

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters

March 19, 2026

President Trump. Well, thank you very much, everybody. It's great to have you, and we have a very special person. Just won a tremendous election in a record-setting fashion. See, we have something in common.

And I was very proud and honored to endorse the Prime Minister because of the fact that I thought she was really good. I thought she did a fantastic job. I respect her a lot, so I gave her an endorsement. And she had the most successful election I—in my opinion, in the history of Japan, won by the most ever.

So we have a very popular, powerful woman. And she's a great woman. We have a very fine relationship. And we're going to be talking about trade and many other things. And it's an honor to have you.

Thank you very much. Thank you very much.

Please.

[At this point, Prime Minister Takaichi began her remarks in English as follows.]

Prime Minister Takaichi. Thank you, Donald, for inviting me to the White House today.

President Trump. Thank you.

Prime Minister Takaichi. My visit is timely, so—given the current situation. So——

[Prime Minister Takaichi gestured to an interpreter.]

President Trump. Oh. Oh, please.

Prime Minister Takaichi. Okay? *[Inaudible]*

President Trump. Yes. Absolutely. You have a very good interpreter.

Prime Minister Takaichi. Yes. *[Laughter]* Your friend. Your friend.

President Trump. Who I've known for a—who I've known for a long time, with—Shinzo.

Prime Minister Takaichi. I know. I know. Your friend.

[Prime Minister Takaichi spoke in Japanese, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Right now situations in the Middle East and also the entire world, we are actually experiencing a very severe security environment. And also, the global economy is now about to experience a huge hit because of this development.

But even against such backdrop, I firmly believe that it is only you, Donald, who can achieve peace across the world. And to do so, I am ready to reach out to many of the partners in the international community to achieve our objective together.

So today I came here at the White House to directly convey this message to you.

And speaking of the situation in Iran, Iran's development of nuclear weapons must never be allowed. And that is why we, Japan, have been urging them and also reaching out to other partners in the world.

In addition, Japan condemns Iran's actions, such as attacking the neighboring region and also the de facto or effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

As a matter of fact, my fellow minister, Minister Motegi—Foreign Minister Motegi, also had the direct exchange with the Iranian Foreign Minister and urged Iran to stop such activities.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Toshimitsu Motegi of Japan. Condemned. Condemned.

President Trump. Yes, you let me know. You're going to let me know.

[*Prime Minister Takaichi continued in Japanese, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Prime Minister Takaichi. And also, the security environment in the Indo-Pacific region is also becoming increasingly severe.

Donald, you have shown deep trust in Japan and also the unwavering commitment to the Japan-U.S. alliance. Once again, thank you very much for that.

And today I look forward to having a discussion on how we can cooperate to make our two nations, both Japan and the United States, stronger and more prosperous.

And I also brought specific proposals to calm down the global energy market.

So today I really look forward to having our discussion, particularly focusing on our collaboration in economic security in the important areas such as energy and rare earth minerals. And also, I look forward to discussing with you how we can make our two economies stronger moving forward.

Thank you very much.

President Trump. Thank you very much. And you're doing a great job. Again, congratulations on the biggest win in the history of Japan. That's not bad. That's a pretty long history. That's a large nation with a large—really, with a great reputation, but it's a tremendous victory. Congratulations to everybody.

I'm very proud of you. Very proud of you. We've become friends, and I'm very proud of the job you've done. It's not easy.

Any questions, please?

Q. Mr. President——

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Sir—Mr. President, are you fully satisfied with the level of support that you're getting from Japan on Iran, including around the minesweepers?

President Trump. Well, we're going to be speaking about it today.

[*The President addressed the interpreter as follows.*]

Go Ahead. You can go.

We're doing—we're going to be speaking about it today. We've had tremendous support and relationship with Japan on everything, and I believe that based on statements that were given to us yesterday—the day before yesterday, having to do with Japan, they are really stepping up to the plate. Yes.

Unlike NATO.

Please.

