

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Beijing, China
May 12, 2026

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Mr. President, at what point are you done negotiating with Iran?

The President. Well, we're going to see what happens. We're only making a good deal. We have—their military's gone. It's wiped out. And we're only going to make a good deal, and we'll see what happens.

But I believe that, one way or the other, it's going to be very good for the American people and, I think, actually very good for the Iranian people.

Pakistan/Role in Iran-U.S. Negotiations

Q. Are you reconsidering the Pakistanis as mediators?

The President. No, they're great. I think they're great. I think that the Pakistanis have been great. The field marshal and the Prime Minister of Pakistan have been absolutely great.

China/Iran

Q. Mr. President, what is your message to President Xi as it relates to the Iran war?

The President. Well, I think, number one, we're going to have a long talk about it. I think he's been relatively good, to be honest with you. You look at the blockade: no problem. They get a lot of their oil from that area. We've had no problem.

And he's been a—a friend of mine. He's been somebody that we get along with. And I think you're going to see that good things are going to happen.

This is going to be a very exciting trip. A lot of good things are going to happen.

Q. Do you think—do you think he needs to intervene at all with the Iranians?

The President. I don't think he does, no.

Q. Do you think he can help in any way?

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

The President. No, I don't think we need any help with Iran. We'll win it one way or the other. We'll win it——

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

We'll win it peacefully or otherwise.

Their navy's gone. Their air force is gone. Every single element of their war machine is gone.

They've killed a lot of people. They've killed 42,000 people, at least, over the last month and a half.

We're going to—we win. I mean, no matter—how you cut it, we win.

President Xi Jinping of China

Q. Mr. President, do you believe—do you believe—Mr. Kurd is here. Mr. President, do you believe your visit to China will impact of international economy and price of oil?

The President. It's going to be a positive. We're going to have a very good meeting. I spoke with President Xi. We look forward—we both look forward to the meeting. It's going to be great.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Mr. President, what is—Mr. President, what is going to be your redline to end—the ceasefire for you? What will it take to pull the plug?

The President. Well, we're going to see, and we'll be thinking about it on the flight, and we'll be thinking about it for the next little while.

But we've beaten their military—very soundly. That's over with. The blockade is very effective. It's been a hundred percent effective. And one way or the other, it's going to work out very well. It's going to work out very well.

I think you're going to have so much oil. You're going to have a gusher of oil like you've never had before.

So, when oil goes up a little bit—I thought it would go up much more. If you go back 3, 4 months ago—when we were contemplating, we assumed oil would go much higher.

Yesterday, it was at \$99. And if you think about it, I would've taken that all day long, because it's very simple: Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. They will not have a nuclear weapon. They know that. They've agreed to that, and then that's not what they said to me when it came to—we don't play games. They're not going to have a nuclear weapon.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Inflation/Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Mr. President, you promised to bring inflation—Mr. President, you promised to bring inflation down. It's now at its highest level in 3 years. Are your policies not working? What's happening?

The President. No, my policies are working incredibly. If you go back to just before the war, for the last 3 months, inflation was at 1.7 percent.

Now, we had a choice: Let these lunatics have a nuclear weapon. If you want to do that, then you're a stupid person, and you happen to be. I mean, I know you very well. Anybody that wants them to have a nuclear weapon is a stupid person.

So, we said we're going to take the greatest stock market in history, and we're going to go down a little bit.

And actually, that turned out to be incorrect because our stock market is now at the highest point in history, which, frankly, surprised a lot of people.

It's a very simple message: Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon, and they won't have a nuclear weapon—and that's a hundred percent. Their navy is gone. Their air force is gone. Their anti-aircraft is gone. Their radar is gone. Their leaders are gone. They're all gone. Iran will not have a nuclear weapon.

Global Oil Markets and Prices/Inflation

Q. Mr. President, are you ready—are you ready to extend a waiver on sanctioned Russian oil to ease the global crude crisis?

