

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks Prior to a Working Lunch With President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters

October 17, 2025

President Trump. Hi, Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News]. Hi.

Q. President Trump.

President Trump. Did you see Andrea Bocelli?

Q. It sounded beautiful. We could hear him from the front yard.

President Trump. He was here. He was actually here, so we put on the music. As he walked in, we put on the music.

Musician Andrea Bocelli

Q. What's your favorite song, Mr. President?

President Trump. It was beautiful, right?

Q. Yes.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. It was—he was—he walked in, we put on his music, right? He was great. Great guy.

He's coming December 5 to perform at the White House for some of the people. If the Cabinet members are good, if they're doing a good job, we'll let them come along with some others, right? We're going to have a good time. December 5.

Well, thank you very much everybody. It's an honor to be with a very strong leader, a man who has been through a lot, and a man who I've gotten to know very well. And we've gotten along, really, very well, and we had a big call yesterday, as you know, with President Putin, and we'll be talking about it.

President Zelenskyy of Ukraine has endured a lot. I mean, he really has. He's endured a lot, and we've endured it with him, to be honest. It's been a long time, and I think we're making great progress.

So we're going to be talking about that today. We'll be talking about what took place yesterday, with my phone call with President Putin.

And I think that things are coming along pretty well. It began with Alaska, where I think certain guidelines were discussed, and we want to see if we can get this done. This was long ago into the Biden administration. I came here, and we inherited this, and we'd like to see if we could finish it, end it. We want it ended. So many people have died in this war, and we're going to—we're going to get it ended.

So I just want to thank you all very much. If you have a couple of questions, go ahead, please.

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

In fact, before I do that, let me just ask the President to say a few words. Thank you.

President.

President Zelenskyy. Yes, thank you. It's a pleasure. Glad to meet you again, Mr. President. Thank you very much for the invitation. Again, my congratulations with your successful cease-fire in the Middle East.

President Trump. Yes. Thank you.

President Zelenskyy. Yes. And you did it. And I think this is a momentum to finish Russia's war against Ukraine.

President Trump. Yes.

President Zelenskyy. I think that—yes, we understand that Putin is not ready—I think—not ready. But I think that—I'm confident that with your help, we can stop this war, and we really need it. We see that they don't have successful steps on the battlefield, and that is good. I think that their army is weak now, but a lot of losses. They have a lot of losses and—economy and people. And I think this is a very important moment.

And I think—I wanted to thank you, Mr. President. After our phone calls yesterday, I had a good opportunity to meet with the big American energy companies, and they are ready to help us—

President Trump. Good.

President Zelenskyy. —yes, after all these attacks on our infrastructure—Russian attacks—and et cetera.

And I had also meetings—thanks to your team, we had meetings with good military companies. We spoke about air defense, and I want to share it after—

President Trump. Right.

President Zelenskyy. —with details where we are.

Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

President Trump. Thank you very much. Very good.

And I think he looks beautiful in his jacket.

President Zelenskyy. Yes?

President Trump. Is he beautiful? I hope people notice, it's a good—it's actually very stylish. I like it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes, please. Go ahead.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Under the Biden administration, the White House was fearing of a possible escalation, and they were not allowing the Ukrainians to strike into Russia, fearing of this escalation.

President Trump. Yes.

Q. Would your administration allow Ukrainians to strike deep into Russia to stop the—

President Trump. We're going to be talking about that. That's something we'll be talking about.

Q. Would you consider—

President Trump. You're right. It's an escalation, but we'll be talking about that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary/Planned Meeting With President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Mr. President, will President Zelenskyy join you in Hungary to meet President Putin?

President Trump. Because it's a leader that we like. We like Viktor Orbán. He likes him. I like him. It's a country that's a safe country, done a very good job. He's been a very good leader in the sense of running his country. He doesn't have a lot of the problems that other countries have. And so we've decided that we'll be going to be with Viktor Orbán, and he will—I think he'll be a very good host.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. It's in Hungary. Yes. We're doing Hungary.

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

Q. Will Zelenskyy join in Hungary with Putin? Is it a trilateral meeting or is it just you and Putin?

President Trump. To be determined, but I would say most likely it's going to be a double meeting. It will be a double meeting, but we will have the President, Zelenskyy, in touch. There's a lot of bad blood with the two Presidents. And I'm not speaking out of turn when I say it. It's very—a very difficult situation.

