

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters in Ankara, Turkey

July 7, 2026

President Erdogan. First, here, on the occasion of the NATO summit, I would like to welcome my valuable friend, Mr. President Trump, who has participated here today with us and added strength to the summit that we are convening for.

And I would like to express how important this summit is that we are here gathering for.

The fact that we are convening here today for the NATO Ankara summit, and that all the leaders are arriving and have arrived, and we will be executing the NATO summit tomorrow with the presence of President Trump, which will be adding might and strength to our summit.

Once again, I would like to say welcome, Mr. President.

President Trump. Well, I want to thank you very much. As everybody knows—it's been very much reported—we are great friends.

The President has done an incredible job. Just landing at the airport to see such a beautiful airport and to have a building named after me, I was very happy about that. That was very nice.

The airport is absolutely beautiful. The roads coming in were brandnew and beautiful, and you've been a great leader and a respected leader all over the world.

And we really do. We have a—we've had, right from the beginning, good chemistry. We've had a very special relationship.

But Turkey has become, under the President, a very powerful country militarily. People know—people don't know how powerful, actually. And they have a lot of our equipment, and they have a lot of great soldiers, and they're really somebody to be reckoned with. And the nice part is that, because of the relationship that we have, it's all gone very well.

I just want to say that I have a lot of respect for the President, and I think it's really to the benefit of both countries.

We're going to be talking today about trade. We're going to be talking about other things having to do with the military—lots of different things. Probably, we'll mention Iran, where we have essentially decimated their military. They cannot have a nuclear weapon. And we're going to have some very good discussions.

But we do a lot of trade with Turkey. We make great things, and they make great things, and we—we've had a very, very—it's had a very big impact on both of our countries.

So I just want to tell you that it's an honor to be with you, and we're going to have a lot of good meetings. We're going to have good dinners, good food. We're going to have a good time. But mostly, we're going to have a lot of work, and we're going to do good things for our countries.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Erdogan. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you very much.

Turkey-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, are you going to sell F-35s to Turkey? And what about the legal restrictions?

President Trump. Well, it's a decision we're going to make. We have a very good relationship. I would think that many people—I can tell you, many people, including the people sitting right here, thinks, you know, why wouldn't we do that? We have a better relationship with Turkey and Turkey has been in many ways much more loyal than other countries that we think would be loyal.

So, yes, it's something, certainly, we would consider. It's a great plane. It's the best—currently the best plane by far. And it's certainly something we will consider, yes.

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

Q. Mr. President, sir.

President Trump. Yes, Daniel [Daniel Baldwin, One America News Network].

President Trump's Relationship With President Erdogan/Turkey-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, sir. You said, I believe it was last week or 2 weeks ago, that President Erdoğan was a big reason you wanted to come to the summit here. What has made your relationship with him so special, in your own words? And what do you broadly hope to achieve here at the summit?

President Trump. You never know why a relationship is special. Some people you get along with, and some people you don't. Sometimes you get along with the toughest people, like him, and sometimes you don't get along with the weakest, most pathetic people. You just don't get along. Maybe you don't respect them.

But I—you know, from the day we met, we got along. We had a pastor—as I remember, his name was Pastor Brunson—and it was a very big thing. And it was a—I don't know—very traumatic. He was sentenced to a long-term prison sentence, and I felt he was innocent. And I called. Other people called. They got nowhere. I called the President, and he released him immediately. That was something that the evangelical community will never forget, and—because he was a good man, Pastor Brunson.

So, you know, just things like that. We just have always—it's always worked out, and I think it's been from the very beginning, from the first moment. This just—I said it before: It's a chemistry that works between us.

There are those that I don't have a good chemistry with, I will tell you that, and we worked that out too.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Europe/U.S. Defense Relationship

Q. Mr. President, are further troop drawdowns in Europe likely? Are you likely to announce further troop drawdowns in Europe?

President Trump. Say it.

Q. Are further troop drawdowns in Europe likely? And are you satisfied with the progress that NATO allies have made since—*[inaudible]*?

President Trump. Well, we're going to see. I was very disappointed with NATO. And frankly, if it weren't held in Turkey—where my friend happens to be a very strong leader, a very strong person—I—it's possible that I wouldn't have attended. I felt I had to attend because of the

fact that, you know, I know he's gone all out. It was a big thing to have NATO come to Turkey or anyplace else. It's a big thing.

