

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One En Route to Lod, Israel

October 12, 2025

The President. A little wet out there. Hello.

Q. Hello, sir.

The President. Go ahead.

U.S. Cease-Fire Agreement Between Hamas and Israel/Lapse in Federal Government Appropriations

Q. So, President Trump, what's harder: peace in the Middle East or ending a Government shutdown?

The President. Well, I think the hardest is this. This has been going on for 3,000 years. The shutdown has only been for 10 days.

So I think the shutdown, it's gotten to be almost customary, but we're taking care of it. We've got the military paid in full. And we're doing a lot of things. We're ending some programs that we don't want. They happen to be Democrat-sponsored programs. But we're ending some programs that we never wanted, and we're probably not going to allow them to come back. I think they made a mistake. I think they made a big mistake. This is really a Schumer shutdown, because he's become sort of irrelevant, and he wants to make himself relevant again.

Peace Efforts in the Middle East

Q. And in terms of the politics of this historic peace deal that we're on the way to go sign right now, you would think it's good for everybody, but at a rally this weekend, they were cheering for you, and they were booing Netanyahu. What's up with that?

The President. I don't know, but we're going to make everybody happy. The one thing I can tell you is everybody is happy. Whether it's Jewish or Muslim or the Arab countries, every country is dancing in the streets. And it's a point in time I don't think you'd ever see it again. They've never seen it for 3,000 years. If you like one group, you don't like the other group. And if you like the other group, you don't like the first group.

And this is the first time they've ever seen where everybody is unified. Because, as you know, we're going to Egypt after Israel, and we're going to meet all of the leaders of the very powerful and big countries and very rich countries and others, and they're all into this deal. Everybody is into it. It's never happened before.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. So I would say this is a lot tougher, but we'll see how it all works out.

Gaza Conflict

Q. Mr. President, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, has not gone so far as to say the war is over. In your view, is the war between Israel and Hamas over?

The President. The war is over. The war is over. The war is over. Okay? Do you understand that? Good.

U.S. Cease-Fire Agreement Between Hamas and Israel

Q. Mr. President, is the cease-fire going to hold? Are you confident the cease-fire will hold?

The President. Say it?

Q. Are you confident that the cease-fire is going to hold?

The President. I think so. I think it's going to hold. I think people are—a lot of reasons why it's going to hold, but I think people are tired of it. It's been—it's been centuries, okay? Not just recent; it's been centuries. I think people are tired of it. Yes, the cease-fire is going to hold, and we're going to make sure it holds.

Q. Mr. President, what will Gaza look like a year from now?

The President. Wait.

Peacekeeping Efforts in Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. The international stabilization force is part of a——

The President. It will be a good, strong force. I don't think it's going to have a big impact, because I don't think—I think barely we're going to have to use it. I think people are going to behave. Everybody knows their place. It's going to be great for everybody. It's going to be great for the surrounding countries—Arab, Muslim, all of them. It's going to be great for Israel. Everybody is happy, and I think it's going to stay that way.

Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News]?

U.S. Cease-Fire Agreement Between Hamas and Israel

Q. And if this peace—if the cease-fire does hold, how long until we get to the part of the 20-point peace plan where developers can go in and make Gaza the riviera of the Middle East?

The President. Well, I don't know about the riviera for a while, because if you take a look at what you have, you have to get people taken care of first.

But it's going to start, really, essentially, immediately. I mean, they're going to have to start by removing a lot of the structures that you see that are down to the ground. I mean, it's a very—it's blasted. This is like a demolition site. Almost the entire site is. So you have to get rid of what you have there. You have structures that are very dangerous. They're falling down. If they haven't fallen, they're going to fall down of their own volition.

So that process, Peter, is going to start pretty much immediately, in that way.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. What will it look like a year from now, in your view?