You know, we just settled the war, and—after thousands of years, I guess. People say anywhere from 500 to 3,000 years. And I was in rooms, as you saw, because you were with me—a lot of you were with me last week, with leaders that didn't like each other, but they were able to get along.

These two leaders do not like each other, and we want to make it comfortable for everybody. So, one way or the other, we'll be involved in threes, but it may be separated.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, what if President Putin doesn't agree to peace in Hungary?

President Trump. Was he what?

Q. What if President Putin——

President Trump. Where are you from?

Q. From Ukraine. You actually had a conversation——

President Trump. Okay. Good.

Q. ——with me in Ukraine.

President Trump. Good. Yes.

Ukraine/Russia/President Trump's Diplomatic Efforts

Q. What if Mr.—President Putin doesn't agree to peace in Hungary? What do you do then? Do you have steps planned for that?

President Trump. Well, let's see what happens. I mean, you know, "What if?" I—I think he will. I think that President Putin wants to end the war or I wouldn't be talking this way. I think he wants to end the war.

I spoke to him yesterday for 2½ hours. We went through a lot of details. He wants to get it ended. I think that President Zelenskyy wants to get it ended. Now, we have to get it done.

Q. President Trump—President Trump, Cara from—Cara Castronuova from Lindell-TV. And although I love asking you questions, today, my question is for President Zelenskyy of Ukraine.

President Trump. Yes. Go ahead, please.

Q. Thank you. Our President, President Zelenskyy, President Trump, just brokered a peace deal in the Middle East that all Americans, both sides of the aisle, are very proud of. But to meet that deal, both sides had to make concessions.

Our president has stuck out his neck in many ways to make a peace deal for your war as well. What specific concessions are you willing to make to end this war with Russia? Will you give up joining NATO? Americans have foreign war fatigue, and our President—as he said, we need our Tomahawks too.

President Zelenskyy. To me?

Q. Yes, you, President Zelenskyy.

President Zelenskyy. Okay. Thank you very much.

Q. What concessions will you make?

President Trump. That's some question.

President Zelenskyy. Thank—so many questions in one.

President Trump. Thank you.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you very much for your question.

First of all, I think we need to sit and speak.

The second point, we need cease-fire. Even now, you see in the Middle East, it's very difficult to hold cease-fire. Everywhere in every war, it's very difficult. We want peace. Putin doesn't want. That's why we need pressure on him.

We will speak with President today what we need. We understand what we need to push Putin to negotiation table. And as I said previously—so we are ready to speak in any kind of format—bilateral, trilateral. It doesn't matter. Matter just peace.

This is important, and we don't speak about NATO or not-NATO. For Ukrainians, it's very important. Of course, it's our decision—decisions of Allies to decide where we are. And——

Q. But are you willing to give up joining NATO?

President Zelenskyy. And yes, but the most important thing—the most important thing for people in people in Ukraine, which are under each day's attacks, to have really strong security guarantees. NATO is the best, but weapon is very important. Allies on our side is very important.

And between us—for us, bilateral security guarantees between me and President Trump is very important.

I don't know. We didn't speak with details about it, but this is the most important document, because the United States is very strong.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. Peter.

Ukraine/Russia

Q. Sir, President Trump, you are the middleman right now, hoping to end this conflict. Who is doing a better job negotiating: President Zelenskyy or President Putin?

President Trump. I think they're both doing a great job. In that sense, we have to get it done. It's—we've got to take some of the hatred of each other. You know, they don't like each other. I say that in front of President Zelenskyy, but I say it in front of President Putin too. They have tremendous bad blood. It's—it really is what is holding up, I think, a settlement. I think we're going to get it done, and we have to make it long-lasting.

As I said in the Middle East, "everlasting," right? Everlasting. And the Middle East is a much more complicated situation. You know, we had 59 countries involved, and every one of them agreed. And it's—you know, it was sort of amazing. Most people didn't think that was doable.

This is going to be something, I really believe, that's going to get done. I had a very good talk yesterday with President Putin. I think he wants to get it done.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Peter.

