

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure From West Palm Beach, Florida

March 23, 2026

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Hey. Hello. Let me get out of the sun here.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

Q. Can you update us on Iran? You said today that——

The President. Let me just say—move over. Can we move over? Let's get out of the sun.

That's better. Isn't that more comfortable?

Q. [Inaudible]

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Mr. President, Iran's foreign ministry says you're not telling the truth when it comes to productive conversations to end the war.

The President. Well, they're going to have to get themselves better public relations people.

We have had very, very strong talks. We'll see where they lead. And we have point—major points of agreement. I would say almost all points of agreement. Perhaps that hasn't been conveyed. The communication, as you know, has been blown to pieces. They're unable to talk to each other. But we've had very strong talks.

And Mr. Witkoff and Mr. Kushner had them. They went, I would say, perfectly. I would say that if they carry through with that, it will end that problem, that conflict. And I think it will end it very, very substantially.

We have very much in mind our partners in the Middle East. We've had great relationships with a lot of them, as you know. A lot of them were surprisingly hit, and I was surprised to see it, and so was everyone else. But we have—they're very much in mind in the discussions.

So the discussions took place yesterday. They went into yesterday evening. They want very much to make a deal. We'd like to make a deal too. We're going to get together today by, probably, phone, because it's very hard to find a country—it's very hard for them to get out, I guess. But we'll, at some point very soon, meet.

We're doing a 5-day period. We'll see how that goes. And if it goes well, we're going to end up with—settling this. Otherwise, we'll just keep bombing our little hearts out.

Q. Who is Steve Witkoff speaking with, Mr. President?

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

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Mr. President, who are you speaking with in Iran?

The President. A top—a top person.

Don't forget, we've wiped out the leadership phase one, phase two, and largely phase three. But we're dealing with a man who I believe is the most respected and the leader. You know, it's a little tough. They've wiped out—we've wiped out everybody.

Q. Is that the Supreme Leader?

The President. No, not the Supreme Leader. We don't——

Q. So it's not Mojtaba?

The President. Well, nobody's ever—nobody heard of the second Supreme Leader, the son. Nobody—we have not heard from the son. Every once in a while, you'll see a statement made, but we have not. We don't know if he's living. But the people that seem to be running it—and they seem that based on, really, fact, because things they've said have taken place.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Can you say who that is?

The President. I can't. I can't.

Q. Why not?

The President. Because I don't want him to be killed. Okay? I don't want him to be killed.

Nobody wants to be that—nobody wants that job right now. You know, nobody's exactly looking forward to being the head of that particular country. But perhaps we'll be able to solve that problem.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Q. Mr. President, you've deployed ICE agents to American airports——

The President. Who are you with?

Q. Newsmax, sir. You've deployed ICE——

The President. You're not doing a very good job.

Q. You've deployed ICE agents——

The President. You're not doing a good job. Did you hear me?

Okay. Go ahead.

Q. What exactly do you want from these talks?

The President. Can you believe that I'm taking CNN over Newsmax? Can you believe it?

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. What exactly are you looking for in these talks, Mr. President?

The President. We're looking for all of the things that we've been talking about. We want to see no nuclear bomb, no nuclear weapon. Not even close to it. Low-key on the missiles. We want to see peace in the Middle East.

We want the nuclear dust, we're going to want that. And I think we're going to get that. We've agreed to that.

Q. The enriched uranium?

The President. Yes. We're going to—we've agreed to that.

Q. Do you want the enriched uranium before you can end this war?

The President. Yes, and we want no enrichment, but we also want the enriched, the enriched uranium.

We're—if this happens, it's a great start for Iran to build itself back. And it's everything that we want. And it's also great for Israel, and it's great for the other Middle Eastern countries. Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., Qatar. All of them. Kuwait and Bahrain, in particular. So, it's great for all of them.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran/U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement

Q. If the war is ending, do you still need \$200 billion?

The President. We—it's always nice to have. It's always nice to have. It's a very inflamed world, and the Democrats inflame it. You know, largely, the Democrats inflame it.

And let me just talk about the others. So ICE has done very well. I've requested—now, you know, I'm a big believer that they should be able to wear a mask when they go and hunt down, you know, murderers, criminals, and others. But for purposes of the airport, I've requested that they take off the mask. I don't like it for the airport, and I believe they are willing to do that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Deployment of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Personnel to U.S. Airports

Q. Why do they need to wear masks not at the airport, but they need to do it when they're out in the country?

The President. Because the people coming into the airport, typically speaking, aren't murderers, killers, drug dealers, et cetera. There may be a few of them, but there aren't many. They're people that want to come into the country or they're people who want to leave the country going to maybe their home country.

