you haven't seen in many years. Even better than the—I had great borders during my 4 years, but these borders are stone-cold closed. You can only come into our country legally now.

But the Democrats want to give it all away. They want to—also, they want to open up the borders. Take a look at that. Big thing: They want to open borders again. After what we're going through now, getting rid of prisoners, getting rid of all of these people dropped out from mental institutions, drug dealers, drug addicts—everything. They're putting everybody into our count—it's all ended now.

But this is what Schumer wants. This is what the Democrats want. They want to have—and they want to take our money. We're doing well. Because of tariffs, we're doing unbelievable. We're making more money than we ever have made.

And by the way, we're going to take some of that tariff money that we've made—just to get off the subject for a second—we're going to take some of that tariff money that we made and we're going to give it to our farmers, who are, for a little while, going to be hurt until it kicks in—the tariffs kick in to their benefit. So we're going to make sure that our farmers are in great shape, because we're taking in a lot of money.

We're finding—the other day, it was very interesting, they found \$31 billion. They said, "Sir, we found 31." I said, "You mean positively, right?" They said, "Yes, \$31 million more than we knew." And they said, "We don't know where it came from." I said, "Check the tariff shelf." They came back the following morning. They said: "You're right, sir. It came from the tariffs."

We've never seen anything like this. So what we're going to be doing is, we're going to be taking some money from all of the tariff money that we've taken, and we're going to distribute it to our farmers until the tariffs kick in to their benefit. Which, ultimately, the farmers are going to be making a fortune, but it's a process of it has to kick in.

All right. Maybe one more question.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Shooting at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Field Office in Dallas, Texas

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President, there was another I—shooting at an ICE facility in Texas yesterday.

President Trump. Yes. Terrible.

Q. Detainees were killed. The FBI Director posted on social media bullets that were engraved with the message "ANTI ICE."

President Trump. Right.

Democratic Party

Q. He just posted another thing on social media saying they recovered a handwritten note from the subject that read, "Hopefully, this will give ICE agents real terror to think, to think, 'Is there a sniper with AP rounds on that roof?'" Who do you hold responsible for the uptick in left-wing violence——

President Trump. Uh-huh. Radical-left rhetoric.

Q. ——that the country is seeing?

President Trump. The radical left is causing the problem. They're out of control. They're saying things—and they're really dumb people. I mean, I look at Crockett. I look at some of these people. They'r every low-IQ people, actually.

But the radical left is causing this problem. Not the right, the radical left. And it's going to get worse. And ultimately, it's going to go back on them. I mean, bad things happen when they play these games. And I'll give you a little clue: The right is a lot tougher than the left, but the right is not doing this. They're not doing it.

And they better not get them energized, because it won't be good for the left. And I don't want to see that happen either. I'm the President of all the people.

But the radical left is causing this. Radical-left Democrats are causing this problem, and it's—it gets worse. It gets worse. And it will be a point where other people won't take it anymore, and that will not be good for the radical left, and we don't want that.

Okay. Thank you—[*inaudible*].

Brian.

Q. Mr. President——

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

President Trump. Brian.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. Brian. Brian.

Former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey

Q. Mr. President, it seems like an indictment of James Comey is imminent. Would this be the first step in accountability for pushing the hoax of "Russia, Russia, Russia," along with Barack Obama involved as well?

President Trump. Well, I can't tell you what's going to happen, because I don't know. You have very professional people headed up by the Attorney General and Todd—Todd Blanche, and Lindsey Halligan, who is very smart—good lawyer, very good lawyer. They're going to make a determination. I'm not making that—I think I'd be allowed to get involved if I want, but I don't really choose to do so.

I can only say that Comey is a bad person. He's a sick person. I think he's a sick guy, actually. He did terrible things at the FBI. And—but I don't know. I have no idea what's going to happen.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew C. Brunson, pastor, Dirilis (Resurrection) Church in Izmir, Turkey, who was detained by Turkish authorities on October 7, 2016, and returned to the U.S. custody on October 12, 2018; Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar; King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates; King Abdullah II of Jordan; Edan Alexander, a U.S. citizen who was captured during the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel and released on May 12; former President Bashar al-Asad and President Ahmad Husayn al-Shara' of Syria; Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer; Rep. Jasmine F. Crockett; Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche; Interim U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia Lindsey Halligan; and former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey. President Erdogan referred to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Reporters referred to former President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia; Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kashyap P. "Kash" Patel; and Joshua Jahn, suspected gunman in the shooting at the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement field office in Dallas, TX, on September 24.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Turkey, President Erdogan.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abdullah II, King; Alexander, Edan; Asad, Bashar al-; Blanche, Todd; Bondi, Pamela J.; Brunson, Andrew C.; Comey, James B.; Crockett, Jasmine F.; Erdogan, Recep Tayyip; Halligan, Lindsey; Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan; Obama, Barack; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Schumer, Charles E.; Shara', Ahmad Husayn al-; Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir.

Subjects: Attorney General; Border security; Deputy Attorney General; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Illegal immigration; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Jordan, King; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Qatar, Amir; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, oil supply and refining; Russia, President; Russia, Putin; Saudi Arabia, King; Senate minority leader; Syria, President; Syria, removal of U.S. sanctions; Tariffs; Texas, shooting at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Field Office in Dallas; Turkey, President; Turkey, relations with U.S.; Turkey, trade with U.S.; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; United Arab Emirates, President.

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