Q. And, President Zelenskyy—right behind you—when we were in Israel with President Trump earlier in the week, we heard a lot about the difference in diplomacy between President Trump and President Joe Biden before him. What do you see as the biggest difference in diplomacy between President Trump and President Biden?

President Zelenskyy. President Trump has a big chance now to finish this war.

President Biden now is not the President, so he doesn't have a chance to finish this war.

And President Trump is—really showed for the world that he can manage cease-fire in Middle East, and that's why I hope that he will do this and we will also have such big success. For Ukraine, it's a big chance, and I hope that President Trump can manage it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. I would say the biggest difference is one is extremely competent and the other one is grossly incompetent. *[Laughter]*

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Sir, a few weeks ago in New York, when you two met, you said that you think Ukraine could ultimately take back all the territory that it's lost so far. Do you still think that's the case, or do you think there will have to be some sort of swap of territories?

President Trump. You never know. Look, you know, war is very interesting. You never know, do you? You just never know with war—war and peace, but you never know.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Please.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Russia calls Tomahawk supply to Ukraine as an escalation, yet it continues using similar cruise missiles like the Kalibr——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. —and even nuclear—

President Trump. Who are you with?

Q. Ukraine.

President Trump. You're Ukraine?

Q. Yes.

But Russia continued even using the cruise—the cruise missiles and also nuclear-capable ballistic missiles in Ukraine since 2022. So do you consider providing Ukraine with the Tomahawk or similar missiles as an opportunity to equalize the possibilities of Ukraine and Russia and push Moscow to the negotiation table?

President Trump. Yes, sure. We're going to be talking about that. That's why we're here. Okay? Fair question. Exactly as he told you to say it, but we're going to be talking about it. Okay?

Yes, please.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Russian Oil and Gas Supply/Hungary/India

Q. What's your message to India and Hungary, who have still refused to—

President Trump. You said, "India and Hungary"?

Q. Hungary.

Q. India and—

President Trump. That's an interesting—

Q. —Hungary are refusing to—stop buying oil—

President Trump. India and Hungary, that's an interesting combination, huh?

Q. —refuse to stop buy—buying Russian oil.

President Trump. Well, India is not going to be buying Russian oil anymore.

Q. But they—[inaudible]—

President Trump. And Hungary is sort of stuck, because they have one pipeline. It's been there for years and years and years. And they're inland. They don't have sea. They don't have sea. And I spoke with the very great leader of Hungary, and they are—you know, it's very hard for them to get oil. I understand it. We have—Hungary is in a very interesting position, because they can't have ports. You know, they're surrounded by land. So we'll see what happens there.

But India will not be buying oil from Russia, and they've already deescalated, and they've more or less stopped. They're pulling back.

They bought about 38 percent of the oil, and they won't be doing it anymore.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

First Lady Melania Trump's Interest in the Ukraine-Russia Conflict

Q. Mr. President, First Lady Melania Trump has been helping you in achieving peace in Ukraine. Yet—

President Trump. Who has?

Q. First Lady Melania Trump——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——has been helping in returning abducted Ukrainian children from Russian captivity. President Zelenskyy, do you appreciate those efforts? How do you assess them? And did you ask her to step in and to help you?

President Trump. No, she wanted to do it. She's just felt very strongly about the children, and she's done a really good job, I think, in bringing it to the fore. You know, we have a lot of children involved. Now, it's—some people say it's 20,000 and some people say it's 300. There's a big difference between that, so nobody really knows.

But she felt very strongly about the children. She thinks about the children all the time.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance/U.S. Missile Supplies

Q. If you okay Tomahawks to Ukraine, what's going to happen if the United States is in a conflict and we need the Tomahawks? Do we have enough?

President Trump. Well, that's the problem. We need Tomahawks, and we need a lot of other things that we've been sending over the last 4 years to Ukraine. We've been—you know, we gave them a lot.

Now, we have a different situation. We send it to the European Union. They pay for it and all that, and they have plenty of money.

But we—it's beyond the money. You know, we need Tomahawks, and we need a lot of other weapons that we're sending to Ukraine.

One of the reasons we want to get this war over is exactly that. It's not easy for us to give—you're talking about massive numbers of very powerful weapons. So that's one of the things we'll be talking about.