The President. Well, a year, that's very quick, but over the years, it'll look very good. It'll be—it's got the first chance it's had in centuries of being peaceful. It's always been a very, very strange area. It's always been loaded up with problems—religious problems, problems like no other place probably in the world. And I think it's going to now—it's going to normalize. All you can say—if it normalizes, that would be fantastic.

Future Governing Structure of Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. The governing structure, sir, that you have set up in that peace plan, how soon will that new governing body be in place?

The President. Very quickly. And everybody wants to be a part of it. You're talking about the board of peace?

Q. That's right. Tony Blair, yourself.

The President. Everybody wants—yes, everybody wants to be a part of it. I've had calls from all of the leaders, the leaders of countries—they all want to be a part. I mean, the leaders themselves, they're not going to send somebody. They want to be a part of it.

Q. Do you know who's going to be a part of it yet?

The President. I do. I do.

Q. Can you share?

The President. No, not yet. It's a little early.

Q. Have you spoken to Tony Blair about it, since the——

The President. You'd better take your ear things out.

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

Q. Have you spoken to Tony Blair about it since——

The President. I have. You know, first I want to find out that Tony would be popular with all, because I just don't know that. And I like Tony. I've always liked Tony. But I want to find out that he's an acceptable choice to everybody.

Israel-U.S. Security Cooperation

Q. What about—what guarantees have you been able to give to both the Israelis and the Arab countries?

The President. We have a lot of guarantees.

Q. The Israelis are very concerned——

The President. And we have a lot of verbal guarantees too. And I don't think they're going to want to disappoint me. I have a lot of verbal guarantees, guarantees that aren't down in writing, but they were given to me, and I believe they're going to be held very strongly. That's why I think it's going to be successful.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Look who we have. Hi, Katie [Katie Pavlich, Townhall.com]. Let me shake your hand. I love Katie.

Hamas/Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Good to see you, Mr. President. Thank you. Good to see you.

I'm sure you've seen reports of Hamas rearming, instituting themselves as a Palestinian police force, taking—you know, shooting—shooting rivals.

The President. Yes, I saw pictures of it.

Q. What is your message to Hamas?

The President. Where they are standing—because they do want to stop the problems, and they've been open about it, and we gave them approval for a period of time—you have to understand, they've lost probably 60,000 people. That's a lot of retribution. They've lost 60,000 people. And the ones that are living right now were, in many cases, very young when this all started. And we are having them watch that there's not going to be big crime or some of the problems that you have when you have areas like this that have been literally demolished.

You know, you have 2 million people, and probably it will be less than that, but you have close to 2 million people going back to buildings that have been demolished, and a lot of bad things can happen. So we want it to be safe. I think it's going to be fine. Who knows for sure, Katie, but I think it's going to be fine.

Yes.

Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Mr. President, hi. What is the latest that you've heard about hostages, when they will be released? Do you expect to meet with any of them?

The President. Well, I hear the hostages might be even a little early, but I don't want to say that. So they have the hostages, I understand all 20, and we may get them out a little bit early. Getting them was amazing, actually, because we were involved, and they were in places that you don't want to know about. Deep. Deep, deep.

Former Presidents Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and Barack Obama

Q. Some of the top Biden administration folks who were there, like Antony Blinken, seem to want some credit for the peace deal. Blinken says, "It's good that President Trump adopted and built on the plan that the Biden administration developed." What do you think about that?

The President. Everybody knows that's a joke. Look, they didn't do—they did such a bad job. This should have never happened. This wouldn't have even happened. That was weak leadership, terrible with—and the same thing with Russia, Russia-Ukraine. If just a decent president, not a great President, like me—not a great President, if a decent President was in, you wouldn't have had the Russia-Ukraine.

And this is—I would say even more so, this was bad policy by Biden and by Obama. Remember when Bibi came, and he begged that you not do what they were doing with Iran? You remember that, right? Begged them. And they wouldn't even listen to him. Everything they did was the opposite what you should have done. And it's nice that they try and take a little credit. That was years ago, and the mistakes were made years ago, and it was both by Biden and Obama.