So I didn't think it was an appropriate look for an airport. I think it's a very appropriate look when they're out on the street trying to find one of the 11,888 murderers that Sleepy Joe Biden let into our country.

Transportation Security Administration/Election Reform

Q. Last year, you gave a \$10,000 bonus——

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

Sorry. Last year, you gave a \$10,000 bonus to TSA workers who kept showing up for work during the shutdown. Will you do that again?

The President. Well, it could happen. There's—it's amazing. They're such—they're people that are really, really loyal and great, and it's not easy for them.

And this is all caused by the Democrats. It's a—just so you know, all this money was approved. Everything was approved. This is done. The Democrats went in, and they want to have radical-left lunatics come into our country. They want to have drug dealers. They want to have murderers come into our country. They want to have open borders, and we are not letting it happen. That's what this is all about.

They don't want voter ID. They don't want proof of citizenship. They don't want—mail-in ballots, they're so corrupt. What they want—the only thing they want is mail-in ballots.

So we also added, as you know, into the SAVE America Act—and it's called "SAVE America." It's not the "SAVE Act." But we added no transgender mutilization of our children and no men in women's sports.

Q. Sir, Elon Musk—sir——

Q. If these talks go well and you reach a——

The President. I don't think he's going to be at Newsmax long, I've got to tell you.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. If these talks go well and you reach a cease-fire agreement with Iran, do you believe Israel would abide by that agreement?

The President. I think Israel be—will be very happy with what we have. We just spoke to Israel a little while ago. I think they'll be very happy. This will be peace for Israel. Long-term peace. Guaranteed peace.

If this happens—and you know, I can't guarantee it, but I think it's going to. My life is a deal. That's all I do is deals, my whole life. I think this is something that's going to happen. And why wouldn't it happen?

So tomorrow morning, sometime their time, we were expected to blow up their largest electric-generating plants that cost over \$10 billion to build. It's a very good one. There was no dearth of money. And one shot, it's gone. It collapses. Why would they want that?

So they called. I didn't call; they called. They want to make a deal. And we are very willing to make a deal. It's got to be a good deal. And it's got to be no more wars, no more nuclear weapons. They're not going to have nuclear weapons anymore. They're agreeing to that. Any of that stuff, there's no deal.

Q. How are you going to—you said——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development/U.S. Sanctions

Q. You said you want to get the enriched uranium. How are you going to get the enriched uranium? Are you going to send troops in?

The President. Well, it's very easy. If we have a deal with them, we're going down, and we'll take it ourselves.

Q. Can I ask you—the Treasury lifted sanctions on Iranian oil that was out to sea. You criticized President Obama for giving Iran \$1.7 billion——

The President. Well, I just want to have as much oil in the system as possible.

Q. But Iran is making \$14 billion——

The President. And we don't even know if Iran gets that money. Frankly, I think it's very hard for them to get it. But you have ships that are out there that are loaded up with oil. Rather than keep it there, I would rather see it go to the system. Any small amount of money that Iran gets, it's not going to have any difference in this war. But I want to have the system be lubricated.

Q. Even \$14 billion you don't think helps them?

The President. Where's the \$14 billion?

Q. Because of the inflated price, they get \$14 billion from the——

The President. I don't think they're getting the money.

Q. ——oil.

The President. I could tell you—when this is all over, I will tell you who's getting the money. It's not them.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Why are you deploying the marines from California, given that it'll take them weeks to arrive? Is the intention to police the Strait or take Kharg?

The President. Where—what are you talking about?

Q. Well, it's been reported that there are marines that left California, left San Diego last week, at the end of the week. Why are they headed there now if——

The President. Well, let me ask you this. If you were in my position, and I asked you that question, do you really believe I'd give you an answer? A crazy question.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

We don't talk about strategy.

Yes.

Illegal Immigration

Q. Another young woman was killed by an illegal immigrant that was let in under the Biden administration.

The President. Let in—let in by Biden.

Q. Do you have a message for her family?

The President. It's devastating. These people were let in by Biden. We're getting them out. We're getting them out fast. That's why ICE is so important. They're doing such a good job.