The President. We're going to do whatever is necessary. And as soon as this war is over, which will not be long, you're going to see oil prices drop. And you're going to see a stock market, which is already at the highest point in history, go through the roof. You're going to see the golden age of America, frankly, and you're seeing it now.

So, as soon as this is—don't forget, you have hundreds of ships that are loaded up with oil that want to come out. As soon as they come out, we're going to have a gusher of oil, and you're going to have inflation that goes way down.

Now, with all of this, inflation is much lower than it was under Biden. Biden had the highest inflation in the history of our country. Inflation is nothing by comparison.

But our inflation is just short term, because if you go from before—just before the war, we were, for the last 3 months, 1.7 percent. And now, what you have is, as soon as this war is over, you're going to see inflation go down to probably one and a half percent.

Q. Will you extend the waiver? Will you—extend the waiver, sir? Will you extend the waiver on Russian crude?

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Go ahead, please.

Kurds

Q. Yes. Yes. Thank you so much, Mr. President. Mr. President, yesterday you said you—gave the Kurds arms, but they took it for themselves. A U.S. military official says that the Kurds have not received any arms, and the Kurdish political parties are denying receiving any arms.

The President. The officials are wrong.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

White House Ballroom Construction

Q. Mr. President, you wanted Jerome Powell fired for cost overruns. How is that different than your ballroom?

You wanted Jerome Powell fired for cost overruns. How is that different than your ballroom and the Reflecting Pool?

The President. So, what happened is we have a ballroom that's under budget. It's going up right here. I've doubled the size of it because we obviously need that. And we're right now on budget, under budget, and ahead of schedule.

Q. The price has doubled. The price has doubled.

The President. I doubled the size of it, you dumb person. It's double the size.

Q. What about the Reflecting Pool?

The President. You are a—you are not a smart person.

Q. What about the Reflecting Pool, Mr. President?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Right over here. Wait a minute. Right over here, and based on a lot of things that have happened over the last year, we are—we doubled the size of the ballroom.

So, we're going to have a ballroom that's appropriate for the White House. We doubled the size. The ballroom now is ahead of schedule, and it's a little bit under budget, depending on the finishes that we use.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Cuba

Q. Does the President of Cuba has his days numbered?

The President. Well, if you—they're not doing well. Cuba is not doing well. It's a failed nation. And we'll be talking about Cuba at the right time.

Venezuela

Q. Mr. President, let me ask you about Venezuela. Some Venezuelans are concerned that there are some political prisoners still in their prisons. Would you do something about that? Any concern?

The President. Yes, we'll do it. We're going to get them all out.

And I'll tell you what, Delcy's doing a great job. The people of Venezuela are thrilled with what's happened. They can't even believe it. They're dancing in the streets.

And, as you know, we have Exxon, we have Chevron, we have all of the big companies going in. And Venezuela now is making more money than they've made in the last 25 years.

Q. And the political prisoners will come out?

The President. We—as you know, we let a lot—they let a lot of the political prisoners out, and the rest will be coming.

Commissioner of Food and Drugs Martin A. Makary

Q. Mr. President, did you ask Marty Makary to resign, sir? Or did you fire your FDA commissioner?

The President. Well, I don't want say, but Marty's a great guy. He's a friend of mine. He's a wonderful man, and he's going to be off.

And the assistant—the deputy is taking over temporarily until we find—everybody wants that job. It's a very important job. Marty's a terrific guy, but he's going to go on, and he's going to lead a good life.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

He was having—he was having some difficulty. You know, he's a great doctor. And he was having some difficulty. But he's going to go on, and he's going to do well. We have—everybody wants that job. Everybody.

Election Security

Q. Sir, the midterm elections. The midterm elections. Would you send the National Guard or ICE to voting locations in November? Would you do that?

The President. Well, you know what? I'd do anything necessary to make sure we have honest elections. We have to have honest elections.