Hopefully, they won't need it. Hopefully, we'll be able to get the war over with without thinking about Tomahawks.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

I think we're——

President Zelenskyy. Can I—can I——

President Trump. I think we're fairly——

President Zelenskyy. Can I answer——

President Trump. I think we're fairly close that.

Yes. Go ahead, please.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

President Zelenskyy. Can I—can I say——

President Trump. President, yes, please.

President Zelenskyy. ——just to understand. So, for today, of course, we want to finish this war. But the war is another technological war. You don't use just Tomahawks. If you want to target a military goal, you need thousands of drones. It goes together with such missiles. Ukraine

has such—thousands of our production drones, but we don't have Tomahawks. That's why we need Tomahawks.

But United States is a very strong production, and United States has Tomahawks and other missiles—very strong missiles, but they can have our thousands of drones. That's why—where we can work together, where we can strengthen American production.

Q. And so just so that I understand. So you're suggesting kind of a trade? If President Trump okays Tomahawk missiles to help you launch deep into Russia——

President Zelenskyy. Yes, it's about military goals.

Q. Then you would let——

President Zelenskyy. It's only about military goals.

Q. Right, but then you would authorize some kind of an exchange where——

President Zelenskyy. Yes, of course.

Q. ——the U.S. gets——

President Zelenskyy. Yes, we have proposition.

Q. ——Ukrainian——

President Zelenskyy. And we have brief proposition——

Q. President——

President Zelenskyy. ——with our drones. Yes.

Ukraine-U.S. Trade/Military Equipment Stockpile

Q. President Trump, I don't mean to be brokering an arms deal here—[laughter]—but is that something that you would be interested in: Ukrainian drones?

President Trump. We are. Yes, we would—we have a lot of drones right now. We build our own drones, but we also buy drones from others, and they make a very good drone. I mean, we—drone warfare has really come to the fore over the last couple of years because of this war.

I will say, there's nothing like the jets. You know, we knocked out a lot of drones in Israel. We were knocking them out for Israel, and we were doing it with extremely fast and powerful jets, following the drones and knocking the hell out of them.

So it's—you know, we've—we know a lot about the drones, and we know a lot about the great jets—the great ones. The ones—well, and the B-52s which were totally under—you know, they were stealth. They were undetectable.

So we have a lot of different weapons. And you know, we—I have an obligation also, though, to make sure that we're completely stocked up as a country—because you never know what's going to happen in war and peace, right? You never know what's going to happen. So, we're going to be talking about Tomahawks, and we'd would much rather have them—not need Tomahawks.

We'd much rather have the war be over, to be honest, because, you know, we're in it to get the war over. We're not—we're selling a lot of different types of weapon, as you know, to the European Union. We're not in it for that. We're in it to get it to get it over.

We're losing thousands of people a week—thousands of people: Russian, Ukrainian, and mostly soldiers. I mean, mostly soldiers.

But we're in it to see that end, and if we can end quickly—and I think we can. I mean, I had a very good talk yesterday. We're going to be talking about it, but I had a very productive talk yesterday with President Putin. We'll see what happens.

But the war in the Middle East was far more complicated. We got that one done.

And I think we have a good chance. I think President Zelenskyy wants it done, and I think President Putin want it done now.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Now—now, all they have to do is get along a little bit. *[Inaudible]*

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

China-U.S. Trade

Q. President Trump, on China. Can you give us an update on the trade negotiations with China? Or perhaps Secretary Bessent can?

President Trump. Yes, I will. And I'm going to let—I'm going to let Scott do that. But I think we're doing very well. I think we're getting along with China. China is—would like to have something.

As of this moment, we'll be meeting in a couple of weeks. We'll be meeting in South Korea. Myself—

Q. You think that meeting will go forward?

President Trump. I think so. It looks like it's going forward. I think so. They want to meet. We like to meet. I have a very good relationship with President Xi, and we're going to see what happens.

But you know, for years, we were taken advantage of by China very badly. We were losing hundreds of billions of dollars a year to China.

We really built their military, if you think about it. The kind of money that Presidents allowed to be lost to China was just insane. And then when I came into office, as you know, I put very severe tariffs, and we took in hundreds of billions of dollars in my first term from China.

