

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

**Remarks During a Greeting With Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and an Exchange With Reporters in Ankara, Turkey
July 8, 2026**

President Trump. Thank you very much. And we've had some great meetings. We had dinner last night with President Erdoğan, and he was really——

Secretary General Rutte. It was amazing.

President Trump. I would rate it a 10, maybe a 12.

Secretary General Rutte. A bit of a small palace, don't you think?

President Trump. Well, yes, no, it's beautiful. Everything's beautiful. *[Laughter]*

Secretary General Rutte. It's huge.

President Trump. We've had some very good meetings, in particular with Turkey and trade, and now we're meeting with everybody today. As you know, we're going to have a very big meeting with lots of leaders from, I think, every country. Right? Every country showed up.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes. They're all there.

President Trump. Every NATO country.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. Plus, we have a couple that aren't in NATO that would like to be in NATO, I guess.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. But it's been very successful. It's been a fantastic meeting.

So I'll be having a news conference after we're finished today, about 4:30, 5 o'clock. And I assume most of you will attend.

But a lot of things have been determined, and some things haven't, frankly.

We attacked very powerfully last night the very dangerous people from Iran. They're sick. There's something wrong with them.

We said, "Go and do your funeral stuff," and instead of that, they start shooting rockets at ships yesterday. And so we hit them very hard last night. Very hard. I would say 20-to-1. Twenty times tougher.

And I told them, "Every time you hit, we hit." And of course, they're dirty players, so they go after everyone—probably including me.

I've been number one on their list for years. And they're a bunch of scum, you want to know the truth. They're scum. And so we don't like them. I don't like them. And they're evil people.

And it's the denuclearization of Iran, and we're going to denuke it. We're not going to let them because they're crazy, and they can't have a nuclear weapon.

And they go around killing people. They've killed thousands and thousands of our soldiers. They've killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

They had the roadside bomb—Soleimani. I took care of him first term, and that was a big thing, because I think they probably would be a lot stronger had he been around because he was a bad guy, but he was—he was an evil genius. But a bad guy. And he was the father of the roadside bomb. The roadside bomb is a bomb that goes on when you're driving your little vehicle around, and it goes on and you have no legs, no arms, and no face.

And they've killed thousands and thousands of people. Even the SS *Cole* was theirs, if you remember that disaster.

So I don't like them at all. And frankly, I think we waste a lot of time with them. I think we should just do our business.

Can you imagine? They start shooting bombs—actually, missiles at ships yesterday: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, a couple of others. And they don't know—I don't think they know what the hell they're doing.

But they're bad people. Very bad people. I think they're incompetent, by the way. Because if they were competent, they would have made a deal a long time ago—like, how about 47 years ago?

So they've been trouble for 47 years, and they're—we took out their first set of leaders. We took out their second set of leaders. They want to take out the U.S. leader: me. I'm on every list.

I saw a thing this morning: I'm on every single one of their lists. And so far, I guess I've been a little bit lucky, but that maybe doesn't last very long, because that's the way it goes. But we have great people.

But these are evil, sick people, and we have to rid—they're cancer. They're cancer. And you know what you do? You've got to cut out cancer early. And that's the way I feel.

And I want to thank Mark. He's been a great Secretary General of NATO.

I'm not happy with NATO because of what they did with Greenland, and I'm not happy with NATO because of the fact that they didn't want to help us with the number-one state sponsor of terror—that's Iran. They were unwilling to help us.

Now, in all fairness, I didn't speak to Mark about it. I think if I did, it might have been different. But we didn't need help.

But I was really testing. I wanted to see whether or not they'd be there.

And the answer is, they weren't—I spoke to Germany. I spoke to France. Spoke to U.K. Spoke to Italy. I spoke to—I didn't speak to Spain. Spain is a wasted cause.

I—we don't want to do any trade business with Spain anymore, by the way. I'd like you to cut it off.

Spain is a terrible partner in NATO. They don't participate. They don't pay. I don't want anything to do with Spain.

Cut off all trade with Spain, please, including visits. Okay? We don't want anything to do.

Watch them come running back. Oh, they'll come running back.

[At this point, President Trump gestured to Secretary General Rutte.]

They treat this man terribly, and this man's a good man too. Great man. They're lucky they have him.