This animal—I saw the whole thing last night; they gave me a briefing—came in through Joe Biden with his open-door policy and his border czar, Kamala, who never saw the border, never made one phone call. All the ICE people—you see, they all know me. Everyone knows me. They like me. I speak to them all the time. Didn't make one phone call during 4 years she was the border czar to anybody on the border. Never went there.

This person came in through the open-door policy of Joe Biden, and we have others. We're taking them out by the tens of thousands. We're doing a great job, but it's a shame. They've hurt our country.

Just remember this: Joe Biden and that gang of radical-left lunatics, some very smart, but radical-left and bad ideology. Sick people. These people have hurt our country very badly.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. If you end up hitting those Iranian power plants, how is that different from what Russia has been doing in Ukraine by hitting Ukrainian power?

The President. Well, I think it's a lot different. And if you look at the nuclear weapons that they wanted to have, that they wanted to possess, a lot of things are different.

I'm no—I'm not a fan of what Russia is doing either, just so you understand. All right?

But it's a lot different. You're talking about a country that has been evil for 47 years. They've been horrible. Death all over the world, not just us. Look at the way they attacked unexpectedly all of those countries surrounding them. That was not supposed—nobody was even thinking

about it. But they wanted to take over the Middle East, and they wanted to knock out Israel permanently. And if they had a nuclear weapon, they would've been able to do that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

What?

Former National Counterterrorism Center Director Joe Kent

Q. Mr. President, do you know whether Joe Kent was leaking?

The President. Look, I'm not a fan of the guy. If you look at—and you never cover this—if you look at his Truths or whatever he went on—if it's X or Truth—if you look at his Truths or his statements, he was all for everything. All of a sudden, he wasn't. He was a man that I met at Dover. He came when his wife was killed. He remarried fairly quickly. His wife was killed, and I felt badly for him.

He ran in—for Congress. He lost. He ran for Congress again and he lost. I said, "You know, he's a guy—nice guy." Seemed like a very nice guy. I met him. He was pretty heartbroken. Pretty. But I said: "You know, it's a shame. He ran for Congress twice. Call him up, give him a job in the White House." Smart. They gave him a job in the White House, and this is what he does to me. You know, being a nice guy doesn't pay off too much.

Think of it. He loses twice in Congress. Ran not very good campaigns. Should've won, but he loses twice. How do I get him? I have my people call him because I didn't deal with him, for the most part. I saw him a couple times, but I never dealt with him at all. I had no idea his ideology was left or right, whatever it is.

I can say this: He said very strongly that Iran is not a threat. Iran's been a threat for 47 years, and there's not a country in the world that doesn't agree with me on that.

So I take this guy, Joe Kent, who lost twice for Congress pretty badly and tough, and he was devastated. And I know that he lost his wife. So, instead of letting him live out his life, I brilliantly have my people call him and offer him a job in security, essentially, in the White House.

And what does he do? He goes out and he says that Iran is not a threat to get publicity. Now, he probably signed up with CNN or maybe signed up with your division of Newsmax. I don't know, but probably signed up with CNN or somebody.

But if you look at his tweets, Xs, or Truths—whatever he uses. I don't know because I don't follow him. What he said is a hundred percent he agrees with me. All of a sudden, he leaves. I never knew he had a problem.

Now, I hear they're looking at him for leaking. That's possible. But just so you understand, just to put it to rest, he lost twice badly. He also lost his wife. He's remarried since. He lost his wife. I felt badly for him. So I told my people: "Reach out to him. Give him a job at the White House." This is the thanks I get.

Any other questions?

Q. He said Iran——

Q. Overall, crime in Memphis, sir——

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. He said Iran was not an imminent threat, that that's what the intelligence showed.

The President. I think it was an imminent threat. I think that Iran, if they—if we didn't bomb them with the B-2 bombers—now that set them back, but if we didn't hit them with the B-2 bombers, they would have had a nuclear weapon within 2 weeks to a month. And if they had a nuclear weapon, they would have used it as soon as they got it.

U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities

Q. If you obliterated their nuclear sites last summer with your strikes, then how can you argue it was an imminent threat now?

The President. Oh, we hit them so hard. We obliterated them, but—obliterated them. But that doesn't mean, with the right equipment, you can't dig down and go get it. We don't want that, and we don't—we won't have that. But we obliterated that site.

