

**Remarks Prior to a Working Lunch With President Lee Jae-myung of South Korea
in Gyeongju, South Korea**

October 29, 2025

President Lee. Mr. President, it's your second state visit to the Republic of Korea. Welcome.

Mr. President, you are often described as one and only, in many occasions. And you are indeed one and only foreign head of state who has made two state visits to the Republic of Korea. And it is the first time that—you are the first U.S. President that has been conferred the Grand Order of Mugunghwa by Korea. So, indeed, our meeting is very meaningful.

And what is also significant and impressive is that it's been 9 months since your Inauguration. And around the world, in eight conflict zones, you brought peace. So you are indeed a peacemaker. So it's almost once a month.

So many people have been killed and so many damages were done, but you have been successful in bringing peace to many parts of the world, and I hope that your peacemaking skills can be applied to the Korean Peninsula so that we can bring peace on the Korean Peninsula as well. And if that happens, I believe that you will be recognized forever in the history of humanity. And also, this will be indeed welcomed by Korean people because bringing permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula has been a long-desired goal for our country.

And as I mentioned many times, you have wonderful capabilities and skills as a peacemaker. And if you can help us and if you can establish peace on the Korean Peninsula, then we will support you so that you can become a peacemaker on the Korean Peninsula as well.

Chairman Kim, I hope, will see your true heart and intention. This time, your meeting with Chairman Kim did not happen, but I am very happy that you are willing and open to having a dialogue with Chairman Kim. And the posture itself is a lot for us.

And so far, Chairman Kim, has not really accepted your good intention and your gesture, so this time it did not happen. But I believe that we've been planting good seeds for a better future, and I hope that your gestures and your words will serve as an opportunity to further open up opportunities for better relations, and we will continue to support your endeavor.

As you may know very well, on the Korean Peninsula, a war is going on, technically speaking. So the two Koreas are at war, technically. But with the help of the U.S. and the international community, we have been able to grow our economy and advance our country. And going forward, our bilateral relations are going to focus on modernizing our alliance so that our alliance can become more comprehensive and strategic.

Korea has decided to increase our national budget for defense, so military spending and defense budget will be expanded to further strengthen our military capabilities. As you may know very well, the current defense budget of the Republic of Korea is about 1.4 times of the total GDP of the D.P.R.K. So our budget—our military spending, is quite significant, and we're ranked number five in terms of our military spending.

So, already, it's quite a lot of money. However, I know that it is important to continue to lessen your burden—military and defense burden—for us. So we will continue to increase our military spending.

Furthermore, I'd like to mention a few things. When I met with you last time, I didn't have a chance to explain in further detail, so there may be some misunderstanding.

But when it comes to submarines powered by nuclear energy, I hope that you will support so that we can get supplied of nuclear fuels for submarines. We're not aiming for nuclear-armed submarines, but rather conventionally armed submarines powered by nuclear energy.

Because our conventional submarines have limited capabilities, they cannot really effectively monitor and counter any undersea activities from other countries. So if you allow and support the supply of nuclear energy and nuclear fuel for submarines, then we will be assisting building submarines and military vessels. And if we are equipped with nuclear-powered submarines, we can help your activities around this region by providing the patrol and other activities.

I understand that you have already expressed support for reprocessing of spent fuel and enrichment of uranium. And if you facilitate the working-level consultations between our two countries regarding that, we will be able to achieve good results.

And you are now working to make America great again, and I can see that there has been a lot of achievements. And last night I checked that your stock indexes have hit another record high. So you are indeed making America great again.

And so, against this backdrop, Korean companies will continue to invest in the U.S., and we will continue to support your endeavor in revitalizing your manufacturing sectors. And shipbuilding sector cooperation will also continue, because this will benefit the Korean economy as well, and it will benefit the U.S. economy. And all these efforts will further advance and strengthen our bilateral alliance and relations.

We have 50 million people in Korea and, along with our Korean people, once again I welcome you to the Republic of Korea, and I hope that we will continue to work together for better Korea, for better U.S., and also for better bilateral alliance.

Welcome once again. Thank you very much.

President Trump. Thank you.

Well, I'd like to thank you very much. And I want to thank all of your people, many of whom I know.

And we've been dealing—they're very tough negotiators, and that's the way it should be. And I will say that we're working together. There's a great love between our communities, between our people, between leadership, and we're all friends.