Biden let that go, because it was so much. He let it continue but he gave all sorts of exceptions. And by the time you looked at it, Scott, I would say there wasn't—it wasn't the same thing. He would give an exception for anything. If you got up and went out to dinner, he'd give you an exception. So it wasn't the same thing.

But I put on very serious tariffs, and we took in hundreds of billions of dollars. And then we—I left office—the election was rigged, I left office, and that was the story.

Now I come back, and we are in a very strong position because of tariffs. We're in a very powerful position because of the fact that we have tariffs.

If we didn't have tariffs, we would be in a very weak position. We would be in a weakened state. But with tariffs, we've made hundreds of billions of dollars not only from China, but from others. And China wants to talk, and we like talking to China.

So we have a very good relationship and we're going to be meeting in South Korea a couple of weeks. And I just got back from a long trip. I'm going on another long trip.

And, Scott, do you want to say a few words on that, please?

U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. Yes, sir. So, the entire relationship stems from the great respect that the two leaders have for each other. China did a substantial unprovoked escalation last week. We were unable to get in touch with them.

Since then, it's been IMF World Bank week. They have had working level people here. There have been meetings.

The Vice Premier, who is my counterpart, and I will be speaking this evening at around 8:30, 9 o'clock. And then he and I and a delegation will meet in Malaysia probably a week from tomorrow to prepare for the two presidents to meet.

So I—again, I think that things have de-escalated. We hope that China will show the respect that we have shown them. And I am confident that President Trump, because of his relationship with President Xi, will be able to get things back on a good course.

China-U.S. Trade/Tariffs

Q. Is the hope for that meeting with you and President Xi some kind of trade deal then or—
—

President Trump. Could be. Look, I think we're in a very strong position. I think we're in a very strong position. We're getting, as you know, as of November 1—I could move it up if I wanted—a 100-percent tariff over and above what we get now. So that would make it about 157 percent.

And China doesn't want that, and they want to talk, and we're talking. And I think we'll make a deal that will be good for both. I think we will do something.

But you have to understand, we never got anything from China. It was a one-way street for many years. For decades, it was a one-way street, and they became rich because of the United States and, frankly, Presidents that—let's be nice—they didn't know. They just didn't know. They didn't understand what was happening to them.

But I understood it. I understood it long before I ran for politics. I used to watch in amazement at how stupid our country was, how stupid they were. And we're not stupid anymore—and that includes with the European Union, that includes with Japan and South Korea.

We're—all we want to do is be treated fairly, but the fairly is hundreds of billions and even trillions of dollars coming into the United States. And it's—our national security is secure because of tariffs. If we didn't have tariffs, we would have no national security. So it's very important.

Russia/Ukraine/International Military Aid to Ukraine

Q. Will you seek China's help in ending the war in Ukraine? Do you need them to put pressure on Russia?

President Trump. I'll be discussing that, but I'd love to see it ended before that. I mean, I think we have a chance of ending the war quickly. If flexibility is shown on behalf—and again, we're not losing people. The United States is not—we're not losing people. We're not spending money; we're getting paid for the ammunition and missiles and everything else that we're sending to the European Union—but to NATO. But it's very similar, if you look at the countries. I mean, it's very similar.

And we just made a very fair trade deal with the European Union and what we wanted—and we made a very good deal with NATO too. You know, they pay for all of this. That's not what we're in this for. We're in it to save thousands of lives every week, thousands and thousands of lives. That's why we're in it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And I think—I think we have a very—I think we have a very good chance of bringing this war to a conclusion.

Ukraine/Russia/President Trump's Diplomatic Efforts

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—and your Cabinet has done honestly an excellent job. I think that a lot of people could agree to that.

President Trump. Thank you.

Q. I'm speaking as someone who lost my father in a war. So I know the human cost. What would your advice be to American leaders, to world leaders, to neocons, to TV hosts who often speak about conflict in abstract or strategic terms rather than the human cost and the human terms like you have?

President Trump. Look, my only statement is, we have to get together. It's a very small group of people. It's the President, the President, and the President. Okay? Three Presidents. And I'm the mediator president, and I'm mediating not an easy situation. It should be easy, but it's a lot easier when people understand each other, when they get together, and when they like each other.

