

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany and an Exchange With Reporters

March 3, 2026

President Trump. Well, thank you very much, everybody. We have a meeting with a man who's become a friend of mine, and we've known each other for a little while in some very interesting times. And we get along. Our countries get along very well. We have a great affinity for each other.

And the Chancellor has been very well-received in Germany. He's very, a very successful man. Became the Chancellor of Germany, which is a big deal, and he's doing a very good job. In my opinion, a really—a great job. Very popular. And the relationship that we have in trade and everything else has been very strong. We've been able to do our deals, and it's been very strong.

We'll obviously be talking a little bit about Iran today, and he's been helping us out, doing—they've been very nice, actually. And that is coming along, as you see, very well. They have no navy. It's been knocked out. They have no air force. It's been knocked out. They have no air detection. That's been knocked out. Their radar has been knocked out. And just about everything's been knocked out, so we'll see how we do.

But we're doing very well. We have a great military, and they're doing a fantastic job. So we'll be talking about that.

And we're talking about some very big trade deals, and those, I know, will work out too. So I just want to say it's a great honor to have you at the Oval Office.

Chancellor Merz. Thank you.

President Trump. The beautiful Oval Office, beautiful White House. It's a special place, even from your standpoint. And you have some very special places too. And I look forward to being with you.

Chancellor Merz. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you very much.

Chancellor Merz. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. President, for having me here in this Oval Office for the third time now.

President Trump. Yes.

Chancellor Merz. Really happy to have the opportunity to speak with you in these challenging times. We are on the same page in terms of getting this terrible regime in Tehran away. And we will talk about the day after, what will happen then——

President Trump. Right.

Chancellor Merz. ——if they are out.

We have to talk about our trade agreement, which I would like to be in place as soon as possible.

And we have to talk about Ukraine. There are too many bad guys in this world, actually. And this is an issue—[laughter]—we have to talk about, because we all want to see this war

coming to an end as soon as possible. But Ukraine has to preserve its territory and their security interests. And, well, we will talk about that.

President Trump. Right. We will indeed.

Chancellor Merz. Looking forward to that.

President Trump. We will. Thank you for being here.

Chancellor Merz. Thank you——

President Trump. We'll have some interesting, some——

Chancellor Merz. ——for your hospitality. Thank you for letting me spending the night in your guest house.

President Trump. That's right.

Chancellor Merz. It's a very, very——

President Trump. Good.

Chancellor Merz. ——comfortable place.

President Trump. Hope you liked it. Right?

Chancellor Merz. Absolutely. Yes. Great place.

President Trump. [Laughter] That's good.

Chancellor Merz. And a famous place. Yes.

President Trump. That's good. Very famous.

Chancellor Merz. So many former Presidents were there.

President Trump. That's right.

Chancellor Merz. Yes.

President Trump. Very famous place.

Any questions, please? [Laughter]

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

U.S. Airstrikes on Iran/Israel/Venezuela

Q. Mr. President, did Israel force your hand to launch these strikes against Iran? Did——

President Trump. No.

Q. ——Netanyahu pull the United States into this war?

President Trump. No, I might have forced their hand.

You see, we were having negotiations with these lunatics, and it was my opinion that they were going to attack first. They were going to attack. If we didn't do it, they were going to attack first. I felt strongly about that.

And we have great negotiators, great people, people that do this very successfully and have done it all their lives, very successful. And based on the way the negotiation was going, I think they were going to attack first. And I didn't want that to happen.

So, if anything, I might have forced Israel's hand, but Israel was ready, and we were ready. And we've had a very, very powerful impact, because virtually everything they have has been knocked out now. Their missile count is going way down.

Amazingly, they're hitting countries that were, you know, let's call them neutral. Right? They lived together for a long time. They, I think they were surprised. I was surprised. I think it—and now those countries are all fighting against them and fighting strongly against them.