But Spain doesn't agree to anything, and you shouldn't carry them. I mean, you sort of automatically carry because you're—you're protecting an area. So they're there. So they probably figure, "They have to protect us." Right? But we don't have to.

And we don't have to trade with them. I don't want to do any more trade with them. All right?

Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. Yes, sir.

President Trump. Take it immediately. You—don't even talk to them.

They're hopeless. They're bad people, because, you know, they have everybody else going and paying and working. And Spain—in particular, Spain, and a couple of others, but in particular, Spain—they're open about it. They're hostile about it.

And let's see how hostile they remain when they call up and they—"Please, please. We want to trade with you, sir. We want to trade with you, sir."

They make so much money with us, and we're going to see that they make a lot less. I want no business with them.

So, other than that, we're having the big meeting in a little while. And I'm going to—I'm going to relate my problems.

Greenland is a big problem for us. And the other big problem is the fact that when we wanted them—we didn't want them badly, but we did say, "If you want to join us," and they all said no. But when they could have, they weren't there for us. And we've been there for them.

We spent over a trillion dollars over the last short period—trillion—in order to protect these countries from Russia. And has nothing to do with us. We have an ocean.

But it's been a long-term thing, and they haven't treated us right. And Mark understands that. He understands that. And we're going to work something out, I think, one way or the other.

But we've been treated unfairly. We pay disproportionately. We had a time when we were paying a hundred percent. We were paying a hundred percent of NATO, and yet a lot of the countries weren't paying anything.

But there was calls made a few weeks ago. I spoke with the U.K., and the Prime Minister said, "Well, we don't want to help you now, but we'll help you when the war is over." I said, "That's not good." And likewise, I spoke to Germany. They didn't want to help. Spoke to France. He didn't want to help. Nobody wanted to help. Some of the very small countries wanted to help because they're the most vulnerable. I mean, that's the only reason they wanted to help.

So I appreciate you being here. We're going to be going back together—many of us together. And, again, I want to say, despite the fact that I'm very upset with NATO that we pay far, far too much—billions and billions of dollars too much—because it's unfair, because we're protecting them. So we protect them, but they're not there for us. Think of it. It doesn't work.

But I want to say, this is a great leader. They're lucky they have him. It's a very—it's a—it's their biggest asset, you want to know the truth.

So, Mark, would you say a few words?

Secretary General Rutte. Absolutely.

President Trump. Thank you.

Secretary General Rutte. And thank you so much, Mr. President, dear Donald.

Let me start with Iran. We discussed it last night at the Presidential palace. I think what you did, degrading the nuclear capability—crucial for Israel, the region, for Europe; degrading the ballistic missile capability of Iran—crucial for Israel, for the region, for you, for the whole world; and then trying to bring this to a peaceful end, they attacking ships yesterday. I think what you did last night was absolutely necessary. It was a very strong response, and I'm with you on this. It's really important.

When it comes to—when it comes to NATO, what you have achieved—and this is a huge win, and I just want to say this again: The last 2 years, Canada and European NATO nations spending \$250 billion more in 2024 and 2025 and 2026 compared to 2024, this is staggering, \$258 billion.

In the meantime, almost 200,000 jobs in the U.S. being supported by all the investments by countries in the United States in the defense industrial base, buying from the defense industrial base from the U.S. companies.

So here you see there is a—you have been able to really get them to step up, to do this.

And when it comes to Iran, I know you are disappointed, and we discussed it a couple of weeks ago. I would say these are isolated cases. Five thousand planes taking off from European airports in support of Epic Fury. It was Europe as one big platform of power projection for the United States helping with Epic Fury, including countries you mentioned—Germany, from day one; France; and many others. We discussed the Bucharest Airport, which was closed for a couple of days for commercial traffic because they—you needed it for Epic Fury.

And they were totally fine——

President Trump. Well, the United Kingdom wouldn't let us use the island for 2 weeks, so we had to fly back to the United States. And——

Secretary General Rutte. No, no, sir, I'm saying—you're right, there are isolated cases.

President Trump. And Italy was very bad having to do with their bases, as you know, and a couple of others. So it—it didn't come—it didn't come through.

Secretary General Rutte. But still, generally, 5,000 is huge.

And you mentioned Spain. Even you got Spain to pay 2 percent. They spent—they made a huge step in last year. So there's still issues we have to solve. But, hey, also even Spain, I would say, they got to the 2 percent.

