

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and an Exchange With Reporters

June 24, 2026

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's a great honor to be with a friend of mine, a man who is respected all over the world, actually, but he's in charge of NATO. He's the Secretary General, Mark Rutte. And he's really done a great job.

He was not too much involved when they weren't too nice to us in our recent little military skirmish, but he is a man that's respected by everybody. And, Mark, maybe you'd like to say a few words.

Secretary General Rutte. Absolutely. And a few things I want to share with the media, with you being here at present, and it's about your leadership.

First of all, about Iran. I really want to make clear how important it is what you are doing on Iran. This is, first of all, about the nuclear capability Iran was basically getting its hands on—its hands on. And that would have been a threat to the region; that would have been a threat to the whole world. This is a country which is exporting chaos. It is exporting terrorism. And they were very near to getting their hands on a nuclear capability.

You have seen last week and with the G-7, all the leaders in the G-7 applauding the fact that this nuclear capability has been degraded. This is extremely important. And I just want to make this clear, because sometimes people think, "Why was this whole Iran thing going on?"

This is about security, about safety. This is the leader of the free world taking responsibility beyond the shores of the United States for the rest of the world. And this is what you did. I know there have been debates about whether your allies in Europe were with you enough. I just want to say one thing, which is sometimes——

President Trump. They weren't. [Laughter]

Secretary General Rutte. Yes, but let me say one thing, which is, I know you think that, but let me—and I know the—about the, let's say, your—yes, irritant—irritation about that.

But, when you look at the numbers, 4- to 5,000 U.S. planes taking off from bases in Europe in the 6 weeks this war took place—still the cease-fire took place middle April.

Bucharest, the airport in Romania, having to close. It had to close for commercial traffic because they had to make sure that you were able to send the tanker aircraft up in the air.

So this is what I know. There have been isolated cases about which you are really disappointed, but generally speaking, your European allies have been there with you. I really want to make the point. Four to five thousand U.S. planes taking off from European air bases. So that's about Europe.

Now I want to take you, if you stay here——

President Trump. Yes. Go ahead.

Secretary General Rutte. I go over to these boards here because I want to show you what this President was able to achieve. And I'll start with this chart. This chart is about the "Trump trillion." The "Trump trillion" shows you the increase Europeans and Canadians are paying into defense since you took office in 2017.

President Trump. Right.

Secretary General Rutte. Trump 45 plus Trump 47. A total of extra spent by the Europeans and the Canadians of \$1.2 trillion.

When you look at the effect of Trump 47, sort of isolated effect of the extra defense spending in 2025 and in 2026, you see almost \$140 billion extra spent nominal on defense by the Europeans and the Canadians. And also, this year, you will again see an increase by about \$120 billion, which brings a total in 2 years of over \$250 billion.

I can assure you this is because of Russia, because of the threat, but I am also absolutely convinced that you being President of the United States, being consistently pushing for something which since Eisenhower has not been achieved, which is the Europeans equalizing their defense spending with the United States, this is your evidence.

Then, when it comes to jobs, look here. In total, 195,000 jobs being supported by investments—investments from European companies into the United States, 83,000 jobs supported by that. A hundred and twelve thousand jobs created by the fact that Europeans are massively, about half of all their defense spending when it comes to defense industrial output is spent in the United States. A hundred and twelve thousand jobs.

Last year, they spent \$54 billion on U.S. defense industrial output. There is now a order catalog, an order backlog, of \$300 billion. So \$300 billion of defense spending from Europeans buying this in the U.S. over the next couple of years, which is already on the order book.

Last year, \$54 billion. A total now order book of \$300 billion. Totally, almost 200,000—these are real jobs, real people, like you had yesterday when you spoke in Pennsylvania, the people behind you.

But I want to say two things more, if you'll allow me.

First of all, to get all of this done, we had to increase the defense industrial output. There is a big problem. The problem is that both the United States and the European are not producing enough. Our stockpiles have to be replenished because of the war in Ukraine and what we do there, and for all the other reasons.

You have taken leadership here. Last week, you signed the defense procurement act. You made it possible for companies to work together to be able, therefore, to ramp up their defense production.

You have been very harsh with them a couple of weeks ago. I had one of them over in my office——

President Trump. It's true.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes, it was really harsh. I had one of them over in my office. He was still trembling. *[Laughter]* *[Inaudible]* And I said, "This is good." This is exactly what we need, because we need this extra defense output. This is important for Europe.

When I point at all these jobs, of course, also many jobs being created in Europe and in Canada. But, again, almost 200,000 here in the United States, supported by all these investments.

But it is about defense industrial output, and this is also what the Ankara summit has to be about. The whole first day will be about defense industrial production, because we can spend as much as we want, but we need the interceptors, the missiles. We need the tanks. We need the artificial intelligence, et cetera, et cetera.

And this is what you are doing—doing that in the U.S., but also, therefore, putting all that pressure on the defense industrial base.

And finally, you were at the G-7 last week. I think that was a big success. What you've seen there is that, yes, you are President of the United States, but I want to make this point: For me, you are, first of all, the leader of the free world.

In 2 weeks, in Ankara, you will have not 7 countries, you will have 42 countries: the 32 allies—U.S. and the other 31—but also 9 or 10 other countries from the Middle East, from the Indo-Pacific. And they want to hear your lead.

You will provide it. I know this. This is what you do on Iran. This is what you on defense industrial output, on spending, and all of this. You, being leader of the free world.

And now we see it with Ukraine. The fact that Ukraine stays strong in the fight, that you still provide all the stuff they need—paid for by European and Canadian allies, fair enough. But very important for them to stay in the fight, and all the other things the United States is doing.

So I'm really looking forward to that summit. I know that Erdoğan, the President of Turkey——

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. ——looks forward to receiving his good friend, Donald J. Trump.