Iran/Oil Supply and Refining/U.S. Stock Market/U.S. Military Readiness

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to lift sanctions on Iranian oil? And do you intend to potentially put U.S. troops or more troops in the region?

President Trump. No, I'm not putting troops anywhere. If I—were, I certainly wouldn't tell you. [*Laughter*] But I'm not putting troops. And we will do whatever is necessary to keep the price as low—I actually thought, when I did this—look, the Dow just hit 50,000 a couple of weeks ago. They said that couldn't happen for 4 years. It wouldn't happen in my term. It's such an outrageous thing. Because I said it would happen. I didn't know it was going to happen that fast. But it just hit 50,000, and we did that in 1 year, not four.

S&P had just hit 7,000. They say that was even more impossible than the Dow hitting 50-, and we did that in 1 year. So it was all done. Everything was going great. The economy was great. Oil prices were very low. Gasoline was dropping to—I mean, we had \$1.99, \$1.85. We had great everything.

And I saw what was happening in Iran and I said, "I hate to make this excursion, but we're going to have to do it." And I actually thought the numbers would be worse. I thought that it would go up more than it did. But we're doing this excursion.

And when it's completed, we're going to have a much safer world. And the Prime Minister agrees with me on this. She considers it to be terrible what Iran did. I think every country does—just about every country does.

Iran is a serious threat to the world—to the Middle East and to the world, and everybody agrees with me. I think virtually every country agrees with me on that.

So I wanted to put out that fire. And I said: "You know, if I do that, oil prices will go up. The economy will go down a little bit." I thought it would be worse—much worse, actually. I thought there was a chance it could be much worse. It's not bad, and it's going to be over with pretty soon.

We've obliterated their navy. We've obliterated their—just about everything there is to obliterate, including leadership. Their navy is gone. Their air force is gone. Their anti-aircraft equipment is gone. We're flying wherever we want, Pete. We have no—nobody even shooting at us.

They have—I mean, and, as you know, their leadership is gone. Their leaders are gone. They picked new leaders. They're gone. They picked new leaders. They're gone. And now they're looking for new leaders again.

We can take out the island if—anytime we want. Their—I call it their little oil island that sits there so totally unprotected. And we've taken out everything but the pipes. We left the pipes, because to rebuild the pipes would take years for—you know, for them to do.

But we are—I would say we are substantially ahead of schedule. And I had to do this. I had to—I call it an excursion. I had to take this little excursion and do something that no other President had the courage to do. And everybody wanted to do it, but they never had the courage to do. And I don't blame them. I'm not blaming them. It was left to me, and we've done a great job.

Our military is incredible. We have an incredible military. We have the strongest military in the world by far. We have the greatest equipment in the world by far.

In fact, Japan buys our equipment—buys a lot of it—and we're honored by that. And that's one of the things we'll be talking. They want to buy a lot of the military equipment.

So it's just an honor to have the Prime Minister. We've had a tremendous relationship.

Okay.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

I think she's going to have to go first before you—*[inaudible]*.

Prime Minister Takaichi. No—*[inaudible]*. It's okay. It's okay. It's okay.

President Trump. Is that okay?

Prime Minister Takaichi. Mmm, yes.

President Trump. Do you understand?

Prime Minister Takaichi. Yes, yes, yes.

President Trump. There's—very good, I'll tell you. She's—*[Laughter]*. I mean, it's so nice that we don't have to sit through that.

Prime Minister Takaichi. I can. I can.

President Trump. No, it's very good. I haven't picked up your language, so—*[Laughter]*. I mean, the next time you come, I'll have your language mastered. *[Laughter]*

All right. Go ahead.

U.S. Military Readiness/Munitions Supply/Security Assistance to Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, if the war is almost over, why is the Pentagon going to ask Congress for an additional \$200 billion?

President Trump. Well, we're asking for a lot of reasons beyond even what we're talking about in Iran. When—this is a very volatile world, and the military equipment, the power of some of this weaponry is unthinkable. You don't even want to know about it. Oh, you could end this thing in 2 seconds if you wanted to.