Someday they'll write a story and they'll say why they did that, but they hit countries that had nothing to do with what's going on. They were sort of leaving everything alone. All of a sudden, they get, they had missiles shot in, which shows you the level of evil that we're dealing with. They'll hit people that were actually at least somewhat friendly, and they had no problems with it. Also hitting only civilian places: hotels and apartment buildings.

And we're hitting them where it is much more appropriate. We're hitting them very hard. And the big-scale hitting goes now. They no longer have air protection. They no longer have any detection facilities at all left. And so they're going to, they're going to be in for a lot of hurt. These are bad people. These are people that killed, I guess it's 35,000. It's coming out: 35,000 over the last 3 weeks. Protesters, 35,000 violently killed.

So these are bad people. And the leader of the pack is gone. And, as you know, 49 people were taken out in the first hit. And I guess there was another hit today on the new leadership, and it looks like that was pretty substantial also. So they're getting hit very hard, and we'll see what happens.

A lot of people are coming forward. A lot of the people you would least suspect want to quit. They want to have immunity. They're asking for immunity. And probably, at some point, they'll be dropping, as you would say, laying down their guns. We'll see what happens.

In the meantime, we're just continuing to go forward. Our military is the number one in the world by far. And we are, this is—everything's big, in my book. Venezuela was big. This is big. The original hit, Midnight Hammer, was big. Everything you view is big. But it's not considered very big by some standards, by some of our standards. We have a military like no other military that's ever been built.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead, please.

Iran/U.S. Military Operations

Q. Mr. President, what's the worst case scenario that you have planned for in Iran?

President Trump. Well, I don't know if there's a worst case. We have them very much beaten militarily, from the military standpoint. They're still lobbing some missiles. At some point, they won't even be able to do that, because we're hitting all of their carriers. We're hitting all of their missile stock. You know, they built up all these missiles over the last few years.

Chancellor Merz. Yes.

President Trump. They had a lot of them. They've shot a lot of them, and we're knocking out a lot. I guess the worst case would be we do this and then somebody takes over who's as bad as the previous person, right? That could happen. We don't want that to happen. That would probably be the worst: You go through this, and then in 5 years you realize you put somebody in who was no better. So we'd like to see somebody in there that's going to bring it back for the people.

And we'll see what happens with the people. You know, they have their chance. And we've said, "Don't do it yet." If you're going to go out and protest, don't do it yet. It's very dangerous out there. A lot of bombs are being dropped. But I always say that would be about the worst.

Iran/New Political Leadership/Venezuela/Iraq

Q. Do you have someone in mind right now? Because you said all the people you did have in mind have been taken out. What do you think of the——

President Trump. Well, most of the——

Q. ——exiled Crown Prince?

President Trump. ——people we had in mind are dead. So, you know, we had some in mind from that group that is dead. And now we have another group. They may be dead also, based on reports. So I guess you'll have a third wave coming in. Pretty soon, we're not going to know anybody.

But we have, I mean, Venezuela was so incredible because we did the attack, and we kept government totally intact. And we have Delcy, who's been very good. We have the whole chain of command. And they've been, you know, look, the relationship's been great.

We've taken out a hundred million barrels of oil already. And a big part of that goes to them, and a big part goes to us. And it's been great.

You—we paid for the war many times over. And we're going to be running the oil. And Venezuela is going to make more money than they ever made, and that's great for the people. The relationship has been great. It's been seamless. Nobody's actually ever seen anything like it.

If you look at Iraq, where, very stupidly, everybody was fired, the generals were fired, the military was fired, the police were fired, the fire departments were fired, and all of the government workers were fired. So, after, you know, people would call. They had no idea. And by the way, ISIS was formed. That's where ISIS came from. All of the fired people. We don't believe in that.

So we'll see what happens, but first we have to finish off the military.

Former Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi of Iran

Q. What do you think of the exiled Crown Prince, Reza Pahlavi? Is he an option at all in your mind?

President Trump. I guess he is. Some people like him, and we haven't been thinking about—too much about that. It would seem to me that somebody from within might—maybe would be more appropriate. I've said that.