Peace Efforts in the Middle East

Q. And so what did you do so differently? Because a lot—I know a lot of it was behind the scenes. So what did you do so much differently than Joe Biden and—to end the war?

The President. Well, I resonated with the Arab leaders, the Muslim leaders, and the Jewish leaders, for whatever reason. You tell me why. You know?

He said that in my first news conference I answered more questions of him than Biden did in four years. And I think that's pretty close to being true.

Q. There were no Pinocchios in the fact check.

The President. There were not. That's right.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel/U.S. Cease-Fire Agreement Between Hamas and Israel

Q. Mr. President, your relationship with Prime Minister Netanyahu has been through some ups and downs. You had to get a little tough on him. Where is that relationship now? And can you tell us——

The President. It's good. It's very good. He just put me up for the Nobel Prize, so, you know, I don't know what it means with the Nobel Prize. But he put me up yesterday for the Nobel Prize, that I should get it. So, I mean, I think it's very good.

Q. Has he made commitments to you personally about moving forward to the next phase of peace?

The President. Look, let me tell you. He's a wartime president. He did a very good job. I had some disputes with him, and they were quickly settled. I can tell you that. But, as far as I'm concerned, I think he's done a great job. I think he was the right person at this time.

You know, look, it's been—it's been this way for centuries. You know, we're not talking about for 10 years, for 5. It's been this way for centuries. And he did a great job. And working with me, he was fantastic.

Now, working with Biden, no good. They didn't get along, and they had the opposite, because Biden and Obama backed Iran. And just so, when you talk about a thing like that, if you think—they were backing Iran. When you back Iran, this wouldn't have worked.

And had we not taken out the Iran nuclear facility and we made the same deal, it would have a really dark cloud over it, and you wouldn't have people dancing in the streets, Katie. You would have people saying, "Oh, my"—you know, you're making a deal, but we have a guy over there with nuclear weapons all over the place. He's going to knock the hell out of us.

If we didn't take out the Iran nuclear when we did—because in 2 months, they would have had a nuclear weapon—this deal, even if it were done the exact same way, would have had a dark cloud over it. And now there's no dark clouds. There's nobody they have to worry about.

Katie.

Qatar-U.S. Relations/Peace Efforts in the Middle East

Q. Have you talked to the Qataris about their changing behavior in your first term? You talked about how they were funding terrorism.

The President. Yes.

Q. What are they——

The President. The Qataris—yes——

Q. What are they doing differently, in your eyes, to make sure they're not funding terrorism?

The President. The Qataris really helped us with this deal. And the Amir is an amazing man who really helped us. You have to understand, his country is right in the middle of everything, more so than any other country. More so than U.A.E., where you have to fly an hour and a half to get there. More so than Saudi Arabia, where you have to fly an hour and a half to get there. His country, you walk across the line and you're there.

So he's in the middle of this unbelievable hostile territory with people on all different sides of the—you know, of the opinion and the question. They were a tremendous help. Qatar was a tremendous help to getting this done. I hope people can realize that.

And it was very—it was very tough and very dangerous for Qatar. They were very brave, and their leader, the Amir, was very, very brave. And Qatar should start getting some credit. And you have to understand, they lived in the middle of everything. So they can't just be like—they—you couldn't do it, I could—nobody. Nobody could do it.

Q. Have they changed——

The President. Say what?

Q. Have they changed their behavior from 2017, when you accused them of funding terrorism?

The President. I don't know. In 2017, I didn't really know them very well. You know, 2017, that was at the very beginning of my term. As I got to know them, I got to understand them, and I got to realize that they're in the middle of—they are right in the middle of everything. Other countries are there, but they're an hour and an hour and a half away. A big difference. They're literally—you walk over from Iran to Qatar. You can walk it in 1 second. You go boom, boom, and now you're in Qatar. That's tough territory. I think Qatar was amazing the way they helped us.