Q. So, you're not ruling that out?

Africa

Q. A quick question. Mr. President, this month is considered to be the month of Africa. On the—May 25th, we'll be celebrating Africa Day. Would you mind doing something special, like 10 minutes interview to speak about your views on Africa?

The President. Yes, we would do that.

Iran/President Xi Jinping of China

Q. Mr. President, you said—ceasefire is "on life support." Is President Xi the person to bring it back to life?

The President. Well, we'll see what happens. We're going to have a great meeting in China. He's a wonderful guy. He's a friend of mine, and we're going to have a great meeting. We do a lot of business with China. We do very well with China, and they do well with us. And the relationship is very good. We're going to have a great——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

We are going to have a great meeting.

Q. Do you think—but do you think he's got what it takes to convince the Iranians?

The President. Whatever he could do to help, we like that.

Ukraine/Russia

Q. Will—you be able to talk about the end of the war in Ukraine with the—President Xi?

The President. Yes, I think it's getting very close. The end of the war in Ukraine, I really think it's getting very close.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead.

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. When you're negotiating with Iran, Mr. President, to what extent are Americans' financial situations motivating you to make a deal?

The President. Not even a little bit. It—the only thing that matters when I'm talking about Iran: They can't have a nuclear weapon. I don't think about Americans' financial situation. I don't think about anybody. I think about one thing: We cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon. That's all. That's—the only thing that motivates me.

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. What is more—what is more broken, OPEC or NATO?

The President. Say it.

Q. What is more broken, NATO or OPEC?

The President. Well, OPEC is having some difficulty right now because—one of those things. But that has nothing to do with me.

NATO was very disappointing to me. NATO was not there when we wanted them, was not—we don't need NATO. We don't need NATO. But if we did need them, they just weren't there.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Do you think—do you think President Xi can help and contribute to a deal with Iran?

The President. He could. I mean, it might be. I don't think we need any help with Iran, to be honest with you. They're defeated militarily, and they'll either do the right thing, or we'll finish the job. Okay? They're either—

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Wait. Wait.

And they're either going to do the right thing, or we're just going to finish the job.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Your message—your message, sir, to the Chinese people as you embark on this summit?

The President. That we're going to have a great relationship for many, many decades to come. My relationship with President Xi is a fantastic one. We've always gotten along, and we're doing very well with China. And working with China has been very good. So, we look forward to it.

As you know, President Xi will be coming here toward the end of the year, so that'll be exciting too. I only wish we had the ballroom finished. The ballroom is right on budget and ahead of schedule, but I wish we had it finished now.

You also may want to do one other thing: You may want to go see the Reflecting Pool, because that's under construction. And for the first time since 1922, it's going to work properly.

United Kingdom/Energy Sources/Europe/Migration Issues

Q. Thank you. Mark Stone from Sky News. What's your advice to Keir Starmer, sir? He seems to be on the brink.

The President. Well, my advice to him has always been: Open up—your oil in the North Sea. You got one of the great oil finds anywhere in the world, and you're not using it. They're not allowed to use it. And it's one of the best in the world—among the best oils in the world. Open up your oil in the North Sea, and get tough on immigration.

Q. Should he stay or go?

The President. Europe is being very, very hurt by immigration—all over Europe. Not only him.

Q. Should he stay or go?

The President. That's up to him. But I've told him from day one, "You're getting killed on energy. You're windmilling your country to death. Open up the North Sea. You have one of the greatest sources of energy in the world. Open up the North Sea."

Oil Prices

Q. Should State Governors—drop taxes on oil? Would you ask them to do that?

The President. I think it's a great idea.

Q. May I ask you two questions?

The President. Okay.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Has there been any understanding between you and Putin that Russia should get entire Donbas?

The President. No. No.

Q. Mr. President, you have a standing invitation to travel to Russia. Do you think it might happen this year?

The President. It could. I mean, look, what—I will do whatever is necessary. That war—I've settled eight wars. That war is getting closer. Believe it or not, it's getting closer. And we think we're going to end up getting a settlement between Russia and Ukraine.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, what is the ultimate goal of your trip to China?