But I just wanted to tell this story because, ladies and gentlemen of the American media, this is important. This is your President, but also leader of the free world, taking the leadership role as is necessary.

President Trump. Thank you very much, Mark. Very nice.

Secretary General Rutte. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you very much.

Any questions, please?

North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Iran/International Cooperation

Q. Mr. President, after all this, do you—you've been so transformative vis-à-vis NATO, and I think the Secretary General just stated that. You transformed NATO, the likes of which——

Secretary General Rutte. That's a good word.

Q.——nobody would have even thought that you could have done.

After all that, do you still think the European allies, like you told me, treated you badly? And if so, what can they do to make things better?

And to you, Secretary Rutte, can you confirm that all the thousands of flights, as you stated today and yesterday on Fox News, are in compliance with the NATO Treaty, sir?

President Trump. Well, let me just say, he's been a friend of mine. He's a great guy, a great leader, great Secretary General. Everybody respects him. And I appreciate your nice words, but you really have done a good job. And I think, if anybody else were in that position, we wouldn't even be meeting today, to be honest with you, because we were let down.

We didn't need help on this at all. We demolished them in literally the first week, but it would have been nice if they would have said, "We'd like to help."

Q. Of course.

President Trump. We didn't even need it, but it would have been nice if they said that. They didn't say it.

But, as Secretary General—and he's the boss of the whole operation—he was—I believe, if I would have called him—and I didn't bother doing that, because I was doing individual countries just to take the temperature and see how they were doing. But I think if I would have called him, he probably would have found a way to help if we needed it. I feel, you know, it would have been a little bit different.

But I was disappointed. I was disappointed with Italy. I was disappointed with the U.K. He's now gone, and you know, he had a lot of problems, but we were disappointed with the U.K. We were disappointed with Germany and France. We were disappointed with most of them.

Spain is a horror show. Spain is terrible, even from your standpoint. I mean, they don't want to pay anything. They think they're in for a free ride. Spain is not a good group. Not a good group at all.

But I have great respect for this man. And so we're going to be discussing what took place, and we'll see what happens.

Thank you. Good question.

Secretary General Rutte. Can I answer to your second question?

Q. Yes, please, sir.

President Trump. Yes, please.

Secretary General Rutte. Because I don't have many disagreements with the President of the United States.

Here, I have to slightly, because I do agree there is reason for disappointment. Absolutely. But my argument is this: These are isolated cases. When you look at the overwhelm—take, for example, Germany. From day one, they delivered on their bilateral—these are bilateral commitments, bit of tech—the techniques of this, but the technology. But these are bilateral commitments these countries are having with the United States. So this is not, strictly speaking, NATO. They're bilateral commitments. They all did what they promised to do.

And this led to the fourth—between 4- and 5,000 U.S. planes taking off from Europe. I would argue, it would've been very difficult to do Iran without having Europe as a power protection platform for the United States.

Delivered again, he's right. There are—it's also reason for disappointment, but this is a mixed bag.

Q. In compliance with——

President Trump. Well, the big question is: Are they paying the 5 percent? They agreed 6 months ago, when we were together, to pay 5 percent. And for the most part, they're not paying the 5 percent.

Secretary General Rutte. Well, when you look at the numbers—take, for example, Germany. So we agreed they get a couple of years to get there, because you cannot spend it in 1 year because you have an absorption problem.

President Trump. You can.

Secretary General Rutte. But Germany, for example——

President Trump. You can. But go ahead.

Secretary General Rutte. Germany has doubled it—is doubling its defense spending between 2021 and 2029. They will spend over 150 billion by 2029, which is staggering—more than the French and the Brits combined, even.

Take the Dutch, take—take—and Poland, and the Baltics, already there. Countries like Denmark, really stepping up, so—and the Nordics.

So you're—you—it's a bit of a mixed bag, but most of them been doing it. And the alliance is so much stronger because of this man.

Q. Are the sorties in compliance with——

President Trump. Please. Yellow dress.

Q. ——with NATO treaty.

United Kingdom Leadership Change

Q. Thank you. Thank you. Bev Turner from GB News.

You mentioned that our Prime Minister has got one foot out the door. The new guy is coming in, Andy Burnham. What do you know about him, Mr. President? And what does he need to do to improve the relationship between——

President Trump. Yes. Know about who?

Q.—our two countries?

The new incoming Prime Minister, Andy Burnham.

President Trump. I don't know anything. I've seen that he was, I guess, the mayor of a town. I hear he's extremely liberal. Extremely. So that means he probably won't open up the North Sea.

You know, I gave Keir Starmer some pretty good advice. I said: "Open up the North Sea. Go to Aberdeen," which was the hottest city in the whole—on the whole continent. It was the "Oil City." It was the oil of Europe. And they closed everything. It was terrible. I saw it. I saw it before my eyes, and I couldn't believe it.

The North Sea is loaded. I have had every oil company come to see me: "Sir, could you give us access to the U.K.? We would do anything to drill in the North Sea." And they haven't even found what's there.

The amazing thing is, they buy their oil from Norway, which gets the oil from the North Sea. Think of it. And they pay a big premium. Norway has got now \$2 trillion in the bank. And U.K. is dying.

So they should open up the North Sea. That's an easy one. And a lot of good things are going to happen.

It's—you know, it's among the greatest fields in the world.

Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News].

2026 Midterm Elections

Q. President Trump, great night for Democratic socialist candidates last night. In the New York primaries, they swept and knocked out two incumbents.

You're from New York. Why do you think it is that now the endorsement of Zohran Mamdani means more than the endorsement of Hakeem Jeffries?

President Trump. Well, they're going radical left. They're going—really, you know, you talk about the Democrat Socialists, you talk really—it's really communist. That's—these people—

I watched that woman last night. That's not a Socialist. I know Socialists. That's a—that woman is a Communist.