He looks like a very nice person. But it would seem to me that somebody that's there, that's currently popular, if there's such a person. But we have people like that. We have people that were more moderate. You know, these were radical lunatics. And you know what they get? They get nothing. All they do is kill people.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, to be clear, what exactly was the imminent threat, Mr. President?

President Trump. You've asked your—not your turn.

Q. What exactly——

President Trump. Not your turn.

Please.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Spain

Q. Mr. President, you, have you been—take the heat off the Europeans to potentially help you? Mark Rutte called on the allies to also help you. And are you——

President Trump. What does that mean?

Q. Well, you'd have to ask Mark Rutte. He said not as part of NATO, but to be helpful to you in this. And will you let the Europeans——

President Trump. Well, some of the European nations have been helpful, and some haven't. And I'm, you know, very surprised. It's, Germany's been great. He's been terrific. Others have been very good. Terrific. I think that the head of NATO, Mark, is fantastic. Okay?

Chancellor Merz. He is.

President Trump. Mark Rutte. I think he's fantastic. But some of the European, like Spain has been terrible. In fact, I told Scott to cut off all dealings with Spain. Spain, first of all, it started when every European nation, at my request, paid 5 percent, which they should be doing. And everybody was enthusiastic about it; Germany, everybody. And Spain didn't do it. And now Spain actually said that we can't use their bases, and that's all right. We don't want to. We could use their base. If we want, we could just fly in and use it. Nobody's going to tell us not to use it, but we don't have to.

But they were unfriendly. And so I told him, we don't want to. Spain has absolutely nothing that we need, other than great people. They have great people, but they don't have great leadership.

And, as you know, they were the only country that, in NATO, would not agree to go up to 5 percent. I don't think they wanted—agreed to go up to anything. They wanted to keep it at 2 percent, and they don't pay the 2 percent.

So we're going to cut off all trade with Spain. We don't want anything to do with Spain.

United Kingdom/Chagos Archipelago

Q. What is the expectation towards Germany?

President Trump. And I'm not, by the way, I'm not happy with the U.K. either. That island that you read about, the lease, you know, okay, he made it. For whatever reason, he made a lease of the island. Somebody came and took it away from him. And it's taken 3, 4 days for us to work out where we can land there. It would have been much more convenient landing there as opposed to flying many extra hours. So we are very surprised. This is not Winston Churchill that we're dealing with.

Germany

Q. Mr. President, what's your expectations towards Germany? What can Germany do and what should Germany do to help you in this conflict?

President Trump. Well, I think they're doing it. I mean, they're letting us land in certain areas, and that's—we appreciate it. And they're just making it comfortable.

We're not asking them to put boots on the ground or anything. I mean, we're just—they're a respected country. We—I have a very good relationship with the country. We have, in particular, now with this leader, with this new leader. I think he's an excellent leader.

I had my differences with Angela. I said, "You're hurting your country with immigration, and you're hurting your country with energy." And we have a man sitting on my right that is, I think, pretty much the opposite of her on energy and the opposite on immigration. And I think he's doing very well.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Situation in the Middle East/Iran/U.S. Military Readiness/Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, commercial air travel right now is severely restricted in the Middle East, and thousands of Americans are stranded. Why wasn't there an evacuation plan, and will you send planes to get people out?

President Trump. Well, because it happened all very quickly. We thought, and I thought, maybe more so than most; I could ask Marco. But I thought we were going to have a situation where we were going to be attacked.

They were getting ready to attack Israel. They were getting ready to attack others. You're seeing that right now. And a lot of those missiles that are heading in, those are stationary. Those were aimed there for a long period of time at these other countries.

So I think I was right about that. We attacked first, and if we didn't, it could have been, you know, look, we're really decimating them. They're being decimated. And if we didn't, if we didn't hit—and by the way, we have massive amounts of ammunition. We have, the high-end, a lot of it was given away, stupidly, by Biden, very stupidly for free. And I'm all for Ukraine, but they gave away a lot.