And—and I know you have a very strong relationship with the United Kingdom, the King, but also you personally—or with—with Keir Starmer, who is now leaving office. He has now also committed to spend another \$20 billion extra—15 billion pounds on defense.

So, I would argue, without you in this chair, this would not have happened. It is, of course, because of Russia, but also because of you. So grab the win. It's there. You did this. It was the Hague, and now they are implementing.

And, on Greenland, you and I made a deal in Davos. I will make sure that that deal is step by step being implemented, that you can deploy, if you want, the Golden Dome on Greenland. You have your trilateral talks. Marco is leading them from your side with the Greenlanders and the Danes when it comes to if they would change the constitutional position, the kingdom, et cetera.

But, hey——

President Trump. I mean, just so they understand. Greenland is very important for the United States, but it's not important for Denmark.

In fact, when Denmark was overrun by the Nazis in less than one day—Hitler beat them out in one day; took over—they asked us to take care of Greenland.

In fact, we took Greenland, and then, stupidly, we gave it back. We shouldn't have given it back to them, because we're the ones that need it. We need it for protection of the world, not just the United States. And it's very important. It doesn't help Denmark, but it helps us, and it's very important for us.

And, again, they were defeated very quickly. Denmark was beaten in 1 day—less than 1 day—by the Nazis, by Hitler. And when this happened, they immediately switched it over to us. We owned it. We had it. We were taking care of it, and then we gave it back, which is—I don't know why. I wouldn't have done—I wouldn't have given the Panama Canal back either, you know. So what do I know? I certainly wouldn't have done that, because China's tried to take over the Panama Canal, and that's not going to happen.

So—but I just—you know, it's interesting. I'm very unhappy with NATO, and yet this man is a great leader. And he gets it. He gets it maybe better than some of the leaders.

Secretary General Rutte. But also, they—your allies get it, thanks to you, and that is important.

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. I could not do this without you.

President Trump. It's too bad Biden didn't do it, or Obama.

Secretary General Rutte. Hey, but you are here now.

President Trump. Obama.

Secretary General Rutte. And you—in Trump 45, in Trump 47—in total, more than \$1.2 trillion. I call this the Trump trillion—\$1.2 trillion——

President Trump. No, it's true, but—but you know——

Secretary General Rutte. ——extra spent by Canada and the—Europeans.

President Trump. And I'm not only blaming NATO.

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. They're getting—they got a free ride.

Secretary General Rutte. Not anymore.

President Trump. And if Biden had any brain, which he didn't, he would have said, "You got to pay more." And same with Obama. Two bad Presidents. But they could have asked. And you would have done that too. It would have been—I mean—I—who knows, but——

Secretary General Rutte. But you——

President Trump. Who knows if they would have done it.

Secretary General Rutte. You made this happen, and——

President Trump. Yes.

Secretary General Rutte. ——and it is huge.

President Trump. And it should have happened years ago, and it couldn't. But Obama didn't do it, and Biden didn't do it, and, frankly, Bush didn't do it either.

Secretary General Rutte. But you did what Eisenhower started trying to do: equalizing the Europeans.

President Trump. He tried, yes.

Secretary General Rutte. He tried.

President Trump. Eisenhower tried.

Secretary General Rutte. And all the other Presidents, none of them were successful. You're the first one. It's your win. Your win in the Hague——

President Trump. That's why I like him. [Laughter]

Secretary General Rutte. ——and your win now.

President Trump. That's why I like him.

Secretary General Rutte. This is true. Without you, this would not have happened. Really. Grab the win.

President Trump. Do you have any questions?

Memorandum of Understanding on the Cessation of Hostilities Between U.S. and Iran/China

Q. Mr. President, on Iran, is the cease-fire over? Is the cease-fire done? Is the MOU dead?

President Trump. It's a very interesting question. To me, I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them anymore. They're scum. You know what scum is? They're scum. They're sick people. They're led by sick people. And they're vicious, violent people. And if they had a nuclear weapon, they'd use it. As far as I'm concerned, it's over.

I'll speak to our negotiators. They want to negotiate. They're good people. Steve Witkoff. Jared Kushner. But they have to come back to me.

