

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah of Kuwait and an Exchange With Reporters
September 7, 2017

President Trump. It is great to have the Amir of Kuwait in our presence and in the Oval Office and White House. We've been together before, have a great relationship. And, as allies, we've been working long and hard. We're being helped tremendously in the Gulf by the Amir. And his representatives are trying to get things back with various States, and I think that's coming along nicely. We're going to be talking about that today, with Qatar and some others. And we're going to be discussing that, among many other things.

The Amir of Kuwait has purchased a tremendous amount of military equipment and other equipment: many 777s from Boeing, a lot of F-18s from us. We're going to be talking about additional orders and military orders.

So I just want to say they've been a great partner. Kuwait has been a tremendous partner. And the relationship has never been stronger than it has been over the last number of months. And I just want to say it's a tremendous honor to have you in the Oval Office. Thank you very much.

[At this point, Amir Sabah spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Amir Sabah. Thank you. I'm really very grateful for His Excellency, the President, that he extended this kind invitation to me. I would like to confirm to His Excellency, to the press, that the nature of relations between Kuwait and the United States of America, it is a good relation, and we will not forget forever the very strong stand for—from the United States toward Kuwait during the invasion of Iraq.

Therefore, I hope that you would be sure that what His Excellency, the President, has said concerning what we will discuss at this meeting, that we will discuss all the issues related to the region's security. And we hope that with the outcome of this meeting we will be a very positive—it will give very positive results for both our sides.

[Amir Sabah spoke in English as follows.]

Amir Sabah. Thank you very much.

President Trump. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Amir Sabah. Thank you, Mr. President.

Hurricane Irma

Q. Mr. President, you know Florida very well. How concerned are you about Hurricane Irma?

President Trump. We're very concerned. We are working very hard. We have tremendous groups of talented people there. The people of Florida are like the people of Texas, Louisiana; you've seen how the people of our country have reacted under this tremendous pressure and these horrible things that we call hurricanes. This is something that is probably bigger, not as much water, but much more power than Harvey.

The Governor has so far done a terrific job. I mean, they're prepared. We don't know exactly where it's going to be landing, where landfall will be, but we think we're as well prepared as you can possibly be. Many of the folks have left Texas, obviously, on an emergency basis and come down to Florida.

Puerto Rico escaped. It could have been far worse. They really escaped the brunt, but it's heading right now, right directly into Florida. So, hopefully, it will take a turn, go east, and do it quickly. Right now it's not doing that.

We are with the people of Florida. And as you know, the Virgin Islands got hit very hard, very, very hard. And we're finding out the kind of damage. We're just—it's actually—communication is actually difficult. We have people right now on the Virgin Islands, and we'll see how that is. But it's been hit very, very hard.

I can say this: Florida is as well prepared as you can be for something like this; now it's just a question of what happens. It's the largest hurricane they've ever seen coming out of the Atlantic, and the winds are the strongest, most importantly. This is the real problem. The winds are the strongest that they've ever seen in a hurricane coming from that region.

So we're with everybody in Florida. We're working very hard. We have tremendous talent and really tremendously brave people to be there, and hopefully, it's going to work out all right. We'll see over the next few hours.

Q. How fearful are you about the loss of life?

Q. Have your tweets made the—[inaudible]—worse?

Federal Emergency Management Agency/Hurricane Harvey/U.S. Coast Guard/Hurricane Irma

Q. Are you concerned, Mr. President, that FEMA may be spread too thin right now?

President Trump. Well, FEMA is doing an incredible job, as you all know. I mean, you've been reporting it. You've seen how incredible they are, and there's a great bravery to what they're doing. But certainly, we're being hit with a lot of hurricanes. We've never had a thing like this where you get hit with Harvey, which was about as bad as it gets—certainly from the standpoint of a water dump—and then you get hit with Irma. And there's one right behind Irma—I guess you probably know—a smaller one, but nevertheless right behind.

I think FEMA has been—I don't think anybody has done anything like they've done at FEMA, and they have done a really good job. You see what happened in Texas. And you see already in terms of what's going on in Florida.

I have to also give a special shout-out to the Coast Guard. The United States Coast Guard saved 14,000 lives in Texas—14,000 lives. And now I think the number is even higher than that. These people—and they go right into the eye of the storm. You know what's been happening. Most of you have been reporting. The number is astronomical. I mean, what could have been a total catastrophe in terms of life has been obviously much less. So I just want to say that the Coast Guard of our country has really performed incredibly. I've never seen anything like it.

I've gotten to meet them. I've gotten to meet a lot of the folks when I was in Texas, and these are tremendous people. They are now shifting a lot of their effort to Florida, right in the middle of it, the difference, again, being these winds are tremendous. They have never seen

winds like this coming off the ocean, so, hopefully, it's going to not hit Florida very directly. But it looks like it's going to be hitting it.

All right, thank you very much, everybody. I appreciate it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:26 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Richard L. Scott of Florida.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Kuwait, Amir Sabah.

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