As you know, when I give away ammunition, everybody pays for it. The European Union's paying for it. Then they can do what they want with it, but they are giving it, let's say, to Ukraine, and it's okay.

But we gave away a lot of high-end, but we have plenty. But we have unlimited middle and upper ammunition, which is really what we're using in this war. And we have an—really, an unlimited supply. We also have a lot of the very high-end stored in different countries throughout the world, where there's—we're literally storing it there, which is actually something that I insisted on in my first term.

I rebuilt the military in my first term. The military is great. A lot of—unbelievable amount of ammunition or munitions, as they say, were given away to, you know. The Wall Street Journal incorrectly covered this story when they said that it was given away to the Middle East. Not to the Middle East. It was given away to Ukraine. Very little was given to the Middle East. The Middle East would buy a lot, and some of the nations, because they're rich, they have a lot. But it was given away to Ukraine.

And it just should have been done. Look, it's a war that should have never happened. If I were President, that war would have never happened. But we have a tremendous amount of munitions, ammunition at the upper level; middle and upper level, all of which is really powerful stuff.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Iran/U.S. Military Operations

Q. Mr. President, a question to both of you. How worried are you that the rising prices for gas and oil are damaging the American economy? And also, Mr. Chancellor, the German economy.

President Trump. Yes. Do you want to go ahead?

Q. And what could be done?

Chancellor Merz. Yes, sure. This is, of course, damaging our economies. This is true for the oil prices, and this is true for the gas prices as well. So that's the reason why we all hope that this war will come to an end as soon as possible. And we are hoping that the Israelian and the American army are doing the right things to bring this to an end and to have, really, a new government in place who is coming back to peace and freedom.

President Trump. Yes. Something had to be done. And it's been 47 years. They've been killing people all over the world for a long time. They were the kings and fathers of the roadside bomb. Soleimani, we killed him last term. If we didn't, I think it might be a different story today. They would have been much stronger and smarter than they are.

But they did the roadside bombs. Ninety-five percent of the people lost their legs, arms, had their face wiped out, just wiped out. I've seen some young people that, it's so sad to watch. And that was all, almost all—95 percent comes from Iran. And Soleimani loved it. His favorite weapon. He loved the roadside bomb. And when you see people walking around with no legs and no arms and a face that's been blown to hell, these people, what they have to go and the way they have to live, this is Iran.

When you look at the barracks, the famous barracks, when you look at the hostages, when you look at, a lot of hostages, when you look at all of the problems, they were really a purveyor of terror all over the world for many, many years. And it's something that had to be done. Something—and I believe that if we didn't, because I see where Congress, you know, if I didn't do this, guys like Schumer, who are losers. The Democrats, they're losers; that's why they're not here. Guys like Schumer would say, "Well, you should have done this." In other words, if I did it, it's no good. If I didn't do it, they would have said the opposite, that you should have done this.

But most people feel—I'll tell you what, I have never had more compliments on something I did. People felt it's something that had to be done.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. So, if we have a little high oil prices for a little while—but as soon as this ends, those prices are going to drop, I believe lower than even before.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead, please.

Europe Union/Trade With U.S./Tariffs

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. —how do you want to solve the conflict on the tariffs between EU and U.S.? And this question to both——

President Trump. Between who?

Q. The conflict on tariffs between EU and U.S. How do you want to solve it?

President Trump. And U.S. and who?

Q. EU.

Q. Tariffs

Q. European Union.

President Trump. Oh.

Q. How do you want to solve it?

President Trump. Well, we——

Q. The question also goes to the Chancellor.

President Trump. We won on tariffs, actually. Somebody said, "You actually won the case." We won on tariffs. We had a decision that was wrong, was a very bad decision from certain standpoints. From other standpoints, a very powerful decision because it reaffirmed all the fact that we have these, all these various forms of tariffs that we felt, right? But it totally reaffirmed it. It said, "You can use all of these tariffs." So we have all these vast menus of tariffs.