We don't necessarily have that situation, as far as like is concerned. Maybe it can turn around. Maybe it can. But in the meantime, we'll have them keep a little bit of distance, and we're going to see if we can get it done.

This is number nine, okay? This will be number nine for me. I've solved eight. Including the Middle East, I've solved eight. This, I thought, would have been among the easiest. We solved—

President Putin mentioned yesterday Armenia. You know, all of the different wars, he said it was amazing because we—but the big one that he was surprised that we were able to settle was the Middle East. He thought it was incredible. He was very generous in that sense.

This should be something we're able to settle, and I think we will be able to settle it.

Brian [Brian Glenn, Real America's Voice].

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Brian.

President Trump's Diplomatic Efforts/Pakistan/India/Afghanistan

Q. On that note, you will go down as the peacemaker, no doubt, and you will resolve this—this war.

President Trump. Well, you know, we resolved eight others. It's funny how people say that. "If you get this one"—every time I do one, they forget about that one. [Laughter]

I solved eight wars. Go to Rwanda and the Congo. Talk about India and Pakistan. Look at Thailand. Look at—look at all of the wars that we solved. And every time I solve one, they say if you solve the next one, you're going to get the Nobel Prize.

I didn't get a Nobel Prize. Somebody got it who's a very nice woman—very nice. I don't know who she is, but she was very generous.

So I don't care about all that stuff. I just care about saving lives. But this will be number nine. But every time I solve one, they said, "Sir, if you solve one more, you're going to be known as the peacekeeper."

So, to the best of my knowledge, we've never had a President that solved one war—not one war. Bush started a war. A lot of them start wars, but they don't solve the wars. They don't settle them. And especially when they're not—when they have nothing to do with us.

I solved—almost—I guess just about all of these wars had nothing to do with us, but I saved tens of millions of lives. The Prime Minister of Pakistan said I saved millions of lives in interceding on Pakistan. And you look at Pakistan and India, as an example. That would have been a bad one. Two nuclear nations, right?

So I say this: This pretty much the last one. Although I do understand that Pakistan attacked or there is an attack going on with Afghanistan.

That's an easy one for me to solve if I have to solve it. In the meantime, I have to run the U.S.A., but I love solving wars. You know why? I like stopping people from being killed, and I've saved millions and millions of lives. And I think we're going to have success with this war.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Wait. Please.

Q. President Zelenskyy, this is your third—hi, I'm over here.

President Zelenskyy. Oh.

Q. And by the way, you look excellent.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Q. [Inaudible]—this is your third time here. How different sitting across from the President is this time versus the two previous times here at the White House?

And how confident are you hearing the success rate of solving these prior wars that you—he can get this war solved?

President Zelenskyy. First of all, about suit. The same suit because the same President. It's very simple. The next President will have another suit. Yes.

About our relations with President Trump, I think we have important dialogs, and I think we begin to understand each other. Yes. And I know that President is briefed very well about situation in the battlefield, and he knows a lot what's going on in the battlefield in Ukraine. And I think it really helps.

When you know a lot of things—a lot of details about one or another war, it helps a lot. But we are still in war, and I hope we can manage——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I think it's important.

Spain/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. [Inaudible]—some countries that are not meeting their commitment. You pointed out Spain. They said that, like, it's impossible——

President Trump. No, Spain has not come through. No, Spain has not been loyal to NATO. Spain has been—they're the only one. Everyone went up to, as you know, I mean, you were at 2 percent, and they all went up to 5 percent. But Spain disagreed with that.

I think Spain should be reprimanded for that. I think it's very bad that they did that, but that's up to them. That's up to NATO and Spain.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—they cannot be expelled from NATO.*

President Trump. Can they or not?

European Union/U.S. Cease-Fire Agreement Between Hamas and Israel

Q. They cannot, according to the treaty, but they also claim that they are protected by the European Union umbrella for trade.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

President Trump. The other people—many of the other countries—they're in the European Union too. They're not complaining. That's sort of—that's sort of interesting. They're protected by the——

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Yes, please. Go ahead.

U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities/Peace Efforts in the Middle East

Q. Mr. President, can you—do you think you can carry the momentum from the Middle East deal over to this deal? And if so——

President Trump. I do.