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]——

Peace Efforts in the Middle East

Q. There was a cease-fire that collapsed in March this year. There was a cease-fire earlier this year that collapsed in March. Do you think this could have been done then? This took a lot of pressure on both sides. But do you have any regrets——

The President. No, sometimes—I see it, and I see it with Russia, Russia, Russia too. Sometimes you have to go through some pain before it all happens. I saw it with Turkey. And by the way, Turkey was fantastic too. President Erdoğan was fantastic. He really helped a lot, because he's very respected. He's got a very powerful nation. He's got a very, very powerful military. And he helped a lot. President Erdoğan.

U.A.E. was great. You know, we mentioned Qatar. Saudi Arabia, the King, they were great. Indonesia was great. We had tremendous help. Jordan, the King, they were great.

This is an amazing thing. Countries that—very diverse countries. Some got along, some didn't. But for the most part, nobody got along with anybody, and they all came together, and they're all dancing in the streets, just like Israel. It's a unique point in time.

You were talking about the cease-fire. That wouldn't have—had that held—that wouldn't have happened back then.

Q. Why not? Why not?

The President's Foreign Policy

Q. With both of your elections, the biggest issues were the economy and immigration. Now you're getting credit from Democrats and Republicans for this Middle East peace deal. Where does it fit—where do you think it fits into your legacy?

The President. Well, look, I solved—this will be my eighth war that I've solved. And I hear there's a war now going between Pakistan and Afghanistan. I said I'll have to wait till I get back. You know? I'm doing another one. Because I'm good at solving wars, I'm good at making peace, and it's an honor to do it. I saved millions of lives—millions of lives.

Now, in all fairness to the Nobel Committee, I was—it was for nineteen—it was for 2024. And this was picked for 2024. But there are those who say you can make an exception, because a lot of things happened during '25 that are—that are done and complete and great.

But I did this not for Nobel, I did this for saving lives. I mean, we've saved millions of lives. Think about India-Pakistan. Think about some of the wars that were going on for years. We had one going for 31, one going for 32, one going for 37 years, with millions of people being killed in every country. And I got every one of those done, for the most part, within a day. Pretty good.

Q. What are the world leaders, sir, that——

Ukraine/Russia

Q. What do you think you can take from this—these negotiations and this peace process into Moscow and try to end the Russia-Ukraine war?

The President. Well, I think what you can take is that never give up. Just never give up.

You know, last week they killed over 7,000 soldiers, mostly soldiers, and a little bit more, frankly, Russian soldiers than Ukraine soldiers last week. But think of it: Every week they're losing from 5- to 7,000 soldiers. It's ridiculous. And I thought that would be one of my easier ones.

I mean, when you settle something that's been going on for 31 and 32 years, that's, in theory, a lot harder than setting, you know, something that's been going on for 3 years. But this is a war going on for three years. Should have never started. Frankly, I give Ukraine credit for doing so well. I mean, they've—they're good fighters. They're very good fighters.

Q. Should they get the Donbas?

The President. I think that—I really think that President Putin would look great if he got this settled, and I think he's going to settle it, but we're going to see. And if he doesn't, it's not going to be good for him. Not going to be good for him.

China-U.S. Trade/Pakistan/News Media

Q. President Xi of China—you've been Truthing about another world leader. You said not to worry about China, but he's been putting out some tough statements in regards to your tariffs, sir. Are you planning to speak with him? When's the last time you spoke?

The President. Well, he's putting out tough statements because we are taking in hundreds of millions of dollars, not only from China, from other countries. We've become a wealthy country again. And the tariffs have given us diplomatic strength. They've given us negotiating strength. I settled a few of the wars just based on tariffs.

I said, with—as an example, with India and with Pakistan, I said, "If you guys want to fight a war and you have nuclear weapons, I'm going to put big tariffs on you both, like 100 percent, 150, and 200 percent." "No, no, no, don't do that." I said, "I'm putting tariffs." I had that thing settled in 24 hours. If I didn't have tariffs, you could have never settled that war.