And you know, what they don't say is that I was 16-and-oh last night, but mine were a little more boring, a little more mainstream. *[Laughter]* They were Republican conservatives. But we were 16 and oh.

And if you look over the last 2½ years, we're about 347 and, just about, oh. That's pretty good. But nobody writes that.

But he picked three. They won. They beat a guy named Dan Goldman, who's, you know, a loser. He was one of my prosecutors—one of my many prosecutors that they used on me. Dan Goldman. Not a good prosecutor, fortunately. But he's now looking for a job.

I would—I was very surprised to see, you know, because he's a pretty liberal guy.

When they go more liberal than Dan Goldman, they're really into never-never land. *[Laughter]*

2028 Presidential Election

Q. Does this tell you that the Democratic Party's 2028 nominee will likely be—or could likely be—a Democratic Socialist?

President Trump. Well, it should make it easier for Republicans, because most of the Nation is composed of sane people. They don't want to—you know, if you look throughout history, go back thousands of years, you've always had socialism and communism by different names.

[At this point, a cellular phone rang.]

It's never ever worked. It's not going to work this time either.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. Yes. Yes, please. Go ahead

Q. Thank you very much, sir. As a Turk myself——

President Trump. Whose phone is that? *[Laughter]*

Don't worry about it.

Q. He's calling you.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Secretary General Rutte. Or the fire alarm.

Q. As a Turk—as a Turk——

President Trump. That's right. Fired. *[Laughter]*

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Turkey/President Xi Jinping of China/Turkey-U.S. Trade

Q. As a Turk myself, I can tell you with great confidence that your presence in Ankara is eagerly anticipated. What's your message to your great friend Erdoğan and the Turkish people? Because you're going to be there in less than 2 weeks.

President Trump. Are you from Turkey?

Q. Yes, I'm a Turk myself.

President Trump. Good. Good. Well——

Q. And——

President Trump. ——I like him. He's a friend of mine. And he stayed out of the war. You know, he was a prime candidate to go into the war with Iran, maybe on the Iran side, because he's not a big fan of Israel, as you know. And I asked him to stay out. He stayed out.

And you know who else was great was President Xi of China. He could have come in. He gets half of his oil from that area. You know, I could see him wanting to, and I asked him to please stay out, and he did.

We did a good job. But he stayed out. Erdoğan is a great leader—very strong person, great military—and I asked him to stay out, and he did and so did President Xi and, frankly, so did Putin, if you really look. But you could say that Vladimir has some other things to focus on.

But they all stayed out. I mean, it was pretty—pretty amazing. People were surprised.

Q. Tied to that, Mr. President——

President Trump. And I think that Erdoğan is—look, he loves Turkey, right? He's doing a great job. He loves Turkey. I love the U.S., but he loves Turkey, and he's doing a great job.

He's a respected man, a respected leader, and he's been a friend of mine. Now, I shouldn't say that because guys like Peter will say, "Oh, he likes Erdoğan." "He likes Erdoğan"—no, Peter won't. Peter doesn't do it. It's some of the others, let's say.

But Erdoğan is a—he's a strong man. But he's been—everything I've ever asked him for, he's done.

Q. And tied to that, Mr. President, Mr. Secretary General clearly pointed out that allies want to do defense business with you, and Turkey is definitely one of them. They want the—they want the F110 jet engines——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——and they want the F-35 fighter jets. Are you going to Turkey with a big gift bag for Erdoğan?

President Trump. I think so, yes. I think so. Look, he's a member of NATO. Some people don't consider him so, but he really is.

Secretary General Rutte. He is.

President Trump. He's a——

Secretary General Rutte. Absolutely.

President Trump. He's a strong member of NATO.

Q. Yes, he is.

President Trump. Yes, I'm going to probably do something that's going to make him very happy.

Secretary General Rutte. And Turkey has a huge——

President Trump. Tell him hello. All right?

Q. I will tell him.

President Trump. Tell him hello.

Q. I will tell him.

President Trump. He's a good man.

Secretary General Rutte. And Turkey has a huge defense industrial base: 3,000 companies working all over the alliance, also in the United States. So, strong contribution.

President Trump. People don't know how big Turkey is in terms of their military. It's a very strong—they have a lot of our equipment—a very strong military, because of him.

Q. So what are your——

President Trump. Yes, please.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit in Ankara, Turkey

Q. What are your expectations, sir, about this meeting in Ankara? What do you think—what are your expectations? What are your——

President Trump. Well, except for the fact that it was being held in Turkey——

Q. ——asks?

President Trump. ——by President Erdoğan, I don't think I would have gone to it.

Secretary General Rutte. You would have come for me.

President Trump. But I might go for you. *[Laughter]*

Q. Not even for Mark?

Secretary General Rutte. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. I might of. You're right. No, you're right.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. I mean, I wouldn't have gone for, you know, what we went through over the last 2 months with, you know, the various countries.

But you're probably right—I would have gone for you. But I would have—I would have not gone for most people. But he called me up. He said: "Please, I have it in Turkey. You've got to be there. The United States has to be there." And so I'm going out of respect to President Erdoğan.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

U.S. Troops Deployed in Europe/Colombia

Q. What do you want the allies—what do you want the allies to do, more than what they are doing right now? Do you have an ask?

President Trump. Just be loyal. I just want their loyalty. We don't need their money. We don't need anything. We have the most powerful military in the world by far, but I just want loyalty. You know, we're so loyal to them. We're always fighting for them. We have thousands of troops all over Europe.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. In Germany, we have 50,000 troops, and then you want a little—give us a little nudge, give us a little kiss. We don't want much. And they say, "No, we can't do it."