Q. ——how does that move the needle?

President Trump. Yes, I do. I think we carry a lot of momentum, a lot of credibility. Getting Middle East done was very important. Nobody thought it could be done.

That was one nobody thought could be done, and we got it done. And a lot of that was the big hit that we put on Iran, with respect to the nuclear. They took—That was a—that was an unbelievable military maneuver, the B-2s—and many other planes involved by the way, but the B-2s.

Yes, I think nobody expected that to happen. And you know, we had 59 countries involved, and these were countries—very diverse. You had Arab, Muslim, Jewish. You had every kind of—you had every country—Christian. You had every country and many countries involved. And we got that done, and we got it done pretty swiftly after we—after we set the table properly. We had to set the table properly.

This should be one that we get done. And I think the table is set properly here now too. And it will be a great honor——

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

It will be a great honor to get it done.

And the Ukrainian people are great, and the Russian people are great. And obviously, they have much in common. As we understand, they have a lot in common, so it will be a great honor to get it done.

Yes.

U.S. Airstrikes on Suspected Tren de Aragua Vessels in the Caribbean Sea

Q. Mr. President, on Venezuela, there are survivors from your latest boat strike. What happens to those survivors?

President Trump. Well, I'll ask Marco to discuss that, possibly.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. Yes, it's well known there's an ongoing narcoterrorist operation the United States has been conducting.

As far as details of any recent strikes, we're not prepared here to announce all those details, but you'll get that information here very shortly.

Q. And how are there survivors when these are meant to be lethal attacks?

Secretary Rubio. Yes. Again, I mean, we're undertaking these operations against narco-terrorists. That's what these are. These are terrorists. Let's be clear. And—but as far as the details of any recent operations, when they—when we are prepared to announce those, we will, as the president has consistently done. So you may get something on that later today.

President Trump. Let me ask you, that was in a submarine, right? It was—we attacked a submarine and that was a drug-carrying submarine built specifically for the transportation of massive amounts of drugs, just so you understand. This was not an innocent group of people. I don't know too many people that have submarines. *[Laughter]* And that was an attack on a drug-carrying, loaded-up submarine.

Yes.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance/U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities

Q. On Putin, is it your belief, as Mr. Zelenskyy said yesterday, that the threat of Tomahawks and costs, as Secretary Hegseth put it—is that bringing him to the table, the fact that it's kind of a carrot and stick?

President Trump. I don't know what's bringing him to the—I think he wants to make a deal. That's all. I can't tell you what's bringing him.

Sure, that's—the threat of that is good, but the threat of that is always there. Tomahawks are very dangerous weapons. They're incredible weapons. If you like warfare, it's one of the most accurate.

You know, we used—we had 30 Tomahawks in Iran. After the B-2s did their damage, we sort of gave it a little capper with 30 Tomahawks from a submarine. Quite far away, actually, but they're an amazing weapon. They're a very powerful weapon, but they're a very dangerous weapon. And it could mean big escalation. It could mean—a lot of bad things can happen.

Tomahawks are a big deal. But one thing I have to say: We want Tomahawks also. We don't want to be giving away things that we need to protect our country. We have a very strong country right now. We have a strong military. We have the greatest military in the world. We have the greatest weapons in the world.

I want to get this war over. Okay?

Russia/Mining Road Project in Alaska

Q. [Inaudible]—Putin-Trump tunnel to connect Russia and Alaska. Are you interested?

President Trump. I just heard about it, a tunnel from Russia to Alaska. I just heard about that one. That's an interesting one. We'll have to think about that. I hadn't heard that.

We just did a nice road in Alaska that's going to get us to a lot of minerals, and we have a piece of it—a good piece of the ownership because of the fact we made it possible.

But this came up yesterday: a tunnel from Russia to Alaska. That's an interesting—what do you think of that, Mr. President? Do you have any ideas? How do you like that idea?

President Zelenskyy. I'm not happy with this idea. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. I don't think you're going to like it. [*Laughter*] I don't think he liked it. I don't think he liked it.