But we weren't treated well, because we did something in Iran. We don't need anybody's help. I didn't even want the help, but before I asked, they said they wouldn't be there. And we've invested trillions of dollars in NATO. Why? To protect European countries and others—Canada, et cetera. But to protect people, countries from—generally speaking, it used to be the Soviet Union; now it's Russia. And I say that's fine, but you would think that they'd be very willing to do something to help us. And they really weren't.

In the case of the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister—I guess he's no longer there, maybe because of this; it was a very unpopular thing he did—he said, "No, we'll help after the war is over." I said, "I don't need that kind of help."

We didn't need any help at all. And in a way, I was testing people. I was testing to see whether or not they'd be there, because I've long said that we help them but I'm not sure that they'd be there for us. And Italy turned us down. And Germany turned us down. And France turned us down.

And it's okay. But you know, why are we spending hundreds of billions of dollars and they're not there for us? We've always been there for them.

[Several reporters spoke at once. Reporters then spoke in Turkish, and President Erdogan responded. The translation provided to President Trump was not audible. Several reporters then spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, can you confirm reports——

U.S. Military Sales/Turkey-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—Russian missile defense system going to be handed over to third party as part of any deal with F-35s?

President Trump. What does that mean?

Q. Are you—is it going to be handed over to a third party? Is that not part of the deal? Was——

President Trump. Third party? What is the third—with respect to what?

Q. Is the—there's—are concerns about the Russian missile defense system. Do you have those concerns about the system? Are they going to have to——

President Trump. I have no concerns at all about anything. I mean, he's a leader of a country that he's made a much better country, much more powerful country. And you see it. I mean, it's beautiful. You get off—the roads are beautiful. It's an amazing thing.

No, I have no concerns about anything having to do with Turkey. The relationship—I would say, the relationship with Turkey right now is better probably than it's ever been. It was good in my first 4 years, but I think now it's probably even better than that, if that's possible.

Turkey-U.S. Security Cooperation/Tariffs/U.S. Automobile Industry

Q. Mr. President. Sir. U.S. military and Turkish military constitute a really strong and large military base for NATO. Are they expecting further defense cooperation out of this bilateral meeting, out of this NATO summit here in Ankara?

President Trump. Well, we're going to find out when I go there. We're going to find out. We're going to be having meetings. I'm very friendly with many of the leaders. Some of them are new. We don't know them.

But you know, I've been doing this for now sort of a long time, if you count the 4 years where we had a rigged election. You know, I was very much into politics then too. But I spent the first 4 years—I spent 4 years in a little different state, and then we had—we've had an amazing—probably the best year maybe ever had by an American President.

You—when you look at the economy, we have the greatest economy we've ever had. We have \$19 trillion—\$19.2 trillion, to be exact—being invested in the United States. That's seven or eight times more than it's ever—it's a world record, not just a U.S. record.

And I just read we're—in fact, coming over, I was just given—I was in the car with those beautiful horses, those great riders, those great soldiers, and it came over the wires that Toyota is moving out of Mexico into the United States and building one of the biggest truck and car plants ever built. It's amazing. That's what tariffs do if properly used.

And so we've never had a more exceptional economy or potential economy. There's never been anything like it.

Under the last administration, they did much less than a trillion dollars of investment coming in, and we're at \$19.2 trillion in, actually, the first 12 months, because that's where it's, you know, really—so, we're there a year and a half, so that number is now substantially higher. But \$19.2 trillion, Scott, for a period of 12 months. Nobody's ever seen anything like that.

So we have, by far, the greatest economy. We have more jobs right now in the United States than ever before, and we have a great relationship with some countries on trade and Turkey happens to be one of them.

[Reporters spoke in Turkish, and President Erdogan responded; the translation provided to President Trump was not audible. Another reporter then spoke in Turkish; the translation provided to President Trump was not audible. President Trump then spoke as follows.]

President Trump. Is that for me? Are you asking me, or are you asking the President?

Q. No, for President Erdoğan. Thank you.

President Trump. For President——

[A reporter spoke in Turkish, and President Erdogan responded; the translation provided to President Trump was not audible. Several reporters spoke at once.]