And tariffs have made our country very rich. We have to charge tariffs to nations who play with their money. You know, they move their money up and down like a yo-yo. We have to do—we have to take care of nations that have been good to us and fair to us, and we're going to take care of them. Other nations, they haven't, and we haven't let them take advantage of us.

But the whole thing with tariffs is, we had a decision that—like, as an example, we have a license situation, and the license is something that allows us to immediately stop all business with—nobody even knew we had this power, but we do now because of the decision. We have the right to stop all business having to do with a certain country.

If a certain country is not treating us well, the President, without going to Congress, without—has the right to stop. Sort of interesting. I have the right to stop, but under that one law, I didn't have the right to charge them. So I have the right to license them, but I don't have the right to charge, which is, frankly, ridiculous. But the right was given to us by the Supreme Court.

And we have the right. As an example, we talked about Spain. I could, tomorrow, stop—or today, even better—stop everything having to do with Spain. All business having to do with Spain, I have the right to stop it, embargoes, do anything I want with it. And we may do that with Spain. What do you think?

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson L. Greer. Well, sir, I think we're going to talk about it with you. I know that you have a strong power that the Supreme Court clarified. We know you can use it, and if you need to use it to assure national and economic security, we'll do it.

President Trump. Scott, do you have an opinion?

U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. Sir, I agree. The Supreme Court reaffirmed your ability the—to implement an embargo.

And the—as we've talked, the—from your first term, the Section 301s and the 232s have withheld more than 4,000 lawsuits. And USTR and Commerce are going instigate—are going to begin investigations, and we'll move forward with those.

President Trump. And we've instituted a 15-percent tariff on everybody, as you know. And just used a—I'll tell you, we had a couple of paragraphs written in that opinion that were really incredible.

Justice Kavanaugh wrote a fantastic dissent, but in his dissent, he said what we should do. And we knew that too. We just wanted to simplify it. And for some reason, I think, you know, very foolishly, the Court's decided no, but they said you can do it many other ways. And that's what we're doing.

And what we've done is, we've gone to a very simple, straight 15-percent tariff. It's taken in—we've taken in hundreds of billions of dollars in our country because of tariffs. So we've

taken in all of this money, hundreds of billions of dollars. And honestly, it's made us very rich as a country, right? So it's been doing good.

When will you have the full plan implemented? We have a 5-month period, up to 5 months, where we can go at 15 percent. And while we're doing that, as you know, we're doing the various studies and things. And we'll be coming out with tariffs, different tariffs on different countries.

Do you want to talk about that for a second?

Ambassador Greer. Yes, sir. By the time the 5-month period has elapsed, we'll have completed investigations under section 301, which Secretary Bessent talked about.

We know there are countries out there with deals who are very interested in keeping the deals. We need to go through and investigate all these unfair trading practices, the kinds of things you've talked about, and make sure that we're protecting U.S. economic security. We know there are countries out——

President Trump. How are we going to treat Germany?

Ambassador Greer. Well, the——

President Trump. I think you should hit them very, very hard. [*Laughter*]

Ambassador Greer. You knew he was right there when you said that, Mr. President. We're——

Q. [*Inaudible*]

Ambassador Greer. They want to—they have expressed an interest. Germany's been quite constructive in wanting to move forward and be helpful. You know, the rest of the EU, we'll talk to them as well. But obviously, we'll work——

President Trump. I will say, every country—every single country wants to make the deal they already have. In other words, a deal that we have using the other authority, they want to make the same deal. And we'd like to see—actually, we're going to adjust it somewhat upward, actually. But they would like—they all want to stay in the deal. And so we'll probably be able to do that pretty easily.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Ukraine/Russia/China

Q. [*Inaudible*—in Ukraine, after all, Iran won't be able to deliver drones to Russia anymore. So, what does this war mean to Ukraine? And having Chancellor Merz sitting next to you, whom would you call if you want to talk to Europe?