But we are—we are being very judicious, but we want to do—don't forget, Biden gave away—I rebuilt the military in my first term. Biden gave away, so stupidly, to Afghanistan, a lot. He didn't want to move it. He was too lazy, too stupid to move it.

But it was a very small amount—it was a lot, but it was very small, relative to what I purchased and what I built. We want to have a good—we want to have vast amounts of ammunition, which we have right now. We have a lot of ammunition. But it was taken down by giving so much to Ukraine. They gave so much.

You know, Biden gave \$350 billion worth of cash and military equipment to Ukraine. And he didn't rebuild anything. Fortunately, we have a lot. We have a tremendous—unlimited supply of what you'd call middle and upper-middle armaments and military equipment—munitions, armaments—but munitions, in particular. At the high end, we have a lot, but we're preserving it. We don't really need it.

But we're building—our manufacturers of military equipment are building at a level they've never seen before, they've never done before. Pete's in charge of it with all of us, really. But Pete's been very, very strong on it. The general and Pete, myself, the whole group.

And Raytheon is building four factories. Lockheed is building five or six factories. And they're—they're building them fast, because we had a very tough meeting with them. They were going out and buying back stock for \$51 billion, in one case. They spent \$51 billion buying back stock. Now they're not allowed to do that.

And they are now building a tremendous—there's never been anything like it, what's taking place right now.

So we're in very good shape, but we want to be in the best shape we've ever been in. We were that. You know, when I rebuilt the military, we were in great shape, and then Biden blew it. And he didn't do anything. He didn't build. He didn't do anything.

And if you listen to the Democrats, they don't even want to have a military. Now you see how important it is.

But we have the strongest military in the world. We have the best equipment. We make, by far, the best equipment. The other night, they had 114 rockets shot at a certain location. And out of a hundred—highly sophisticated rockets—out of 114 sophisticated rockets, every single one of them was shot down with our equipment. All our equipment. It's amazing, actually, how good it is.

So we want to be sure. And it's a small price to pay to make sure that we stay tippy-top.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Iran/Political Leadership

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. The Treasury Secretary this morning said there were defections among Iranian leadership. Are you aware of that? And is there anybody that the U.S. can work with as a leader going forward?

President Trump. Well, we have a man named the Treasury Secretary here, so maybe—*[laughter]*—maybe he wants to discuss it.

Does anybody know—do you know who he is? Central casting. *[Laughter]*

U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. Yes. So—and we are seeing the defections at all levels, as they're starting to sense what's going on with the regime. It doesn't get reported here in the U.S. very well, but, you know, we are trouncing them from the air, and the regime will probably collapse within itself.

At Treasury, we've seen where they've wired their money out of the country. We're coming for that. We're going to get it back to the Iranian people.

President Trump. And are you seeing defections?

Secretary Bessent. Yes, sir.

Q. On Israel, have you talked——

President Trump. There's a lot of military defections also. You have a lot of military defections in Iran. I don't—hey, I don't blame them.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Have you talked to Prime Minister Netanyahu about attacking the oil and gas fields in Iran?

President Trump. Yes, I did. I did. I told him, "Don't do that." And he's—won't do that.

We didn't discuss—you know, we do—we're independent. We get along great. It's coordinated. But on occasion, he'll do something, and if I don't like it—and—so, we're not doing that anymore.

Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell/Interest Rates

Q. And the last one, if I could. The Fed Chairman told me yesterday that he plans to stay until a new Fed Chairman is confirmed. And he also plans to stay on the board until the investigation into the Federal Reserve is done. Just your comments on that.

President Trump. Well, he's under investigation because he's building a building for hundreds of billions of dollars more than it's supposed to cost.

The building you see over there is under budget and ahead of schedule. That's the ballroom. The ballroom is a much bigger building. It's a much more complex building than what he's doing, and it's at a fraction of the cost.

And something is going on, whether it's contractors—that's what I do best in the world: I build. I build great buildings. I've always done it, and I build them under budget and ahead of schedule.