They still haven't been able to get it. That was a complete success. But if it wasn't, they would have had—if we didn't hit them, if we didn't use the B-2 bombers, it's—which are unbelievable. We just ordered 22 more of them. Modern version, by the way. Super modern version. If we didn't hit them with the B-2 bombers, they would have had, within 2 weeks of that attack—that's why we hit them, because we knew—they would have had a nuclear weapon. They would've used it on Israel and the entire Middle East.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Law Enforcement Improvement Efforts in Memphis, Tennessee/Iran

Q. Overall crime in Memphis is down 43 percent since you began this Task Force. Is this a template you think——

The President. Well, what I'm doing——

Q. ——is working and could work other places?

The President. What I'm doing today—really, this was supposed to be—this was a little bit before—set up a couple of weeks ago. This was before we had this situation with Iran take place last night.

And by the way, they're just not communicating. When they say—I'm sure they don't mean that. When somebody says, "Oh, I didn't know you were talking"—we were talking last night, and I'm sure they have a lack of communication, which is appropriate considering we blew up—in addition to the navy, air force, every division—their radar. We also blew up all of their anti-aircraft and communication. So they have no telecommunication. So there is a lack of—I would imagine a lack of coordination.

Q. So how do you know that the talks are reliable? If they're—if you're worried about the miscommunication——

The President. Well, we think——

Q. ——how do you know that—[inaudible]?

The President. We think—all we can do is think. Look, we have numerous leader groups. They've all been killed. Very dangerous position. Khamenei was killed. Khamenei's son is unavailable. Nobody knows what happened to him. I can say they haven't seen him there either. Something is going on with him.

But regardless, I don't consider him, really, the leader. But they do have some leaders left, because we blew up group number one, group number two, a lot of group number three. But we think we have people that are very representative of the country and will do a good job in representing.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Transportation Security Administration/Democratic Party/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Election Reform

Q. Elon Musk, sir. Elon Musk has offered to—Elon Musk offered to pay TSA workers—

The President. Yes.

Q. —during this DHS shutdown. Is this something that you've been speaking to him about?

The President. Yes, I'd love it. I think it's great. Let him do that. And I want to thank ICE because they stepped in so strongly. They'll do great. And if that's not enough, I'll bring in the National Guard.

We're not going to have the Democrats destroy our country. These people are the most destructive, sick people—the Democrats. They want—and they're fighting for this.

They're fighting for men in women's sport. They're fighting for transgender for everybody. "Everybody go out, get your kid a nice operation, and change the sex of your kid." They're fighting for—no, think of it.

They don't want you to do voter ID. You walk into a booth—in California, if a person who's doing voting—an official asks you for identification, they're subject to being arrested.

What's wrong with this country? So we're fighting it hard. And I think they should—because the Democrats are being blamed for the shutdown, and it's their fault. And they're getting killed. That's why—when I announced yesterday about ICE, the Democrats called. "We want to settle. We want to settle."

And I told the people: "Don't settle. Don't settle, because we have something bigger. Only settle if you get the SAVE America Act; voter ID; and, so important, proof of citizenship; et cetera."

Thank you very much.

Q. Whose idea was that to put ICE at the airport?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Are we talking directly to the Iranians?

The President. We're dealing, really—

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Q. Whose idea was it?

The President. Mine. That was mine.

Q. And can I ask you—you said that there are—

The President. That was like the paper clip. Do you know the story of the paper clip? A hundred and eighty-two years ago, a man discovered the paper clip. It was so simple. And everybody that looked at it say, "Why didn't I think of that?"

ICE was my idea. I called—first person I called was Tom Homan. I said, "What do you think?" He said, "I think it's great." Then I saw, today, there was some masks on. I didn't think the masks were appropriate. I put out a statement, and I asked them, "Would it be possible to take off

the mask?" Because they should wear a mask when they're dealing with the murderers and the thugs left—let into our country.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. And just a detail. You said there's many points of agreement with Iran right now.

The President. Many.

Q. What—can you give us a few of those?

The President. Many. Like 15 points. Fifteen points.

Q. That Iran has said yes to?

The President. Well, they're not going to have a nuclear weapon. That's number one. That's number one, two, and three. They will never have a nuclear weapon.

Q. And they have said yes to that?

The President. They've agreed to that.