And, Chancellor Merz, you've just been in China. The President will be traveling——

President Trump. Who are you? What country are you from?

Q. I'm from Germany.

President Trump. Okay.

Q. Yes.

President Trump. I thought so.

Q. I'm—yes. [*Laughter*]

President Trump. I could see. [*Laughter*]

Q. So—and, Mr. Chancellor, you have been in China and the President will be——

President Trump. She likes you.

Q. —in China soon.

Chancellor Merz. I don't know.

Q. Will you be talking about China——

Chancellor Merz. We will.

Q. —as well during this visit?

President Trump. We'll be talking about China, yes.

Chancellor Merz. For sure.

Q. And what about Ukraine?

President Trump. Every—I'll be going to China in a little while. Every time you meet, you talk about China. We respect China. I do. We both do, I think. But it's always a topic of conversation.

We've had a very good relationship with China. We used to lose a tremendous amount of money with China, and that's no longer the case. We have a very, very good relationship with China. And we have a very good relationship with Germany.

All right.

Iran/Government Response to Political Demonstrations/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. We've seen countries around the world, many of whom don't usually work together, working with the United States on Iran, whether it's, you know, Saudi Arabia——

President Trump. Right.

Q. —working with the United States, Israel, Qatari shooting down Iranian aircraft. And we've also seen European countries step up. Why are we seeing, you know, such unity around the world against Iran?

President Trump. That's a great point. I look, they're just evil. They're—it's not the politics; it's their whole philosophy. It's their whole—where they come from. It's terrible, where they kill 35,000. I thought it was 32, now it turns out it's much more than 35,000 people.

And in some cases, using machineguns with people that have no weapon. They have no weapon, and they're being machine-gunned. They're being sniped from buildings. They have—they're hitting the people with snipers right through the eyes. It's just a very evil ideology, and nobody's really seen anything like it.

As I said, even the fact that they've attacked all of their neighbors, and the neighbors weren't attacking. They thought they'd maybe sit it out or what. They're—they've drone—they've hit Qatar. They've hit U.A.E. They've hit Saudi Arabia. They've hit Oman with—they were helping us negotiate. They got hit. Everybody got hit because they're evil and they're bad.

It's a bad seed, and somebody had to do it. And it should have been done sometime during a 47-year period, because so much death has been caused by them, so much unbelievable death. From Germany too, from—I mean, Germany has been hit. Everybody's been hit by them. It's an evil ideology.

And I've never been—I—look, I've done a lot of good things. So many people are saying, "Thank you, thank you, thank you." You see it in the streets of Los Angeles. They have thousands

of people. I saw it the other day, pictures of Donald Trump. And I'm looking, I'm on the phone, probably talking to you—[laughter]—and I'm looking, and I see my picture. I say, "Oh no, it's another, you know, protest." I see my—and then I started saying, "Boy, they were very friendly people." And then I saw a woman hugging the picture of me. I say, "What's going on?" And it turned out to be these are Iranian people——

Chancellor Merz. Yes.

President Trump. ——that live in the United States.

Chancellor Merz. So many. So many, yes.

President Trump. Thousands and—you saw the rallies. And in New York too, they had a big rally. My picture's all over the place.

The fact is that people are happy, what we did. And you could never—and I've always said it—you could never have had true peace in the Middle East if Iran was allowed to go. Even beyond the nuclear, if Iran was allowed to have all the—look at all the missiles they built. A lot have been now taken out by us, and a lot have been expended, but they had thousands of missiles in a fairly short period of time.

And I'll go—two things. The attack that we did, known as Midnight Hammer, had we not done that, Iran would've had a very powerful nuclear weapon within 1 month. We did it. It was great timing, but you know, and you've been able to see that too.