We're paying hundreds of millions of dollars for the troops that we have in Germany, the troops that we have in U.K., the troops that we have all over Europe.

I will say, Poland was very good. You know, I endorsed him, and he won.

By the way, many people that I endorse outside of the United States won. You know that, right?

Q. Of course.

President Trump. Do you know we had a big win yesterday with Colombia? A favorite place of Marco. Marco loves Colombia. *[Laughter]*

But no, I endorsed a man who was—you know, at the end.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes. Yes.

President Trump. And he won. But the same thing in Poland. He was number 10.

Secretary General Rutte. Karol Nawrocki.

President Trump. I endorsed him. I didn't like the man that was the President at all. And I endorsed him. He was a fighter—a big fighter, a good fighter—and I endorsed him. He came from 10th place and he won, and they say it was the biggest upset in Europe in 50 years for a major election.

And you know what? He's a—he's going to be a great President of Poland. But we have many people—South America.

But we just—just the other day we endorsed somebody that—"El Tigre." They call him "El Tigre" because he's tough. He's another fighter. I like fighters, I guess.

But——

Q. Mr. President, you like winners.

President Trump. But he won, and it's great.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, you like winners. Do you think President Zelenskyy is winning right now? You famously called him a loser.

President Trump. Well, he's doing pretty well. Look, no matter how you look at it——

Secretary General Rutte. Absolutely.

President Trump. ——he's doing pretty well. He's holding his own, at least. A lot of people dying on both sides. But I think he's doing pretty well. You've got to hand it to him.

Q. Can I ask you—can I ask——

President Trump. Look, you have to—you have to say: He's courageous, he's got great equipment, but he's got great men. He's got fighters.

Q. And can I ask you one other question?

President Trump. Yes.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Have you seen the report into the Minab school attack, sir? And can you tell us, sir——

President Trump. I have not seen it, no.

Q. Why not?

President Trump. At some point—well, I have to——

Q. It's been published.

President Trump. I have to wait for it to be complete.

Q. It's been completed.

President Trump. I don't know that they're ever going to solve that problem. And you could ask Pete, but I don't know that they're ever—they're say—they're going to say it was one of our missiles. Pete, I don't know that they're ever going to solve that problem in terms of whose fault was it, because there were missiles flying all over the place.

Q. So you won't accept——

President Trump. And it's horrible what happened. But there were missiles fire—flying all over the place. And somebody said it was our missile. Well, maybe it wasn't our missile, but I've seen nothing to lead me to believe it was. There were plenty of missiles being flown by other people.

What do you think, Pete?

Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth. Well, Mr. President, we've taken the investigation very seriously, and when the appropriate time is right, whatever that outcome is, that will be the time to divulge.

Q. And do you know what the results of the investigation is?

President Trump. I mean, if you come up with the right answer, I don't—I don't think it's going to be us. I don't think it was us. There were a lot of missiles being fired at that time.

Yes, please.

Election Reforms/California

Q. Mr. President, you just had a colorful lunch on the Senate——

President Trump. I did.

Q. ——in the Senate. Would you be open to a compromise measure that had provisions of the SAVE Act into a reconciliation bill?

President Trump. Not really, no. The SAVE Act should be—there's no compromise. It's voter ID, it's proof of citizenship, and it's also the mail-in ballots. We want mail-in ballots for the military, if they're away. We want them for people that are ill or people that are, in some form, handicapped or have a hard time, or people even that are on vacation. I'm open to that.

But mail-in ballots, you have to vote, because we have a lot of rigged elections.

Q. And would you be—[inaudible]—housing bill if——

President Trump. And then we added in men in women's sports is a no-no. No men in women's sports and no transgender mutilization of our children.

Q. Would you——

President Trump. These are 99 percent issues. And we have to do it. We have to protect—look at what's gone on in Los Angeles and California. The vote still hasn't been counted. What's it—2 weeks now? It still hasn't been counted.

And I don't know Spencer Pratt, but I watched him, and he was doing really nicely. All of a sudden, he's out. And I said he was going to be out because he was doing well, and then, a week later, they started saying: "Oh, he's starting to lose favor. He's starting to lose." I said, "They just rigged the election."

And they were going to do that with Steve Hilton. He's a good man. And I asked the U.S. attorney to go look at their votes, and as soon as I did that, they announced that Steve Hilton would be a finalist.

So, no, we have rigged elections. Now, in my case, I made it too big to rig. Remember the expression "too big to rig"? But we have rigged—and we have to have voter ID. If we don't have voter ID and proof of citizenship—but basically, it's "The SAVE America Act." Everybody wants it. Everybody is—including Democrats. Eighty-seven percent of Democrats want it. Not the leaders, because they want to cheat. Their policy is so bad, they're unelectable.

Q. Mr. President, the housing bill, if it came to your desk, sir, would you veto it?

President Trump. About what?

Housing Legislation/Interest Rates

Q. If the housing bill that you didn't sign today, if it came to your desk——

President Trump. No, I said I'm not signing the housing bill. I want to see what happens with SAVE. Look, the housing bill is—housing—I made billions of dollars with housing. I know housing better than anybody maybe anywhere. It's all about the interest rate. Lower the interest rates. You're going to have all the housing you want.

But you have to understand, I don't want to have—I don't want to hurt people that own houses too. These people, for the first time in their lives, they have valuable houses. They become rich. I don't want to hurt them either.

Q. Sir——

President Trump. What you want to do is what—good for everyone: Get the interest rates down. We have this numbskull that was the head of the Fed before, and he's a stupid person. And we call him "Too Late" because he was too late with the interest rates all the time.

We need low interest rates. Low interest rates will solve everything, will solve that.