They could have a 4 billion dollar—this is a renovation job for \$4 billion. And if you look at the building, it's not even—I don't know if Kevin Warsh is ever going to be able to move into it. It's been under construction for years. It's the most expensive building ever built.

Now, it—I know it's gross incompetent, because I happen to think he's grossly incompetent. Today, certainly, you should be lowering interest rates. All right? Certainly. Who would not lower them?

But he's stubborn and he's got Trump derangement syndrome. But a lot of people have that, you know. It's not a curable disease. *[Laughter]* But he's also building—he should be lowering rates immediately. But he won't do that because he's a stubborn, incompetent person, and that's a bad thing. You know, when you're stubborn and incompetent, I think it's the worst combination, and he's also not a smart person.

But he's building a complex over there that's—under his jurisdiction, he started it, and it's out of control. It's billions of dollars for a little building. I could have done that building and made it beautiful for \$25 million. Twenty-five million, and it would've been beautiful. Look what I've done at the White House, fixing it up. And, I mean, the place was in bad shape. You see the floors and everything. It was in bad shape. I could have—I could have made that building beautiful for \$25 million. They're spending \$4 billion. All right?

So it's—there is criminality. Maybe it's with the contractor, but—because I know more about contractors than any human being maybe that's ever lived. But that contractor is a very rich man. Whoever the contractor is—and we know—but whoever the contractor is, is an extremely rich man. He's going to make—I mean, he could make millions of dollars. I don't—I'm hearing numbers from \$3- to \$4 billion. That would make it the most expensive building, on a square-foot basis, ever built in history.

And you're not even building a building. It's a renovation. The exterior skin is staying, the steel is staying, the structure. So all I want to do is bring out to the public that this guy is an incompetent—he's a very incompetent guy, and he may be a dishonest guy. But somebody is dishonest because there's no way that building could be \$3- to \$4 billion.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Thank you.

President Trump. Please.

Q. Mr. President, you just mentioned Japan——

President Trump. This looks like one of your people right here. *[Laughter]*

Q. I am. Thank you.

President Trump. Is he good or bad? Good—is he a good reporter or a bad? Do you know him?

Minister Motegi. So-so. [Laughter]

President Trump. Not a——

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. All right. He looks like a nice guy.

Go ahead.

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz/Japan/U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Mr. President, you just mentioned Japan stepping up. What kind of support do you — expect from Japan in the future?

President Trump. Look, I expect Japan to step up because, you know, we have that kind of relationship, and we step up with Japan. We have 45,000 soldiers in Japan. We have—we spend a lot of money on Japan, so—and we've had that kind of a relationship. So I expect—I'm not surprised that they would step up.

We don't need much. We don't need anything. I mean, honestly, we don't need anything from Japan or from anyone else, but I think it's appropriate that people step up. In the case of Japan, I hear they get more than 90 percent of their oil through the Strait.

Prime Minister Takaichi. Yes.

President Trump. So that's a big reason to step up.

I mean, we've demolished—that country is close to demolished. The only thing is the Strait. It's very hard. You could take two people and they could drop little bombs in the water, and they're holding things up. We don't want that to happen.

But honestly, Japan, China, Europe—parts of Europe get a lot of their oil through the Strait.

We get none practically. We're less than 1 percent. We don't have to be any percent. We don't even—I think we do it just to be nice. But we—think of it. We don't use the Strait. We're defending the Strait for everybody else.

And then in the case of NATO, they don't want to help us defend the Strait, and they're the ones that need it. But now they're getting much nicer because they're seeing my attitude. They're getting much nicer. But it's—as far as I'm concerned, it's too late.

You know, U.K. wants to send aircraft carriers now, and I said: "I want the aircraft carriers before the war. I don't want them after the war is won." They want to send me aircraft carriers after the war's—there's practically nobody to shoot at them.

You know, their missile count is down—Pete, maybe you could discuss it——

U.S. Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth. Mm-hmm.