Senator Mazie Hirono

Q. President Trump, do you think that Vladimir Putin—do you think that Putin is serious—your gut instinct?

President Trump. Well, we had a Senator that wanted—remember, from Hawaii? She wanted a tunnel from the mainland to Hawaii. Then she said, "Well, we can't do that, so we're going to build a railroad to Hawaii." Do you remember? She's a current sitting Senator, a Democrat. She wants a railroad to go to Hawaii, right? You know who that is, right? She's another—she's another beauty.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Yes, please.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. On meeting with Putin, aren't you concerned that maybe the Russian President is trying to buy himself more time?

President Trump. Yes. Yes, I am, but, you know, I've been played all my life by the best of them, and I came out really well. So it's possible, yes. A little time. It's all right. But I think that I'm pretty good at this stuff. I think that he wants to make a deal. I made eight of them. I'm going to make a ninth. I think he wants to make a deal.

Q. Is your gut instinct—

Ukraine/Russia

Q. Do you still consider Russia to be a paper tiger? Do you think, judging by the state of its economy—

President Trump. Well, I think—I think that he should have won the war in a week. Yes, I do think. And if we didn't—if we didn't give the anti-tank missiles, as you know—the Javelins, they call them—they got stuck in the mud—they would have been in Kyiv very quickly. They were heading to Kyiv.

So, you know, in war you have a lot of luck too. You know, people—weather has won war, and the cold and the heat and all things take place in war.

But that was a very interesting moment, when the tanks started rolling and some brilliant general said, "Let's go through the mud instead of going down the highway." Right? So they got a little bit lucky.

But you know where they really got lucky? I gave Javelins. That wasn't given by Barack Hussein Obama. He gave them sheets. You know, there's a statement. Obama gave them sheets, and I gave them the Javelins. And the Javelins are a devastating weapon. And that wasn't given by Obama. That was given by Trump—because at the time, it was Obama. That was given by—that was given by me. So it was like one of those things.

And you had hundreds of them—hundreds of them. They're a devastating weapon. We have a lot of devastating weapons. I'd rather not use them.

But that was a big moment. You know, when the tanks got stuck, they got stuck. And call it luck or call it talent. I'm not sure what you'd call it, but it was a big moment in time.

Democratic Party

Q. Do you think Democrats will give you credit? Do you think Democrats will give you credit when you finally end this war, like they did with the war in the Middle East?

And second question——

President Trump. I think, right now the Democrats are really damaged—mentally damaged. They want to take \$1.5 trillion—with a "t"—trillion dollars and give it to people that invaded our country. They came into our country illegally from prisons, from mental institutions, gang members. They want to give them health care and take it away from our citizens.

We're not going to do that. \$1.5 trillion. They want to destroy our health care system. We're not going to let that happen.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

U.S. Covert Operations

Q. Have you authorized CIA operations in Venezuela as part of——

President Trump. Well, I wouldn't say that, but some interesting things are happening around the world, I'd say that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela

Q. Mr. President, it has been reported that Maduro offered everything in his country—all the natural resources. He even recorded a message to you in English recently, offering mediation. What should he do in order to stop that?

President Trump. He has offered everything. He's offered everything. You're right. You know why? Because he doesn't want to fuck around with the United States.

Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:34 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado; former President George W. Bush; and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan. Secretary Bessent referred to Vice Premier of the State Council He Lifeng of China. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on October 25.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bocelli, Andrea; Bush, George W.; Hirono, Mazie K.; Machado, María Corina; Maduro Moros, Nicolas; Obama, Barack; Orbán, Viktor; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Sharif, Shehbaz; Trump, Melania; Xi Jinping; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Afghanistan, relations with Pakistan; Alaska, Ambler Road Project, Federal approval; China, President; China, trade with U.S.; European Union, trade with U.S.; Federal Government appropriations, lapse; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Health insurance exchanges; Hungary, Prime Minister; Hungary, trade with Russia; India, relations with Pakistan; India, trade with Russia; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Japan, trade with U.S.; Nobel Prize for Peace; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pakistan, Prime Minister; Pakistan, relations with Afghanistan; Pakistan, relations with India; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, oil supply and refining; Russia, President; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury;

South Korea, trade with U.S.; Spain, defense spending level; Suspected drug-trafficking vessels, U.S. airstrikes in Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific; Tariffs; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Venezuela, President.

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