The other thing was Barack Hussein Obama made maybe the worst deal I've ever seen, because he gave all power in the Middle East to Iran. He went the exact opposite way, and I terminated that. If I didn't terminate that deal, they would be sitting with a massive nuclear weapon 3 years ago, which would've been used already on Israel at least and other countries also. And we wouldn't be talking about it right now.

But if I didn't terminate the deal that Obama made giving them everything, including planeloads of cash. Do you remember the airplane flew over there? It was a Boeing 757. It was two of them, loaded, they took out all the seats. It was loaded with green cash, so much cash that you could—it was in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC. They got all the cash from all the banks. They put it, and they flew it to Iran.

I never knew a President had that power. I'm going to maybe try it sometime, if it's okay. [Laughter] I think I'm going to do it. I'll fly it somewhere.

Nobody's ever seen anything like it. Two planes loaded from floor to ceiling. Big planes, Boeing 757s, taken over there and giving cash. In addition to that, he was giving them billions of dollars.

But worse, he was giving them the right to have the path to a nuclear weapon. And that deal expired. A lot of people said, "Oh, you terminated it." Well, it was going to be terminated anyway because it expired.

It gave them the right to have top-of-the-line nuclear weapon. If they had—because they're crazy. They're crazy, just like the people on my right during the State of the Union. I looked at them, I said, "You're crazy." These people are crazy. And if they had a nuclear weapon, they would've used it.

All right. How about one or two more?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead, please.

Iran/U.S. Military Operations/Europe/Spain/United Kingdom/Chagos Archipelago/Energy Sources/Migration Issues

Q. Chancellor Merz, you just heard that the President is thinking about punishing Spain. What are your thoughts? What can you say on this? And what can you do to—yes.

Chancellor Merz. Well, the answer on that is quite simple. We are trying to convince Spain to catch up with the 3 percent at—or 3.5 percent, which we agree on in NATO. And as the President said, it's correct. Spain is the only one who is not willing to accept that. And we are trying to convince them that this is a part of our common security, that we all have to comply with this numbers. And this is 3.5 for military and another 1.5 for our military infrastructure. So Spain has to comply with that.

President Trump. They've been——

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

They've been very—Spain has been very, very uncooperative, and so has U.K. Now, the second one is shocking, but this is not the age of Churchill. I will say the U.K. has been very, very uncooperative with that stupid island that they have, that they gave away and took a hundred-year lease having to do with perhaps Indigenous people claiming the island. They never even saw the island before. What's that all about? And they ruin relationships. It's a shame. It's—and that country, U.K., and I love that country. I love it. My mother was born there. I love it. My mother was born there. My father was born——

[*President Trump motioned to Chancellor Merz.*]

Right? He knows all about my father. My father was born there. So you know, very—places that you, sort of, automatically very feel warmly about. But the U.K., what they're doing with energy and what they're doing with immigration is horrible.

You have the North Sea. Somebody said yesterday, "What would you do if you were the U.K.?" Open up the North Sea. They've got windmills all over the place that are ruining the country, ruining the landscapes, ruining the beautiful fields. Open up the North Sea. It's one of the greatest—think of it. They buy their energy from Norway, which gets the energy, the oil, from the North Sea. So Norway drills in the North Sea and sells it to U.K. And U.K. has a better part of the North Sea. Open up that.

Q. [*Inaudible*]

President Trump. And number two, illegal immigration. They've got to solve that problem. And I must say, that's not only U.K., they're—that's other parts of the European Union. They have the same problem. Immigration and energy. The energy is through the roof. The highest in the world. And the immigration was, I mean, you know—look, you have places where, in the U.K., you have a terrible mayor of London. Terrible. He's an incompetent guy. But you have Sharia courts. You don't have Sharia courts, you don't want Sharia courts. You have Sharia courts adjudicating law.

So it's very simple: immigration, very importantly. Immigration and energy. And you bring it back, otherwise you're not going to bring it back.

Okay, one more. One more.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Go ahead.

Russia/Ukraine/Iran

Q. I have a question for the Chancellor——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——and for you.

President Trump. Please.