Immigration Enforcement Efforts

Q. Will we see arrests of illegal migrants at airports, sir?

The President. Arrests of——

Q. Will we see ICE arresting illegal migrants at airports?

The President. Yes. Yes, that's——

Q. Are we talking to Iran——

The President. That's why the Democrats are going crazy, because they've allowed—by what they did in the holdup, we've put ICE, who are a very high level—I mean, they really are a high-level group of people. And they love it because they're able to now arrest illegals as they come into the country. That's——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

That's very fertile territory. But that's not why they're there. They're really there to help.

Q. Are we talking to Iran directly?

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. [Inaudible]—agreed to no enrichment whatsoever, even for medical purposes, civilian purposes?

The President. They have.

Thank you.

Q. And what about the Strait of Hormuz?

The President. Thank you.

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Who's going to be in control of that?

The President. That will be opened very soon if this works.

Q. How soon?

The President. Immediately.

Q. And who's in control of it?

The President. Immediately.

Q. Will Iran still be able to control the flow of oil?

The President. Be jointly controlled.

Q. By who?

The President. Maybe me. Maybe me.

Iran/Venezuela

Q. You want the United States to be in control of the Strait of Hormuz?

The President. Me and the Ayatollah, whoever the Ayatollah is—whoever the next Ayatollah—look—and there will also be a form of a—very serious form of regime change.

Now, in all fairness, everybody's been killed from the regime. They're really starting off—there's automatically a regime change. But we're dealing with some people that I find to be very reasonable, very solid. The people within know who they are. They're very respected. And maybe one of them will be exactly what we're looking for.

Look at Venezuela, how well that's working out. We are doing so well in Venezuela with oil and with the relationship between the President-elect and us. And maybe we find somebody like that in Iran.

Oil Markets and Prices/Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Are you seeing any more options to lower the price of oil while these talks—

The President. The price of oil will drop like a rock as soon as a deal is done. I guess it already is today.

No, we have a very serious chance of making a deal. That doesn't guarantee anything. I'm not guaranteeing anything. I'm not going to come out here in a week or 2 weeks and have you all say, "Oh, you said"—I didn't say anything. All I'm saying is, we are in the throes of a real possibility of making a deal, and I think, if I were a betting man, I'd bet for it. But again, I'm not guaranteeing anything. They want to make a deal very badly.

Thank you.

Secretary of Homeland Security Markwayne Mullin

Q. What changes would you like to see in DHS under Markwayne Mullin?

The President. Well, he's going to be fantastic. He'll make his own changes. He's already given me a list of people he wants to bring. He's a fantastic guy. I think he's just the right guy. You all know him. He's a very open, smart guy; very successful, actually, in business, which people don't know; and he's a friend of mine. I think Markwayne is going to be fantastic.

Thank you.

Airplane Collision With a Firetruck at LaGuardia Airport in New York City

Q. Have you been briefed on LaGuardia, Mr. President—on the plane crash that happened—

The President. Terrible.

Q. ———there last night?

The President. They made a mistake. It's a dangerous business. That's terrible.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:40 a.m. on the tarmac at Palm Beach International Airport prior to boarding Air Force One. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff; Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei of Iran, son of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei of Iran, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Tehran, Iran, on February 2; Jose Medina, suspect in the shooting of Sheridan Gorman, a Loyola University Chicago student who was killed in Chicago, IL, on March 19; former Vice President Kamala D. Harris; technology executive and former White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; and Acting President Delcy Rodriguez Gomez of Venezuela. He also referred to his son-in-law, U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Jared C. Kushner; and S. 1383.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, West Palm Beach, FL.

Locations: West Palm Beach, FL.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Harris, Kamala D.; Homan, Thomas D.; Kent, Joe; Khamanei, Mojtaba; Kushner, Jared C.; Medina, Jose; Mullin, Markwayne; Musk, Elon R.; Rodriguez Gomez, Delcy; Witkoff, Steven C.

Subjects: Border security; Election security and integrity, strengthening efforts; Florida, President's visit; Illegal immigration; Iran Supreme Leader; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, defense relationship with U.S.; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Iran, U.S. military operations; Iran, U.S. sanctions; National Guard; New York, Airplane collision with firetruck at LaGuardia Airport in New York City; News media, Presidential interviews; Oil markets and prices; Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act; Secretary of Homeland Security; Tennessee, law enforcement improvement efforts in Memphis; Transportation Security Administration; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions; Venezuela, Acting President; Venezuela, U.S. military capture and exfiltration of President Maduro; White House Border Czar.

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