You knew that better than anybody, McGee.

Q. You said—[inaudible]—more tariffs on China. Are you considering walking that back?

The President. Boy, she asks a lot of questions.

Who are you with?

Q. Politico. Dasha Burns, sir.

The President. Oh, you're Dasha, Politico. Politico has gone bad. They've been so wrong about everything. Politico——

Q. We've got a lot of questions, sir.

The President. No, no, Politico has been so wrong about everything. Let's get somebody else to ask some questions. Do you mind? Is that all right? Because Politico is fake news.

President Xi Jinping of China

Q. Do you plan on meeting with Xi now, when you go to Asia in a couple of weeks?

The President. Well, you saw the statement I put out, that he had a bad day. And I think we're going to be fine with China.

Look, I have a great relationship with President Xi. He's a very tough man. He's a very smart man. He's a great leader for their country. He's a great leader. And I have a great relationship with him. I think we'll get it set.

I know what happened. I really understand what happened. And I'm not even saying he's wrong. But then we met him with something much tougher than what he did to us. Again, because of the tariffs, it's much tougher.

The President's Travel Plans/Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Would you ever visit Gaza?

The President. What?

Q. Would you ever visit Gaza?

The President. I would, yes. I would. I'd be proud to. I see it. I mean, I know it so well without visiting, but I do see it. Yes, I would, actually. I'd like to do it. I'd like to put my feet on it, at least. But I think it's going to be a great miracle over the coming decades.

And you know, if you go too fast, that's not going to be good. You have to go at the right speed. Can't go too fast.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Who are you with?

Q. I'm BBC. BBC. Tom Bateman, BBC, with the radio pool.

The President. That's excellent.

Q. Thank you.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Q. When Steve Witkoff was in Hostages Square last night, he mentioned Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the crowd booed. I wondered if you saw that and——

The President. I did.

Q. ——what you made of that.

The President. I also saw the crowd cheer when he mentioned Trump, like really cheer. And it's an honor.

No, as I said, I think Bibi did a great job. I had some words with him a couple of times where I didn't agree, and he was always—he was the right guy at the right time.

U.S. Cease-Fire Agreement Between Hamas and Israel

Q. But are you confident? Because many Palestinians will be concerned that after the hostages are handed over, that Israel might restart the war, for some reason. Are you——

The President. I'm not worried about anything. I think we have a great deal, and it's a great deal for everybody. You know, a great deal is a deal where everybody is happy and every country, they're dancing in the streets. That's a great deal.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. It's a unique—it's a unique period in time.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, November 1, 100-percent tariffs on China is what you said. Is that still the plan?

The President. Yes, right now it is, yes. Let's see what happens.

You know, for me, you know what November 1 is? An eternity. November 1st is an eternity for me. For somebody else, it's right around the corner. For me, when I hear November 1, it's an eternity.

Go ahead.

Ukraine/Russia

Q. You had talked a couple weeks ago—you were doing an interview, and you talked about how you hope to end the war in Ukraine because it might help you get into Heaven. How does this help? Does this help?

The President. You know, I'm being a little cute. I don't think there's anything going to get me in Heaven. Okay? *[Laughter]* I really don't. I think—I think I'm not maybe Heaven bound. I may be in Heaven right now, as we fly on Air Force One. I'm not sure I'm going to be able to make Heaven.

But I've made life a lot better for a lot of people. And you know, as an example, had the—had the election of 2020 not been rigged, you would have millions of people living just in Russia, Ukraine alone. That would have never happened. And it didn't happen for 4 years. And I knew Putin very well. It was the apple of his eye, that all the things I've said would have never happened.

We had an incompetent administration. We had an incompetent President. And because of a crooked election, millions of people are dead. And by the way, the Israeli thing was much harder to get settled because of the past administration.