Turkey-U.S. Trade/Turkey-U.S. Security Cooperation/Iran

President Trump. And I might add that Turkey bought planes. It's the best plane. But they bought planes from the United States. And when you buy a plane from the United States, if there's engine rehab and other things that are done to engines—it's various things that happen, including just maintenance. I think we have an obligation to maintain engines and help them maintain engines.

When you buy a plane from us, what are we going to do? Say, "You're buying a plane. If the engine needs work or if the engine has to be rehabilitated or even upgraded somewhat"—but I think we have an obligation to do it.

What are you going to do? Say, "I'm not going to do that."

Look, Turkey has been—I know, you know, a lot of people don't agree—although, I think with time they're starting to agree—Turkey has been a great ally for us. Turkey's been—Turkey

could have gone on the—they know Iran very well, and they know the problems with Iran, but they've been very instrumental, along with a couple of other countries, of helping.

They could have gotten into the fight. You know, I hear some people saying about their relationship with Israel. They could have gotten into the fight. They're a very powerful military nation. They didn't do that. Maybe they didn't do that because of me, but they could have gotten into this—into the fight on the other side.

They are a nation that's been very, very good. And I can only—I can speak for myself, as President. They've been extraordinary in many ways with respect to our relationship, including trying to end the war with Iran or whatever you call it. It's not even a war. It's a military operation.

It's a denuclearization—that's really what it is—of Iran, because I don't think he wants to see them have a nuclear weapon either. I'm pretty sure of that. In fact, I'm totally sure of that.

So—but when they buy a product from us, whether it's a plane or anything else, when it's time for maintenance, I think we have—don't we have an obligation to help them? What are we going to do? Say, "We're not going to let you use the product that you spent a lot of money in buying," and especially when it's been somebody that, frankly, has been more helpful to the United States than many other more traditional countries.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, you will meet President Zelenskyy tomorrow. Sir, you will meet President Zelenskyy tomorrow. Should we expect a breakthrough soon?

The President. I do.

Q. Where are we at Ukraine talks?

President Trump. I do. I had a very good talk with President Putin, who, by the way, has a lot of respect for President Erdoğan. A lot of respect for him.

We had a long talk yesterday. Lasted a long time. And I also spoke with President Zelenskyy right after that.

I think they both want to make a deal. It's too bad it took so long. But I think there's going to be—something's going to come out, and the President's also helping us with that.

But I think there's something—you know, I settled eight wars, and I think we're going to be settling a ninth.

It doesn't seem likely now, but sometimes when—with war, I see, when it's least likely, that's when it happens.

I had a very good talk with President Putin. I had a very good talk with—I would say, as a combination, a lot of times I do well with Putin and Zelenskyy would be a problem, or vice versa; I—Zelenskyy would be great and Putin would be a—they both want to get it settled now, more than—that's all I do in my life is deals. I know deals. And I think they are going to—I think we're going to get it settled, hopefully, soon.

Last month, 35,000 mostly soldiers died. The month before that, it was 24,000. The month before that, it was 27,000. And the month before that, it was 29,000.

But last month, it was 35,000 young soldiers—mostly soldiers died—and that's crazy.

[A reporter spoke in Turkish; the translation provided to President Trump was not audible.]

U.S. Sanctions Policy/Syria

President Trump. I can tell you. We're going to be taking the sanctions off.

Okay?

I don't want him to waste his time answering that question, because we're working very closely with Marco Rubio—a very famous man, great Secretary of State—and with Scott Bessent and with Pete and everybody else. We're going to be taking the sanctions off. It's time to do that. Okay?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

We don't want to sanction friends. It's very simple. There's plenty of people we can sanction and we are sanctioning. We don't want to sanction friends.

And because of the President—you know, we have a very good relationship with the new leader of Syria, and he's done an amazing job. In a year and a half, he's pulled the whole country together. And I have a very great relationship with him. And somebody said, "Well, he's pretty rough to put him there." I approved him, along with the President. We were the two that really wanted him, and he's done a great job. He's done a great job. He's pulled it together. Not an easy job.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy/Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz/Venezuela

Q. Can you clarify what you meant with your social media post yesterday with respect to Prime Minister Meloni? That Truth Social post with the restraining order.

President Trump. Oh, I don't know. I think she's a nice person, actually. We've had a good—we—had a bad relationship, but it became a little bad because she refused to help us. Again, I didn't put a heavy press on her, but she refused to get involved with the Hormuz Strait—or you could also say just Iran. She refused to get involved.