President Trump. ——by about 90-something percent. The drones are way down and the factories are being demolished. Maybe——

Secretary Hegseth. Yes, sir. Our missile—missiles being shot are down over 90 percent since the beginning. One-way attack drones down 90 percent since the beginning, which is a reflection of overwhelming firepower.

But you mentioned the most important part, Mr. President: their defense industrial base. If you can't make more of it in the future, then you have a limited supply, and so we're going after all of their defense contractors that make all of their exquisite weapons and ensuring that even if they wanted to rebuild more launchers or more missiles, they couldn't in the future. And that's a level of devastation for their military that they've never seen before.

President Trump. So we have—in literally 2 weeks, we've demolished their navy, their air force. All technology is gone, all communication is gone, and all of the leaders are gone. Other than that, they're doing quite well. *[Laughter]*

Okay. How about one more question for the Prime——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

——for the Prime Minister.

Let me pick a beautiful-looking person from—a beautiful person from Japan. A question for the Prime Minister.

Go ahead.

Q. Me?

President Trump. Yes, you.

Q. Thank you. Mr. President——

President Trump. Oh, he doesn't believe he's beautiful.

Q. Oh. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. He's—he sounded shocked. *[Laughter]* Go ahead, please.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran/Japan-U.S. Relations

Q. Of course, now Japan and the U.S. are very good friends, but one question. Why didn't you tell U.S. allies in Europe and Asia, like Japan, about the war before attacking Iran? So, we are very confused about—we, Japanese citizens.

President Trump. Well, one thing, you don't want to signal too much. You know? When we go in—we went in very hard, and we didn't tell anybody about it because we wanted surprise.

Who knows better about surprise than Japan? *[Laughter]* Okay? Why didn't you tell me about Pearl Harbor? Okay? Right? You know, he's asking me—no, you believe in surprise, I think, much more so than us. And we had to surprise them, and we did.

And because of that surprise, we knocked out—the first 2 days, we probably knocked out 50 percent of what we—and much more than we anticipated doing.

So, if I go and tell everybody about it, there's no longer a surprise. Right?

Okay. One more. One more.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

One more for the Prime Minister. Please.

Are you going to—for the Prime Minister?

Q. Yes, and then for you too.

President Trump. Go ahead, for the Prime Minister.

China

Q. Thank you very much. Japan's Jiji press. Japan's biggest concern is China. Now, they are giving us export control and, you know, very harsh terms to criticize us. So could you plan—would you—will you plan to bring up a relationship between Japan and China while you are there in a short term?

President Trump. Yes. Well, I'll be going to China very quickly, but the—I think I'd really like to have the Prime Minister talk about China because I know they have a little bit of an edgy relationship, and I'd just like to know where it stands, how are you doing with China. So please.

[Prime Minister Takaichi spoke in Japanese, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Prime Minister Takaichi. So, first of all, Japan has been consistently open to dialogue with China. And also, second, we have been addressing our relations with China in a calm manner.

And also speaking of the U.S.-China relationship, my sincere hope is that the relationship will be something conducive for regional security and also ensuring the global supply chain in the world.

Once again, I would like to reiterate that Japan has been consistently open to dialogue with China.

President Trump. And I think we're going to have a great trip. The trip has been postponed for about a month and a half. It's been reset, and we look forward to it. And I'll be speaking Japan's praises when I'm in China with President Xi.

But we have—but we're going to have some good talks today, and I think mostly about trade, because they want to do a lot of trade. They're a tremendous purchaser of our energy; our oil; gas from, in particular, Alaska. Because Alaska, believe it or not, is very close. It's much closer than any other source.

It's just—it seems a little cold compared to——

Prime Minister Takaichi. Yes, yes. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. But just a short—it's just a short trip.

[Prime Minister Takaichi spoke in Japanese, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Prime Minister Takaichi. So that's something that we will talk about after the press corps leaves.

President Trump. We'll be discussing trade, and a lot of the talk will be about energy.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. J. Daniel Caine, USAF; and Kevin M. Warsh, the President's nominee to be Federal Reserve Chairman. Prime Minister Takaichi referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araqchi of Iran.

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