Now, despite that, we're doing well with housing. But where we're really doing well is, oil is plummeting and costs are coming down. Affordability—we're doing great. The Democrats gave us a tremendous affordability problem, and we're reducing prices a lot.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

United Kingdom Leadership Change

Q. Our new Prime Minister will be installed in a matter of weeks.

President Trump. Yes.

Q. Could be 3 or 4 weeks. Would you want to be the first person on his list to visit globally?

President Trump. No.

Q. Why?

President Trump. But I think we're probably of a different persuasion. He's very liberal. But you know, I got along well with Starmer. I disagreed with Starmer. I said you have two problems: immigration and energy—and crime too, by the way. Crime.

You have a terrible mayor of London, by the way. I don't want to cause any problems, but your mayor of London is grossly incompetent, a bad person, and a horrible representative for your country. You know that. That's why you're smiling and laughing. It's true. But you know that. The mayor of London is a horror show.

But you have a crime problem. You have an immigration problem. The immigration helps cause the crime, by the way. And you have a tremendous energy problem. You're building stupid windmills all over the country, and they don't do the job. You have the greatest oil field in the world, one of them. It's called the North Sea oil. All you have to do is bid it out to Exxon, Chevron, Shell, British Petroleum. They're begging to go there and pay billions of dollars.

And because the left is so crazy, they don't want the money. And the country is losing. I mean, it's going to go—your country is going to go bankrupt.

Think of it. You have one of the—now, most countries don't have that. You have the North Sea oil, and you have the best part of it. Think of it: You go to Norway, who doesn't have the best part of it, and you give them—and they have \$2 trillion in the bank. You know they have \$2 trillion, maybe more, because the U.K. pays them all this money—and others.

But you have one of the greatest fields. And I told this guy 15 times, and he wouldn't do it. I said, "You're going to lose your Prime Ministership," and he did. In fact, I called it about 3 days early. Right? Remember I said he was leaving? I wonder if that nudged him out. *[Laughter]*

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Would you block a final Iran deal if they include any kind of fees on shipping or maritime—

President Trump. Yes, no, I wouldn't—

Q. —activity in the Strait of Hormuz?

President Trump. —it would be unacceptable to me, because we have numerous straits, and if you did that for them, you'd have to do it for other people. You have other straits. I wouldn't allow it there either. Yes, it would—it would be a game changer.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. And have you made progress on munitions building in Europe? That's obviously something you brought up at the G-7.

President Trump. Yes, we always make progress. Some of the countries that he represents aren't as good as him. He's great. They're lucky they have him.

Secretary General Rutte. Thank you.

President Trump. They're lucky they have that guy.

Secretary General Rutte. And the production—

President Trump. Right behind you.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran/Election Reforms

Q. Mr. President, how do you think that Congress voting to end the war with Iran, even in a non-binding way, impacts your negotiations with Iran?

President Trump. So we're doing great in our negotiations with Iran. Right in the middle of one of the key things—which we're going to get anyway; we got—we have breaking news: The

Senate has voted that they'd like Trump to stop the war. So Iran sees that, and they go, "What's that all about?"

Now, you know it's meaningless, right? But I had lunch with them. We had four Republican Senators and all Democrats. You know, Democrats—they want to lose the war because they're stupid. That's why we call them "Dumocrats."

You know, I no longer use the "e." I use—I've changed the "e" into a "u." We call them "Dumocrats." They're dumb. Their policy is so bad.

That's why they have to—they are opposed to the SAVE America Act because they don't want voter ID, they don't want proof of citizenship. You know why? Because they have to cheat. Their policy is so bad that if they don't cheat, they wouldn't win an election. They're phenomenal cheaters, and they stick together.

But you know, the people—the Democrat people are 87 percent in favor of the SAVE America Act.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Yes, please.

Democratic Party

Q. Mr. President, last night, of course, you know, the Speaker pointed out, we saw the Mamdani-backed candidates winning in Jeffries's and Schumer's backyard.

President Trump. Yes.

Q. You told me in October that Schumer was "gone-zo" and that Mamdani was the leader of the party. Does—do last night's results—

President Trump. I did.

Q. —confirm that assessment? And—

President Trump. Well, Schumer has lost his way. He's become, essentially, a Palestinian. I think it's the greatest transformation of a political position I've ever seen. Chuck Schumer, who was a strong supporter of Israel, and he's become 100-percent Palestinian.

In fact, I've asked for a beautiful, beautiful silk outfit to be sent in the Palestinian tradition. I'm going to send it to him as a birthday present.

No, it's the greatest transformation of a political ideology I've ever seen. Chuck Schumer is Jewish, and he was a strong supporter of Israel. Not that strong, because he let the Obama—even though he was opposed to it, he let the JCPOA get through. He could have fought that harder with Barack Hussein Obama. Have you heard of him?

So—but Chuck Schumer is a Palestinian now. Sad.

Yes, please.

Mayor Zohran K. Mamdani of New York City/Tax Code Reform

Q. Do Democrats have a problem on their hands now that, you know, Obama and Mamdani—their two true leaders—neither of them can run for President in '28?

President Trump. Well, you know, Mamdani was here, as you know, twice. And he's a very nice guy. He's a charming guy, good-looking guy. We talked. We talked.

But you can't raise taxes on people where you force them to leave your State or your city. And they're leaving, and they're going to Florida. Most of them are going down to Palm Beach

and Miami. They're just leaving. And they pay 90 percent of your taxes. And I keep wondering, "How are you going to do this?" Every day you read about somebody that's leaving for Florida—mostly Florida and other places, but they're leaving.

You can't put estate taxes on that are so high that when a loving father or mother dies and they leave it to their beautiful child, the child is supposed to pay 50-percent tax. That's on top of Federal tax, right? So, basically, you're leaving them nothing.

You—what you're doing is, you're just for—I mean, you can be liberal; you can be anything. It's common sense. You're forcing people to leave, and these are the people that pay the taxes. They pay 90 percent of the taxes, and they're leaving New York, and they're leaving California too.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Yes, please.