Q. To the Chancellor. Chancellor Merz——

Chancellor Merz. Yes.

Q. ——you've called for unity and joint force in this moment against Iran. What does that look like to you?

And then, Mr. President, where is getting a deal with Russia and Ukraine on your priority list right now?

President Trump. Okay. Well, you want to?

Chancellor Merz. So we, as I said in Germany the last 2 days, we are supporting the United States and Israel to get rid of this terrible terrorist regime, and we are looking forward to a day after. And we have to talk about——

President Trump. Yes.

Chancellor Merz. ——the strategy, what is following after this regime is away. And we have to strategize on this entire region.

And we are having a high interest in common approach and common work in what we can do, and this is important not just for the Americans, this is extremely important for Europe and extremely important for Israel and their security. So we are really looking forward to find ways how to deal about the day after.

President Trump. And as far as Russia-Ukraine, where is it on my priority list? Very high. We thought that—I thought it was going to be one of the easier ones. I've settled eight wars and actually maybe one more than that, but minimum eight wars, big ones. Potential India-Pakistan. Big, big wars. Very important, big ones.

I thought this was going to be much easier than it is. It's very—there's tremendous hatred between President Putin and President Zelenskyy. Tremendous hatred. I'm—I've seen a lot of hatred in my life, but I think this is about top scale. I believe it's going to happen. Sometimes I blame one. Sometimes I blame the other. I think it's going to happen.

But it's high on my list, not in that it affects the United States so much, because it's very far away. But last week, I just see, last week and for the last 4 weeks, actually, 32,000 soldiers died. Thirty-two thousand. And it's been averaging 25- to 30,000 soldiers a month have been dying in that stupid war. And I'd love to see it ended. It's the worst that there has been since World War II.

Q. If you can't get a deal, what will that mean for you?

President Trump. All you can do is do your best, you know. It takes two to tango, and they have to get along. They have to be able to talk to each other. They hate each other a lot. That has an impact, you know. It really has an impact. It's bad for both.

The saddest is that if the election weren't rigged, my election, that war would have never taken place. And you know, what else wouldn't have taken place? Allowing 25 million people to pour through an open border. That wouldn't have taken place. A lot of things would've been different.

But we're doing very well. And I think a big, big factor in this world and future factor is what we're doing right now with Iran. If we don't stop them, or if we didn't stop them, or if we didn't start—they've been decimated.

But if we didn't do what we're doing right now, you would've had a nuclear war, and they would've taken out many countries. Because, you know what? They're sick people. They're mentally ill, sick people. They're angry. They're crazy. They're sick.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:49 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei of Iran, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Tehran, Iran, on February 28, 2026; Acting President Delcy Rodriguez Gomez of Venezuela; Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom; former Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio; former Presidents Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and Barack Obama; Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer; Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, United Kingdom; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. A reporter referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Germany, Chancellor Merz.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Greer, Jamieson L.; Kavanaugh, Brett M.; Khamenei, Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-; Khan, Sadiq; Merkel, Angela; Merz, Friedrich; Obama, Barack; Pahlavi, Reza; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rodriguez Gomez, Delcy; Rubio, Marco A.; Rutte, Mark; Schumer, Charles E.; Starmer, Keir; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Chagos Archipelago, territorial status; China, relations with U.S.; Diego Garcia, U.S.-United Kingdom joint military facility; Europe, defense spending levels; Germany, Chancellor; Germany, relations with U.S.; Iran, Israeli airstrikes; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, political unrest and violence; Iran, Supreme Leader; Iran, terrorism sponsorship; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Iran, U.S. military operations; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Israel, airstrikes on Iran; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Oil markets and prices; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury; Senate minority leader; Spain, defense relations with U.S.; Supreme Court Associate Justice; Tariffs; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; U.S. Trade Representative; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; United Kingdom, Prime Minister; Venezuela, Acting President; Venezuela, oil supply and refining; Venezuela, U.S. military capture and exfiltration of President Maduro.

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