

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland
April 12, 2026

The President. Good evening. Thank you very much.

You probably heard that a lot of very good things are happening with regard to the Strait—Hormuz.

And a lot of good things are happening for our country. It's been very strong. We had some tremendous numbers released, economically, on jobs and everything else. And things are going very well.

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

Q. How is the cease-fire holding, Mr. President?

The President. Say it.

Q. Is the cease-fire holding?

The President. I would say it's holding well.

Their military is destroyed. Their whole navy is underwater. You know that. One hundred and fifty-eight ships are gone. Their navy's gone. Most of their mine droppers are gone.

We have a lot of people—as you know, at 10 o'clock tomorrow, we have a blockade going into effect. That will be 10 o'clock tomorrow. Other nations are working so that Iran will not be able to sell oil, and that will be very effective.

But what we want to do is we want to—and again, we don't need it. What we notice and what we see and what I think is maybe my idea, maybe not—I don't know—but there are many boats heading toward our country to fill up with oil and then go and take it. So they're not going to go through the Hormuz Strait. And ultimately, that will be corrected. But in the meantime, they're using us.

We have more oil—because of "drill, baby, drill," we have more oil than Russia and Saudi Arabia put together. So, if you look at Russia and Saudi Arabia, two big ones, we have much more oil than they have, put together.

Q. Can—[inaudible]?

The President. And what's happening is boats are coming over here, filling up. They don't have to go through the Hormuz Strait.

Rescue of U.S. Servicemembers From Iran

Q. You said——

Q. Can you give us an update, Mr. President, on the two pilots? Are they in good condition? Have you spoken to them or their families?

The President. They are in very good shape, and we're very proud of them—the two pilots. Yes.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. You said that Iran—earlier, you said Iran, you think, is ready to come back to the table. What gives you that thought? Has there been any conversations?

The President. I think Iran is in very bad shape. I think they're very desperate. We had a meeting that lasted 21 hours. We understand the situation better than anybody, and Iran's in very bad shape.

Q. How long are——

The President. And just so you understand, Iran will not have a nuclear weapon. Will not have. There is no way that they're going to get it. They still want it, and they made that clear the other night. Iran will not have a nuclear weapon.

Q. How long are you waiting for them to come back to the negotiating table, Mr. President?

The President. Oh, I don't know. I don't care if they come back or not. If they don't come back, I'm fine.

Their military is gone, and their missiles are largely depleted. The manufacturing capability for missiles and drones is largely defeated.

We've been very nice. We haven't ripped down too many bridges. We did one only because they broke their word. They broke their promise. And remember, their promise was that they were going to open the Hormuz Strait. They didn't do it. They lied.

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. And do you have other countries right now who are willing——

The President. Yes. They're coming up, and they're helping. Yes.

Q. ——to help you with this blockade?

The President. We have many other countries.

Q. Do you have specific countries that will be buying the oil from the United States?

The President. Yes.

Q. Have you had any talks with specific countries?

The President. Well, you just have to see. But ships are heading up to our country right now—empty—and they're going to go back filled up with oil, okay?

Pope Leo XIV

Q. Mr. President, why did you attack Pope Leo on Truth Social?

The President. I don't think he's doing a very good job. He likes crime, I guess. He hit us.

Think of it. He's worried about fear. What about the fear when the ministers and the priests and the—all of those great people that were arrested during COVID? And in many cases, they're outside, 10 feet apart, and they were arrested.

So we don't like it. We don't like a Pope that's going to say that it's okay to have a nuclear weapon. We don't want a Pope that says crime is okay in our cities. I don't like it. I'm not a big fan of Pope Leo. He's a very liberal person, and he's a man that doesn't believe in stopping crime.

He's a man that doesn't think that we should be toying with a country that wants a nuclear weapon so they can blow up the world. I'm not——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I'm not a fan of Pope Leo.

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Sir, would you be okay with a third country that took Iran's uranium? If a third country—
—

The President. About what?

Q. Would you be okay if a third country agreed to accept Iran's uranium and hold it?

The President. That's a very theoretical question, really. That's really—I don't want to answer that.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. You met with Mark Rutte this week. You've been very frustrated with NATO countries. Are you planning on punishing NATO countries?

The President. Well, they're coming up. They're going to be coming up. But I'm very disappointed in NATO. They didn't do—they weren't there for us. We pay trillions of dollars for NATO, and they weren't there for us.

Remember what I said. NATO was not there. Now they want to come up, but there's no real threat anymore. But NATO was not there.

Iran/International Cooperation

Q. Are you going to punish the countries who didn't help you and how?

The President. We'll see what happens. But you know, we spend trillions of dollars on NATO to help them guard, really, against Russia. When you think of it, we're guarding against Russia. And I've long thought it was a little ridiculous, but we spend trillions of dollars doing it, and I think that's going to be under very serious examination.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:08 p.m. on the tarmac after exiting Air Force One. A reporter referred to Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on April 13.

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

Locations: Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Names: Leo XIV, Pope.

Subjects: COVID-19 pandemic; Holy See (Vatican City), Pope; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, rescue of U.S. servicemembers; Iran, U.S. military operations; Maryland, Joint Base Andrews; Maryland, President's visit; News media, Presidential interviews; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Oil and natural gas, domestic production.

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