So it soured my relationship with her a little bit, but I like her. I think she's a nice person, actually. But I think she made a mistake.

You know, they get a lot of their oil from—we don't get any of our—we have a lot of oil. The United States has more oil than anybody. When you add Venezuela to it, it's like we have far more oil than any—we don't need the Straits. We do this because we think it's an important thing to do.

But she just wasn't there for us, and I wasn't happy about that. You can imagine I wasn't happy about that.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, you seem to express optimism that a deal between Russia and Ukraine is close. Why do you think that? What conditions have changed? Did Putin seem——

President Trump. About—with what?

Q. Russia-Ukraine. Did Putin seem open to any concessions that he hadn't been?

President Trump. Never changed. I just don't want them killing people.

You know, it doesn't affect the United States. When Biden was here, he gave them hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of equipment. Now I sell the equipment for, you know, a fair price—the full price. And I sell it not to Ukraine. I sell it to the European Union. They pay us.

But, with me, it's not anything to do other than I'd like to save lives. You have 25-, 35-, 30—one time, it hit 41,000 a month—souls. They're dead. They leave their mother in Ukraine. They leave their mother and father in Russia, Ukraine. They wave goodbye, and a week later they're dead. It's crazy, and I would like to see—it doesn't affect us. It really—you know, it's far away. It affects Europe much more. We're there to help Europe, but it doesn't affect the United—it—we have an ocean in between.

But you know, it's just I can't stand watching what's happening. I've seen the pictures of those battlefields, and it's a drone war. It's a war of drones. It's a whole new technology, and we're actually the leader in drones now. We have the most sophisticated drones. But people wouldn't believe how violent it is. And I've seen the battlefields. They send me pictures. I actually want to say, "Don't send them to me."

Pete, this man right here, sends me pictures. Pete Hegseth. And I said, "Pete, you know what? It doesn't help to look." I've never seen anything like it. It's carnage, and it should stop.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Did Putin seem open to any concessions to end the war? Did Putin seem open to any concessions to end the war in your call with him?

President Trump. I get along very well with both, and we're going to get it settled. And President Erdoğan is helping us get it settled, as he's helping with Iran.

Greenland

Q. Mr. President, on Greenland, do you have confidence that the negotiations will play out? Or do you think the U.S. will have to annex Greenland ultimately?

President Trump. With respect to what?

Q. Greenland.

President Trump. Well, that's what hurt my relationship with NATO, because Greenland doesn't help Denmark. Denmark doesn't spend money, really, to help Greenland, but it's an important part for the United States.

And it's surrounded by China ships and Russian ships, and that's not going to happen. The ships is—it's not going to happen.

It was Greenland that I—in my—and it continues to be—that should be controlled by the United States, not by Denmark.

And when they wouldn't go along with it, and with all the money we spend to help them with Russia—and we don't have to spend any money. We could remove all of our soldiers out of Europe.

Because, as you probably noticed, Europe's a very different place than it was 20 years. A lot different. Much different. It's a much different—and they'd better be careful with immigration and energy. If they're not careful with those two things, you're not going to have a Europe anymore.

Okay, thank you very much, everybody.

[President Erdogan spoke in Turkish; no translation was provided.]

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:45 p.m. at the Beştepe Presidential Compound. In his remarks, he referred to Andrew C. Brunson, pastor, Dirilis (Resurrection) Church in Izmir, Turkey, who was detained by Turkish authorities on October 7, 2016, and returned to the U.S. custody on October 12, 2018; former Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom; and President Ahmad Husayn al-Shara' of Syria. President Erdogan and reporters spoke in Turkish, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Turkey, President Erdogan.

Locations: Ankara, Turkey.

Names: Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Brunson, Andrew C.; Erdogan, Recep Tayyip; Hegseth, Peter B.; Meloni, Giorgia; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Shara', Ahmad Husayn al-; Starmer, Keir; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; Denmark, administrative relationship with Greenland; Economic improvement; Greenland, ownership and administration; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, U.S. military operations; Italy, Prime Minister; Job creation and growth; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury; Secretary of War; Syria, President; Syria, relations with U.S.; Turkey, President; Turkey, President Trump's visit; Turkey, relations with U.S.; Turkey, trade with U.S.; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Venezuela, oil supply and refining.

DCPD Number: DCPD202600448.