I know you showed me a picture from a long time ago of you and I, and you're looking better now than you did then. That was quite a while ago. So you're doing something well. [*Laughter*]

But I will say this, that the Korean Peninsula—and I know you are officially at war, but we will see what we can do to get that all straightened out.

We're—we've been very lucky. I've been very fortunate to be able to solve a lot of problems in the world. I didn't even know there were so many problems. There were countries that nobody knew that they were even fighting, and yet they were killing millions and millions of people. And we got them—with the exception of one, which we'll—I think we're going to get straightened out—Russia-Ukraine.

But we got them all done, all finished. And you know that I'll be working on this very hard with you, with your team, with a lot of other people—see if we can do something that makes sense. I know Kim Jong Un very well. We get along very well. We really weren't able to work out timing.

We have—President Xi is coming tomorrow, and it was—that was something that obviously is very important to the world—to all of us. You'll be watching very carefully. We're meeting right here. And we're all looking forward to that. I think it's going to work out very, very well for everybody. And we—I look forward to seeing him. And that was our focus, really, for this visit.

But we'll have other visits and we'll work very hard with Kim Jong Un and with everybody on getting things straightened out, because that makes sense.

You know, I have a couple of phrases that I like. One of them is "common sense." It's common sense that that should work out. And I feel certain that it will. It may take a little time that—you have to have a little patience, but I feel absolutely certain that it will.

In the meantime, what you've done is amazing. What you've—first of all, the welcome and the beautiful honor you've bestowed on me as the only American President, that's—that's really a great tribute to our country—not to me, it's a great tribute to our country. But I had it focused toward you, as opposed to against you, which some people did.

What you've done, what you've created—what you've done in really a very short period of time, relatively speaking, is amazing. It's really amazing.

And you're working with us now on shipbuilding, because you become a master of shipbuilding. You know, during World War II, we were the biggest. We were number one by far, the United States. And then, through a series of very bad decisions or lack of caring, we really didn't make ships very much anymore. We made other things very well, but we didn't make ships.

Well, making ships is a necessity, and I know we're working in the Philadelphia yards and in various other places in the United States, where you're coming. We're going to make ships together in the United States, and we're going to start up shipbuilding. And we'll be right at the top or at least toward the top in a pretty short period of time.

But we have a lot of industries that are together. And we have a lot of industries where we're leading. We're leading in AI now. We're leading in a lot of the different things. We have many car companies coming back, as you know, to the United States.

Yesterday I was in Japan, and Toyota is investing \$10 billion on building car plants—numerous car plants throughout the country with American workers—largely American workers. And we have many, many of them opening. So we have a lot of industry coming back.

We're going to be having—I think, by the end of my first term, we should have \$21- or \$22—\$22 trillion dollars invested in the United States from other people and countries. And that's a record. That's not even close. I think the record could be just about a fifth, one-fifth of that.

And the previous administration had less than \$1 trillion in 4 years, and we're going to have maybe \$21 trillion—could be even higher than that—in 1 year. So nobody's ever seen anything like—no country has ever seen anything like that.

But I just want to let you know, it's a special bond that we've had. We've had it for a long time, but you've never had it as strong as you've had it with me. And it's a tremendous honor.

I will tell you, driving up in the Beast—that's called "the Beast"—driving up in the Beast—the limo—with those very powerful people carrying very vicious-looking weapons, it was something. That was some spectacle and some beautiful scene. And I know what goes to making that happen.

But it was so perfect, so flawlessly done. And all of us—I can speak for my entire Cabinet and all the people with me, I don't think we've ever seen anything like that.

So I just want to thank you for that. That was a very special welcome, and it will be remembered.

And, Marco, I think you're working extremely well with the defensive side—defense and offense, okay? We have both defense and offense, and they're equally as good. In fact, our defense is very important from the standpoint of helping other countries. But we're going to take care of—we're going to work with you, and we're going to take care of the one—it's really a lingering cloud. I would call it a "lingering cloud" that's over your head. We're going to see if we can get that straightened out.

And I just want to thank you again for the welcome. And I wanted to say: We've been friends for a long time, and you are going to be a great President—you already are. And if we can do this together, then you'll go down as the greatest of them all. And we'll try and make that happen.

Thank you very much. Great honor.

President Lee. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:50 p.m. at the Gyeongju National Museum. In his remarks, he referred to State Affairs Commission President Kim Jong Un of North Korea; President Xi Jinping of China; and Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. President Lee spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on November 8.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : South Korea, President Lee.

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