Turkey-U.S. Trade

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. You said yes to the jet engines, but you're a very direct, very straightforward, no-nonsense man, as you're known in Turkey as well. What needs to happen for the F-35 deal to be finalized? What do you need to see to happen?

President Trump. Why don't you answer that question, J.D.? I want to give you an easy one. That's an easy——

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance. *[Laughter]* Okay. Thank you, sir.

President Trump. He's done a great job over there, by the way.

Vice President Vance. *[Laughter]* Well, I know that Pete and the entire team are reviewing this right now because there are certain things that we have to certify have happened—that have happened, in order to comply with American law. The President has asked us to do that. We are running the traps and confirming that's happened. This is really a congressional thing and ensuring that Turkey has complied with American law so they can get the F-35s. And of course, we'll announce that when we have that——

President Trump. We're going to work on it.

Vice President Vance. ——that review is complete.

Q. So it's progressing.

President Trump. Yes, we're going to work.

Look, hey, he's a man who's a little controversial, but I am too. But I know him. I think he's a very good person. He's helped us a lot. He's been—he really—anytime I've help—like, as an example, I said I'd love you to stay out of the war with Iran. That's a natural for him, right? He stayed out.

I like him. A lot of times when they have a problem with Erdoğan, they call me, and they say, "Would you talk to him?" They'll call me——

Secretary General Rutte. *[Laughter]* It's true. It's true.

President Trump. ——they'll say, "Could you do me a favor and talk to him?"

You have a question in the back? No, yes, in the back.

I love your questions, but you've asked a lot of them.

Q. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. But you're very nice. I appreciate it.

Oil Markets and Prices

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Earlier today, you instructed your Department of Justice to do an investigation for oil companies that you said gas prices were not coming down quick enough——

President Trump. Yes. That's right.

Q. ——and you are concerned that there is price gouging going on, taking advantage of the crisis, sir. Can you elaborate on that?

President Trump. So it's ExxonMobil, it's Chevron, it's Shell, it's BP—it's a lot of them. The gasoline or the oil prices have come down so much, and we are not seeing anything at the pump by comparison to what it should be. We should be, in my opinion, at \$2.25 right now at the pump, and we're higher than that. And we are doing a big investigation on it. Yes. They are not reducing the prices commensurate with what's happening.

Look, we are sending out—think of it—19 million barrels came out yesterday. That is a flood. That's like a gusher. That's an oil gusher. And they should be much lower, the gasoline prices, which really is what people see more than anything else, but the—you know, for their car. But the gasoline prices should be much lower at the pump, and the oil companies are possibly gouging. I hope they're not. Otherwise, they're going to be in big trouble. They're going to be in big trouble. We're not going to play games.

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken to them, sir? Have you spoken to the oil——

President Trump. I have. Yes.

Q. ——today about this?

President Trump. I told them—I told them: Don't gouge our people.

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup

Q. Mr. President, there's a report that you're going to present the World Cup at the final——like, the final.

President Trump. I am. I—well, I've been asked to by soccer, by football, by Gianni. Gianni has done a great job.

By the way, how hot has this thing—[inaudible]——

Secretary General Rutte. And the Dutch are doing—and the Dutch are doing very well. Have you seen?

President Trump. How hot is—you're doing well, and we're doing well.

Secretary General Rutte. Doing very well.

President Trump. Maybe we'll play you in the finals.

Secretary General Rutte. Well, it's——

President Trump. No, but how hot——

Secretary General Rutte. [Inaudible]

President Trump. How hot has it been?

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. It's been great. You know, they came to the United States, which isn't a big—a big, as they would say, football, but we can't because it's too confusing. We say "soccer." But it's not a—you know, very big at that.

And this is the biggest they've ever had. They've never had anything like it. The numbers are bigger than any number.

Secretary General Rutte. It's huge. Yes. It's very big.

President Trump. And it's—there's great spirit. There's tremendous spirit.

Secretary General Rutte. The Dutch King and Queen are—[inaudible].

President Trump. I think Gianni has done a fantastic job.

And yes, he has asked me to hand out the Cup.

Suspected Vandalism at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool/District of Columbia Public Safety/Federal Law Enforcement Support in U.S. Cities

Q. Mr. President, will the fencing around the Reflecting Pool will be down by July 4, or is that going to be——

President Trump. The pool?

Q. Yes, is it going to——

President Trump. It's in great shape. No. Ready? Thugs—they just told me a little while ago—six have been arrested, and, like, six or seven are under investigation—they have pictures and everything else. They went to the bottom. And it's not a paint job. It's very expensive. It's not rubber, but it's like rubber. And they went down with probably a box cutter or a very sharp razor of some kind or a knife, and they cut, and then they started ripping it up.

You know why? Because they're sick people. And then the side of the pool, right at water level, they took razors and they started cutting this, you know, very expensive stuff. It's incredible stuff. It's beautiful. And it was so—and it's still beautiful. But we have one area where they cut it. It's still holding; it's not leaking. But they hurt it.

So, in about probably—maybe after July 4 or maybe before—I don't know—we'll let a little water out, because it's at the edge. They'll cut it, they'll replace it, and it will be as good as new.

But these people should go to jail for a long time. You know, there's a statute that I signed when I had my first term that if you do anything to hurt statues or monuments, fountains in Washington, DC, or Federal fountain—it's actually Federal, all over the country—but you go to jail for 10 years, and there's no shortcuts. In other words, it's not 5 years for good behavior. It's a very tough statute, and so tough that it really hasn't been used very much over the years.