As far as I'm concerned, it's just a waste of time dealing with them. They're liars. We make a deal, and they—if I make a deal with him, we have a deal, and he goes out, he talks.

We make a deal, everyone's agreed: no nuclear weapon. We make a deal, they go outside, talk to the press. They say we never even talked about it. There's something wrong with them. They're cuckoo.

As far as I'm concerned, it's over.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Does that mean talks won't resume after we get through the funeral proceedings? Will——

President Trump. What?

Q. Are——does this mean that talks with Iran will not resume after——

President Trump. I don't care.

Q. ——we get through the funeral?

President Trump. They can talk, but I think they're wasting their time. They're a bunch of lying guys. I do it—my whole life, that's all I do is deals. My whole life is—that's how I became President, I guess. That's a deal too, right? But I made a lot of money. I had a lot of great success—tremendous success. Everything I did, I was successful.

And I deal with these guys, and I say, "This is from a different school." They're liars. They're cheats. They're sick people. They've hurt their people. They killed 54,000 people, as of now, that were protesting.

You know, when people say, "How come they haven't taken over?" They can't take over because they're dead. They killed them. Nobody's going to take over. They have no guns, and the other side has machineguns. And they're killing them, and the press doesn't report it.

But they're bad people. They're bad people. And frankly, I don't want to waste my time with them.

Now, I'll let our wonderful negotiators keep talking if they want, but I don't see it. I don't like these people, you know that?

I like him.

[President Trump gestured to Secretary General Rutte.]

I like——

The leaders, are, like—I think, all of these leaders——

Secretary General Rutte. Great. Right. And they love you.

President Trump. I think they didn't treat the United States fairly for many years, but that's okay. But they're sane, rational, good people—most of them. I don't like a couple of them, to be honest with you. *[Laughter]* But there are a couple I don't like much.

But—I like

Secretary General Rutte. You keep that a secret. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. I like Erdoğan. I'll tell you, I like President Erdoğan. He rolled out the red carpet. He's terrific.

You know, he could have gone into the war. A lot of people were saying——

Secretary General Rutte. Yes.

President Trump. Like with Bibi. I like Bibi. I think Bibi was a terrific wartime Prime Minister.

But Bibi said rough things yesterday about Turkey and Erdoğan. And I said, "You know"—I spoke to him, I said,

"He could have gone into the war," because he doesn't like Israel much, and he doesn't like Bibi much. And he didn't go because of me.

And this is a military power. Millions of soldiers. Turkey is very strong. They have a lot of our best equipment. They're trying to get the F-35s.

But he didn't go in. He wanted—he would go in. If it weren't for me, he would have gone in. And he would have been on the other side, even though I don't think he likes the other side either, because he happens to be very sane and they happen to be very crazy. But—so, I think, you know, they treated us right.

I think China treated us right. I was with President Xi, and I said, "I hope you're not going to go into the war, because we don't want that." You know, he gets 50 percent of his oil from the Strait of Hormuz and—he gets more than 50 percent. And he never went into the war. He didn't supply them equipment, you know. He was great.

I'm a big fan of President Xi. A lot of people say, "Oh, why?"

You know, I watched a couple of people critical of the fact that TikTok—"TikTok, it's so bad. It's so dangerous. It's so horrible." They're spreading all these rumors.

And the numbers came out yesterday. You know, who's number one on TikTok? I am. [Laughter] I'm number one on TikTok. And all I talk about is how bad communism is, right? They say: "Oh, it's terrible. They're spreading"—but I'm number one. [Laughter]

And it's—I listen to Gordon Chang. I like Gordon Chang, but he's always, like, negative. "Oh, China's so terrible. They're so terrible. And TikTok is so terrible." But I'm number one on TikTok. I have, like, 4 billion views or something like that.

So I don't know. You people have to get the priorities straight.

We have had a really good day. We're going to have another good half a day. And then I'll see you later, and we'll talk to you.

Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody.

Secretary General Rutte. I also will do a presser, but his will be more important. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:03 a.m. at the Beştepe Presidential Compound. In his remarks, he referred to former Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom; former President George W. Bush; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff; and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; lawyer and political commentator Gordon G. Chang. He also referred to his son-in-law, U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Jared C. Kushner. Secretary General Rutte referred to King Charles III of the United Kingdom; and U.S. Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio.

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