The President. I think, more than anything else—[inaudible]—shows we have massive relationship with China. We're the two superpowers. We—we're the strongest nation on Earth in terms of military. China is considered second. Who knows? I mean, who knows? But we are. There's nobody even to come close.

And you see that whether it's Venezuela or whether it's Iran. Iran's military is decimated.

I have a great relationship with President Xi, and I think it's going to remain that way. We have a lot of things to discuss. I—wouldn't say Iran is one of them, to be honest with you, because we have Iran very much under control. We're either going to make a deal, or they're going to be decimated.

So, one way or the other, we win. But we'll be——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But we're going to be talking about—we're going to be talking with President Xi about a lot of different things. I would say more than anything else will be trade.

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Mr. President, just to clarify. Did you say—did you say earlier that the only thing that matters to you when it comes to Iran is a nuclear weapon? You're not considering the financial impact of this war on Americans?

The President. The—most important thing by far, including whether our stock market—which, by the way, is at an all-time high—but including whether or not our stock market goes up or down a little bit, the most important thing by far is Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon.

Economic Impact of U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. What about the pressure on Americans and prices right now?

The President. Every American understands it.

Q. How concerned are you about Americans, how they're feeling about——

The President. Every American——

Q. ——what they're paying for food and——

The President. Are you—listening to me?

Every American understands. And they—were—just had a poll. Like, 85 percent, which is surprising it's only that—they understand that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon.

If Iran has a nuclear weapon, the whole world would be in trouble because they happen to be crazy. They're not going to have a nuclear weapon.

Now, if the stock market goes up or down a little bit, the American people understand it. When it's over, you're going to have a massive drop in the price of oil, which a lot of people thought would be higher. And, I mean, it was a hundred—it was \$99 yesterday, which is low—which is relatively low.

When this war is over, oil is going to drop. The stock market's going to go through the roof. And truly, I think we're in the golden age right now. You're going to see a golden age like we've never seen before.

The minute it's announced—and I'll be the one to announce it because I'm the one that makes that decision—I could leave right now, and it would take them 25 years to rebuild their country. But I don't want to do that. I want to have it complete and total. So, you ready? As soon as this war is over, you're going to see numbers like you've never seen before.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. I know how much you value loyalty. Are you comfortable with people serving in the military if they personally oppose the Iran war or you?

The President. It doesn't mean I'm happy about it, but——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President.——I—live with a lot of different situations.

Congressional Redistricting Efforts

Q. I have a question on redistricting.

The President. Yes.

Q. So, voters who are confused about the changing maps, the changing dates, and to African Americans concerned that this is going to draw Black members of Congress off the map, what do you say?

The President. Well, I think it's been a wonderful process. They've been—the Democrats—or as I call the Dumb-ocrats, because they are dumb in so many ways—they've redistricted for years. And now we took our shot, and it looks like we're going to pick up a lot of seats, and that's a good thing. That's—a good thing.

We want voters to have their choice. We want fair voting. We want fair elections. The Democrats have been cheating on elections for many years, and all we're doing is winning.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to boarding Marine One. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir of Pakistan; Acting President Delcy Rodriguez Gomez of Venezuela; Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs Kyle A. Diamantas and Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom. Reporters referred to Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell; President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez of Cuba; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Diamantas, Kyle A; Makary, Martin A; Munir Ahmed Shah, Syed Asim; Rodriguez Gomez, Delcy; Sharif, Shehbaz; Starmer, Keir; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2026 midterm elections; China : President; Food and Drugs Administration; Inflation; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, U.S. military operations; Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, renovation work; News media, Presidential interviews; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Oil markets and prices; Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries; Pakistan : Prime Minister; Pakistan, Chief of Defense Forces; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Stock market; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; United Kingdom : Prime Minister; Venezuela, Acting President; White House Ballroom construction project.

DCPD Number: DCPD202600336.