But I used it when they had a problem in Washington, where they were trying to hurt—you know, the sickos were trying to hurt things. And I announced it—as soon as I announced it—read it, announced it, and I said 10 years for anybody, everybody dropped what they had, including ropes. They had ropes; they were tying ropes around Thomas Jefferson's head, Andrew Jackson right up there. They had a rope around his head on that incredible statue outside. As soon as I invoked it, everybody left.

That's still in play. They could go to jail for 10 years. They'd better be careful.

They have a gash on that beautiful pool. It's a reflecting pond. This is the most—a very expensive material. Then, on top of it, we did the—we did a much bigger job than we said we

were going to do, because we did all the outer areas and everything else. We did a beautiful job. It's like a piece of glass. And for some reason, this disturbed the radical-left lunatics.

You know, the guy that—one of the guys, he's a member or a big payer to ActBlue. He's a big Hillary supporter. He's a big supporter of Sleepy Joe Biden.

No, these are—this is a very political thing. But as I understand it, six are under arrest. This was pure vandalism.

It's an amazing thing that we did. Don't forget, it hasn't worked properly since it was built, because it always leaked, in 1922. So it was built in 1922, so that's a hundred years—more—ago. It's never worked properly. I always say it had great potential, and I said in my first term, "I'm going to do something."

So, Biden and Obama, between the two of them, spent over \$100 million. It was a disaster. Obama, because of the environment, took the water from the Potomac, and it was—it was horrible. It was bad. I don't want to have to tell you what happened, but it was really bad. You—you can read about it.

Biden, he didn't have any idea what the hell they were doing because he didn't know what—anything was happening. But they spent over \$100 million. We spent 14 or 15, and a lot less than that, because a lot of these people work for the Parks department anyway, so, you know, they're going to work. So I would say a lot less.

And we put a great surface on. This is a world-class surface, and it looked beautiful. But they came in, and they cut it, and then they grabbed it, and they pulled it up. That's why it's all ripped. And who would even think of that? They're sick people. So I think they're in big trouble.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But here's the bottom line: We temporarily patched it. Even though we stopped the leak—it's so good that it—with all that damage they did, it's not leaking, and it looks really beautiful. I just had pictures taken. It's reflective. It's beautiful, like it did a week ago.

And then we're going to let a little water out because you have to let the water out to fix it. We're going to fix it, and then the water goes back in. It won't take long. We may do it before July 4, or we may do it just after July 4.

Now, we have it a little bit fenced off because we have a big fireworks display. And tonight, I'm making a speech, and people like my speeches, but I guess we're going to have a lot of people over there. But tonight we're going to have a lot of good entertainment. One of the greatest opera singers in the world. We think he's great. Lee Greenwood is going to be singing our favorite song. And we have a lot of great things, but I think I speak at about 7 o'clock tonight, so that's over at the Mall.

No, but the water looks great, but we will do the final fix-up. But just remember this: They took razor blades, 350 feet—coming from where he comes, they don't do that. They took—maybe a little bit. *[Laughter]*

They took razor blades——

Secretary General Rutte. No guarantees. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. ——and knives, and they cut patches like that, 350 feet long. A lot of them are, like, a foot, a foot, a foot. They cut the lining.

And there's pictures of the guy bending over. I don't know if anybody saw that, but there are pictures of the guy. And you say, "Who would do that?" Maybe it's Trump derangement syndrome.

You know, we fixed over 50 fountains and monuments in the city. The city is the safest it's ever been, ever. We have virtually no crime. We're crime free. When I came here—when we came here at the beginning, it was a horrible, crime-ridden city. And we have no crime—virtually no crime now.

Everything is fixed. We have new grass. We took a—miles—we took so much. Nobody has ever seen anything like—everything had graffiti on it. It's all gone. The tents all over the lawns, which were terrible, are all gone. The fences are all gone, because nobody goes on the lawns anymore. But we fixed those.

You know, grass has a life, just like people have a life. And we fixed the lawn, and it will be fixed.

Now, one of the other things—they did a job. Around the Reflecting Pool, we have a huge field of grass. They poured acid on the grass. The same people, I guess. They poured acid. So that's in the process. It killed—you know, acid kills grass quickly, so that's being fixed.

But the Reflecting Pool is great, and it's going to look beautiful.

It's so sad to see what they did. And then the fake news tries to say, "Oh, well, it didn't work." Of course, it worked. Everything I does work—what I do works. What I do best is build, and we fixed—I think it's 52 fountains—all over the city, they're talking about it.

But you know the biggest thing is, we have one of the safest cities. If you would have come here 2 years ago——

Secretary General Rutte. Mm-hmm.

President Trump. —you had a good chance of being mugged; although, you're a very big guy. *[Laughter]* They would have mugged him up. They would have beat the hell out of him.

Secretary General Rutte. If Matt was with me, yes. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. He would have said, "I'm never going back."

Now, you can walk with your beautiful wife, you can walk with your friends down to a—

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. You know, we were losing all our restaurants. Nobody wanted to go out. Even if you got into the restaurant, they'd rob you when you were in. Now you can't get a—you can't get into a restaurant, but the restaurateurs are opening restaurants all over the city. I'm so proud of it.

Also, Memphis. Take a look at Memphis. Take a look at—in Louisiana, take a look at what's happened. What we've done in Louisiana with New Orleans is incredible. The Governor, Governor Landry, called me. They just had Mardi Gras. He said, "It's the safest Mardi Gras we've had in 75 years." It's great. We've done a good job.

And you know what? In Chicago, they had many murders over the last week. Many. We could solve—I could make Chicago, with this group of strong people—they're strong people, if that's okay.

You know, one thing we got from the Supreme Court: We have merit. So, if you have great students, great marks, great scores, great boards, you get into a good college. If you have bad, you don't get into a good college. In other words, it's based on merit. A tough decision for them. But that also applies to the military.