Okay? Rest. Enjoy yourselves. Say hello to your boss. And I'll see you guys, all right? Good.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Sir, before you go, can you tell us about your conversations with President Zelenskyy? Did you talk about long-range missiles?

The President. We had a very good conversation this morning and yesterday. And he basically would like to—as you know, we are not sending any weapons. We're sending them to NATO, and NATO is paying, which is a big difference between Biden and Trump, because Biden gave them \$350 million and we didn't. We gave them—we gave them nothing. But we gave them respect and some other things, frankly.

So we talked about weapons, and the weapons are sent to NATO, and NATO then sends us a check. They pay for them in full. And they would need more weapons, and we're looking into doing that. We hope we're going to be able to provide them.

You know, our country needs weapons too. We can't give so many weapons that we don't have weapons. You never know what's going to happen. Who knows what's going to happen?

But NATO pays us 100 percent for the weapons, and then they send them into Ukraine. And we talked about the weapons they need, what kind of weapons. They need Patriots very badly.

They'd like to have Tomahawks. That's a step up. They'd like to have Tomahawks. We talked about that. And so we'll see.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Will you send Tomahawks?

The President. Well, I don't know. I may—I might have to speak to Russia, to be honest with you, about Tomahawks. Do they want to have Tomahawks going in their direction? I don't think so. I think I might speak to Russia about that, in all fairness. I told that to President Zelenskyy, because Tomahawks are a new step of aggression. Right? You understand that very well. Okay?

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/CBS News

Q. Are you saying that you will speak to Putin first about Tomahawks before——

The President. I might talk to him. I might say: "Look, if this war is not going to get settled, I'm going to send them Tomahawks." I may send them. The Tomahawk is an incredible weapon, very offensive weapon. And honestly, Russia does not need that. They don't need that.

Yes, I might tell them that if the war is not settled, that we may very well do—we may not, but we may do it. I think it's appropriate to bring up, yeah. I want to see the war settled.

Thank you very much. Tell them to be honest. They're not honest people.

Q. Sir, talk to Karoline. She'll vouch for me. [*Laughter*]

The President. Okay. Thank you.

Q. Thanks, President.

The President. Thank you.

Q. My first time on the plane.

The President. Oh, really?

Q. Yes.

The President. Wow. What do you fly? He flies private. [*Laughter*]

Q. Yes.

The President. He's doing pretty well, huh?

So who's going to be the head anchor at CBS? Not Norah O'Donnell, I don't believe. I don't believe it. You know, there's a story that they're going to—I don't believe it.

Well, I tell you what—Larry Ellison is great, and his son David is great. They're friends of mine. Big—they're big supporters of mine. And they'll do the right thing. They're going to make CBS—hopefully, they'll—you know, they called it the Tiffany Network. And it's got great potential. CBS has great potential.

Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:01 p.m. in the press cabin. In his remarks, he referred to Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer; former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar; King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; King Abdullah II of Jordan; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff; Norah O'Donnell, senior correspondent, CBS News; Larry Ellison, chairman of the board and chief technology officer, Oracle Corp.; and David Ellison, founder and chief executive officer, Paramount Skydance Corp., parent company of CBS. Reporters referred to former Secretary of

State Antony J. Blinken; and White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on October 13.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Air Force One.

Locations: Air Force One.

Names: Abdullah II, King; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blair, Tony; Ellison, David; Ellison, Larry; Erdogan, Recep Tayyip; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; O'Donnell, Norah; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Schumer, Charles E.; Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir; Witkoff, Steven C.; Xi Jinping; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: CBS News; China, President; China, trade with U.S.; Federal programs, improvement efforts; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Indi, relations with Pakistan; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Israel, Prime Minister; Israel, security cooperation with U.S.; Jordan, King; News media, fairness and accuracy; News media, Presidential interviews; Nobel Prize for Peace; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pakistan, relations with India; Qatar, Amir; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Saudi Arabia, King; Senate minority leader; Tariffs; Turkey, President; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance.

DCPD Number: DCPD202501004.