

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks During a Meeting With President Mauricio Macri of Argentina and an Exchange With Reporters

April 27, 2017

President Trump. First time in the Oval Office for the President and Mrs. Macri. And it's a great, great honor to have them here. He's been my friend for many years. We've known each other for long, prior to politics. And who would have thought this was going to happen——

President Macri. Nobody.

President Trump. ——for both of us.

President Macri. Yes.

President Trump. But this is a great, wonderful person, and he will be a great President of Argentina, I have absolutely no doubt. Absolutely no doubt.

Argentina-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. Trump, what do you want to achieve with our country, with Argentina?

President Trump. We're just going to be great friends, better than ever before. And we're off to a wonderful start, because I've known Mauricio for so many years, and I know the kind of person he is. He's a great person, and he's a great leader. He will do a fantastic job for Argentina. And I feel very comfortable backing him, because they need certain things from the United States. I feel very comfortable backing him because I know what I'm backing. I'm backing a man who loves his people and loves his country.

Argentina-U.S. Trade Relations

Q. If he's such a good friend, Mr. President, are you going to let the lemons—the Argentine lemons—in, in your country? They are very good. [*Laughter*]

President Trump. We are thinking about it.

Q. People will love you if you let them in.

President Trump. Well, I know about all the lemons. And believe it or not, the lemon business is a big, big business.

Q. Just say yes! [*Laughter*] You can say yes now.

President Trump. But we are going to give that very serious consideration. One of the reasons he's here is about lemons—[*laughter*]—and I'll tell him about North Korea, and he'll tell me about lemons. [*Laughter*]

Q. Are you going to talk——

President Trump. But I think that we're going to be very favorably disposed. We're going to be talking about it.

Venezuela

Q. What about Venezuela, Mr. President? What do you think about Venezuela, the decision to——

The President. Venezuela is a mess. Venezuela is a mess.

North American Free Trade Agreement

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—*the agreement, Mr. President, on renegotiating NAFTA, tell me how you came about the decision—*[inaudible]*?

President Trump. Well, I was going to terminate NAFTA as of 2 or 3 days from now. The President of Mexico, who I have a very, very good relationship, called me, and also the Prime Minister of Canada, who I have a very good relationship. And I like both of these gentlemen very much. They called me, and they said, rather than terminating NAFTA, could you please renegotiate? I like them very much. I respect their countries very much. The relationship is very special. And I said, I will hold on the termination; let's see if we can make it a fair deal. Because NAFTA has been a horrible deal for the United States. It's been very good for Canada, it's been very good for Mexico, but it's been horrible for the United States.

And if you check my campaign—any of my speeches—I said I'll either renegotiate or I'll terminate. So they asked me to renegotiate; I will. And I think we'll be successful in the renegotiation, which, frankly, would be good, because it would be simpler. But we have to make a deal that's fair for the United States. They understand that. And so I decided, rather than terminating NAFTA, which would be a pretty big shock to the system, we will renegotiate.

Now, if I'm unable to make a fair deal, if I'm unable to make a fair deal for the United States, meaning a fair deal for our workers and our companies, I will terminate NAFTA. But we're going to give renegotiation a good, strong shot.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you very much.

Venezuela

Q. What about Venezuela, Mr. President? Mr. President, about Venezuela, what is your position?

President Trump. Well, I'm very sad for Venezuela. I'm very sad to see what's happened in Venezuela.

Q. What can I do about Venezuela?

President Trump. Venezuela is a very sad situation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Juliana Awada, wife of President Macri; President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico; and Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada.

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

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