We have tough, tough people in the military. And the National Guard has done an incredible job in Washington, and my people have done an incredible job.

So, if you look at Memphis, crime is down 78 percent. I have a friend from Memphis. He was going to leave. And he called me, he said: "I've never seen anything like this. It's like a different city."

And also, in New Orleans, it's like people can't believe it.

I could do that for Chicago. I could—I'd love to do Chicago, because Chicago is potentially a great city, but you're going to lose it. It's got to be done. I could—and you know, we do something much more than they can do, because we take people out and bring them back to the country from where they came, where they came out of jails, where they're drug lords and drug dealers and people from mental institutions.

And I'd love to do it in Los Angeles, and I'd love to do it in New York City. I love New York. I'd like to see it—they had a lot of—a lot of problems in New York over the last couple of weeks. If we were there, they wouldn't have any of those problems.

And we removed the bad people from those cities so they'd never come back. Now, some liberal people probably don't like the sound of that. But 92 percent of crime is caused—in these cities, is caused by 2 percent of the people. I love that number, because it's easily solved. Now think of that: 92 percent of the crime in Washington was caused by 2 percent of the people.

We moved out almost 5,000 career criminals and people from other countries, and Washington now is one of the safest cities—I could say "on the planet," but let's just say "in the U.S." And it's beautiful now.

The Reflecting Pool, but we have 52—I think it's much more than that. It's going to soon be more than that. You see them opening up.

And my team has done an unbelievable job. Doug Burgum has been great—Department of the Interior—and his people, Greg, and all—I mean, these people, they're phenomenal.

But think of that. You work so hard; you get it open way ahead of July 4—July 4 was the key; and then somebody's in there with a knife, cutting it and ripping the floor out. It's terrible.

But the 350-foot gash in the side, it's a terrible thing.

Ready? Here, I'm going to end on this.

I'm so proud of Washington, DC. It's become one of the hottest cities in the world, but what is the hottest in the world is the United States of America. We have the hottest city.

And you know that. You were talking about that.

Two years ago, we were laughed at. We were a joke. We were a dead country. Now we're the hottest country anywhere in the world.

Thank you very much, everybody. Have a good time. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom; New York Democratic congressional candidates Darializa A. Chevalier, Bradford S. Lander, and State Rep. Claire Valdez; former New York Democratic congressional candidate Rep. Daniel Goldman; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Karol Nawrocki and former President Andrzej Duda of Poland; Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio; President-elect Abelardo Gabriel "El Tigre" de la Espriella Otero of Colombia; former Los Angeles, CA, mayoral candidate Spencer Pratt; California Republican gubernatorial candidate Stephen G.C. Hilton; First Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Central District of California Bilal A. Essayli; Jerome H. Powell, member and former Chairman, Federal Reserve System Board of Governors; Mayor Sadiq Khan of London, United

Kingdom; Sens. William M. Cassidy, Susan M. Collins, Lisa A. Murkowski, and Randal H. Paul; Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer; Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) President Giovanni V. Infantino; Cameron M. Thiers, Sophie Dennison-Gibby, and Justin T. Carreno, who were arrested and charged for allegedly removing pieces of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, and former Olympic canoeist David C. Hearn, who was charged with allegedly damaging the Reflecting Pool; former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in her capacity as the 2016 Democratic Presidential nominee; opera singer Christopher Macchio; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management Gregory Winscher. He also referred to S. 1383; H.R. 6644; and the Democratic online fundraising platform, ActBlue. Secretary General Rutte referred to King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima of the Netherlands; and U.S. Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Matthew G. Whitaker. Reporters referred to former New York Democratic congressional candidate Rep. Adriano D. Espaillat; House Minority Leader Hakeem S. Jeffries; and Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Michael Johnson.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Secretary General Rutte.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Burgum, Douglas J.; Burnham, Andy; Carreno, Justin T.; Cassidy, William M.; Chevalier, Darializa A.; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Collins, Susan M.; de la Espriella Otero, Abelardo Gabriel "El Tigre"; Dennison-Gibby, Sophie; Duda, Andrzej; Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip; Essayli, Bilal A.; Goldman, Daniel; Greenwood, Lee; Hearn, David C.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Hilton, Stephen G.C.; Infantino, Giovanni V.; Khan, Sadiq; Lander, Bradford S.; Landry, Jeffrey M.; Macchio, Christopher; Mamdani, Zohran K.; Murkowski, Lisa A.; Nawrocki, Karol; Obama, Barack; Paul, Randal H.; Powell, Jerome H.; Pratt, Spencer; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Rutte, Mark ; Schumer, Charles E.; Starmer, Keir; Thiers, Cameron M.; Valdez, Claire; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Winscher, Gregory; Xi Jinping; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2026 midterm elections; 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act; ActBlue; California, gubernatorial election; China, oil supply chain; China, President; Colombia, President-elect; Crime rates; Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management; District of Columbia, beautification and renovation projects; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; District of Columbia, Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, renovation work; Election security and integrity, strengthening efforts; Europe, defense relationship with U.S.; Federal Reserve System; Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup; Gasoline costs; Housing, affordability and access; Illinois, crime in Chicago; Interest rates; Iran, cease-fire agreement with U.S.; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, destruction of elementary school in Minab; Iran, U.S. military operations; Louisiana, Governor; Louisiana, law enforcement improvement efforts in New Orleans; National Guard; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; North Sea, oil exploration and development; Oil markets and prices; Poland, President; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Interior; Secretary of War; Senate minority leader; Soccer; Sports, efforts to restrict transgender participation; Tax Code reform; Tennessee, law enforcement improvement efforts in Memphis; Transgender athletes, efforts to restrict participation; Turkey, defense relations with U.S.; Turkey, President; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; United Kingdom, energy sources; United Kingdom, Prime Minister; Vice President.

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