

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026*

**Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland**

*February 19, 2026*

*[The President's remarks were joined in progress.]*

*The President.* —have been put up, and that will go to Gaza.

Hi.

That will go to Gaza. It will go to various other places—hot spots as they materialize. And we know they will materialize, right?

What do you think, Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News]? Do you think there will be no more hot spots ever?

*Q.* Hope not.

*The President.* And—I don't think so. Would put you out of business, right? *[Laughter]*

Any questions?

*Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*

*Q.* Mr. President, you took a—kind of a little bit of a swipe at A.O.C. today, and I was just wondering——

*The President.* Well, her performance was horrible. I was surprised, actually. I didn't know she was stupid.

*China/Taiwan*

*Q.* So how would you have answered the question that she was asked about whether the U.S. should support Taiwan if they're ever attacked by China?

*The President.* Well, I would have just said, "That's none of your business right now," because I wouldn't answer that question anyway. I wouldn't respond to a question like that. That's war. When it comes to war, you don't talk about your strategy. She could have done that very easily.

She had no idea. I don't think she knew what Taiwan was. That was her problem.

But you don't talk about military strategy. She could have taken an easy pass on that one. That was not a good answer. Could be death-defying, because I suspect that will be used in every campaign for the next 30 years against her.

That was not a good one, Peter. What do you think?

*Department of Justice Files Concerning Deceased Convicted Sex Offender Jeffrey Epstein/British Royal Family*

*Q.* I've got a question about something big overseas today. The former Prince Andrew arrested by the police there related to something with Jeffrey Epstein. Do you think people in this country, at some point—associates of Jeffrey Epstein—will wind up in handcuffs too?

*The President.* Well, you know, I'm the expert in a way, because I've been totally exonerated. That's very nice. I can actually speak about it very nicely.

I think it's a shame. I think it's very sad. I think it's so bad for the royal family. It's a very, very sad—to me, it's a very sad thing.

When I see that, it's a very sad thing to see it and to see what's going on with his brother, who's obviously coming to our country very soon, and he's a fantastic man—the King. So I think it's a very sad thing.

It's really interesting, because nobody used to speak about Epstein when he was alive, but now they speak. But I'm the one that can talk about it because I've been totally exonerated. I did nothing. In fact, the opposite. He was against me. He was fighting me in the election, which I just found out through the last 3 million pages of documents.

Yes, please.

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* Yes, please.

### *Iran*

*Q.* You said today, on Iran, bad things will happen if Iran doesn't——

*The President.* Yes, bad things. Really bad things.

*Q.* What will that——

*The President.* I'm not going to talk to you about that.

*Q.* Okay. Can you explain, though, what is the goal, if there is a U.S. military strike?

*The President.* Well, we'll either make a deal or we're going to get a deal one way or the other.

*Q.* But with a military strike, is it to wipe out their nuclear program?

*The President.* I'm not going to talk to you about that. But we're either going to get a deal or it's going to be unfortunate for them.

*Q.* And you said today "10 days." Have you given them a deadline, firm, to make a deal?

*The President.* It's—I think—I would think that would be enough time—10, 15 days, pretty much maximum.

### *Board of Peace*

*Q.* Mr. President, when you have the Board of Peace, obviously, there's a lot of countries that you're trying to get on. What countries would you like to see join the Board of Peace the most?

*The President.* Well, we have a lot that are on, and we have a lot that are going through the process of getting on. They have to get legislative approval, et cetera. And we've had billions of dollars put up already by the countries that are on. You saw some of the big players today. It's been very successful.

Everyone's going to want to be on. Everyone wants to be on. Some have to go back to their legislatures to get approval.

*Q.* Would you want, like, China or Russia, any kind—anyone of those guys?

*The President.* I would love to have China and Russia. They've been invited, yes.

*Q.* Something that got a lot of——

*The President.* You need both. You need all persuasions. No discrimination.

*Former President Barack Obama*

*Q.* Something that got a lot of attention this week: Barack Obama said that aliens are real. Have you seen any evidence of nonhuman visitors to Earth?

*The President.* Well, he gave classified information. He's not supposed to be doing that. Yes.

*Q.* So aliens are real?

*The President.* Well, I don't know if they're real or not. I can tell you he gave classified information. He's not supposed to be doing that.

*Q.* But what was classified?

*The President.* He made a big mistake. He took it out of classified information.

No, I don't have an opinion on it. I never talk about it. A lot of people do. A lot of people believe it.

Do you believe it, Peter? [*Laughter*]

*Q.* Well, the President can declassify anything that he wants to, so if you want to make an announcement——

*The President.* Well, maybe I'll get him out of trouble. I may get him out of trouble by declassifying.

*Q.* We know illegal aliens are real. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Yes, illegal. Only illegals.

What else?

*Apparent Kidnapping of Nancy Guthrie in Catalina Foothills, Arizona*

*Q.* What do you—based on what you've been told, what do you think happened to Savannah Guthrie's mom Nancy?

*The President.* Boy, it's so crazy. It's so bad. I didn't like when they were talking about going after the pacemaker and the—and you know, before they even started going after it, they're coming and reporting it. So if in fact they could do it that way, the person would say, "Well, I'm not going to let that happen." Right? So bad things would happen if you didn't—not going to let that happen.

I can't imagine why they would have done that. And just in terms of strategies, one little piece—I don't know. But we have to start reporting on other subjects also and see what happens. It's a very sad situation.

*White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt.* Sir, they're trying to take off.

*Q.* And with Iran. If the whole point of striking——

*The President.* Yes. I have to take off. I'll come back.

*Q.* Thank you, sir.

*The President.* All right?

*Q.* Yes. Thank you, President Trump.

*The President.* But do I have to? Maybe I don't have to. [*Laughter*]

Have a good time. Thank you.

*Q.* I think you have to. I think you have to.

*Q.* Thank you.

*The President.* Sit down.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:02 p.m. in the press cabin prior to departure for Rome, GA. In his remarks, he referred to King Charles III of the United Kingdom and his brother Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor. A reporter referred to Savannah Guthrie, cohost of NBC News' "Today" program, whose mother Nancy Guthrie was abducted from her Catalina Foothills, AZ, home on February 1,

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Joint Base Andrews, MD.

*Locations:* Joint Base Andrews, MD.

*Names:* Charles III, King; Leavitt, Karoline; Mountbatten-Windsor, Andrew; Obama, Barack; Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria.

*Subjects:* Alien life forms, question of existence; Arizona, apparent kidnapping of Nancy Guthrie in Catalina Foothills; Board of Peace; Classified national security information; Department of Justice files concerning deceased convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Illegal immigration; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Maryland, Joint Base Andrews; Maryland, President's visit; News media, Presidential interviews; Taiwan, political status with respect to China; United Kingdom, King; White House Press Secretary.

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