

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Stefan Löfven of Sweden
and an Exchange With Reporters**

March 6, 2018

Q. So, Mr. President, are you prepared for a trade war with Europe? [*Laughter*]

President Trump. Thank you very much. It's a great honor to have Prime Minister Löfven with us. He's a highly respected man and done a great job in Sweden. They are doing, really, record numbers, I guess very much like we're doing record numbers.

We've had a tremendous run in the United States. We're doing well, and we work well together. Our relationship is a very strong one. We have trade deals; we have military deals. We have—we are working very closely with respect to terrorism and many other things.

So we're going to have quite a long discussion. We're going to see you a little bit later in the East Room. And, Mr. Prime Minister, great honor to have you. Thank you very much.

Prime Minister Löfven. Thank you for inviting me, Mr. President. I appreciate it very much. And as you said, Mr. President, our countries enjoy good relations, long, long relations.

President Trump. Yes.

Prime Minister Löfven. And I look forward to this meeting, discussing both economics and security.

Sweden-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, why is it important to talk to Sweden?

President Trump. Great country, great ally. They've been with us for a long time. In fact, I think we're together for about 200 years, to be exact. This is an anniversary.

But we've had very special relationships for many, many years, 200, to be exact. So it's very important.

Sweden-U.S. Relations

Q. And what are you hoping to achieve today?

President Trump. Well, I think we're going to be talking a lot about trade and a lot about the military and protection, a lot about terrorism, which is, unfortunately, a subject we discuss with many countries when they come to the Oval Office.

Q. Mr. President, do you consider——

President Trump. But we'll be discussing many things.

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, do you consider the events in North Korea a breakthrough and possibly a peaceful breakthrough?

President Trump. Well, I hope so. I want to see what happens. We're in very close contact. We have come, certainly, a long way, at least rhetorically, with North Korea. It would be a

great thing for the world. It would be a great thing for North Korea. It would be a great thing for the Peninsula.

But we'll see what happens. We have——

Q. Do you believe that they're prepared to denuclearize?

President Trump. We've been in a situation that should have been handled for a long time. For many, many years, this should have been taken care of. It shouldn't have been waited. But we'll get it done.

North Korea/2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea

Q. Do you believe that they are prepared to give up their nuclear weapons, sir?

President Trump. Say it?

Q. Do you believe the North Koreans are prepared to give up their nuclear weapons?

President Trump. We're going to see. We're going to see. They seem to be acting positively, but we're going to see. We'll know, and I'm willing to go—as you probably noticed this morning, where we sent out, through social media, a statement—willing to go either way. Hopefully, it's going to be the proper way. The proper way is the way that everybody knows and everybody wants.

But we are prepared to go either way. I think that their statement and the statements coming out of South Korea and North Korea have been very positive. That would be a great thing for the world. A great thing for the world. So we'll see how it all comes about.

[*At this point, many reporters began speaking at once. President Trump continued as follows.*]

I will say this—and we've been given tremendous credit, because the Olympics was not going well. And when they came in out of the blue and they said, we'd love to participate in the Olympics, it made the Olympics very successful. President Moon of South Korea was very generous in his statements, as to the fact that we had a lot to do with that, if not everything. We had a lot to do with it.

The Olympics were beautiful. There were, really, very successful. And as you know, they weren't looking that way prior to. So I thought North Korea was terrific. They came out—they went into the Olympics, they went in with good spirit, they did well. It's—let's see if we can carry it over.

We may carry it over. It may not. Very—it's a very tenuous situation.

Q. You sound more optimistic though——

President Trump. It's going to be very interesting to see what happens.

Q. Would you be willing to meet Kim Jong Un, sir?

Q. Would you agree to those conditions if they say that they won't do any——

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, you sound more optimistic about this situation.

President Trump. I'd like to be optimistic, but I think, maybe, this has gone further than anyone has taken it before. Nobody had been in the position. This should have been handled

long ago. This should have been handled over many years by many different administrations—not now. This was not the right time to handle it.

But these are the cards we were dealt. We're handling it properly. And again, as I said, hopefully we'll go in the very, very peaceful, beautiful path. We're prepared to go whichever path is necessary. I think we're having very good dialogue, and you're going to certainly find out pretty soon what's happening. But we have made progress, there's no question about it.

North Korea

Q. Do you have any preconditions—

Q. Mr. President, would you be willing to meet Kim Jong Un?

President Trump. We'll see what happens. Let's see what happens.

Q. Do you have any preconditions for talks?

Q. Would you agree to direct talks if they agree to just suspend any types of tests right now? Would you agree to talks?

President Trump. We're going to see what happens. I don't want to talk so much about things that we don't know yet. But we have had very good dialogue. I think it was very positive dialogue. And you've heard that before. But so far, whether you look at the Clinton administration or the Bush administration or the Obama administration, it never worked out.

That was the time to have settled this problem, not now. But we are settling it. We're going to do something now. One way or the other, we have to do something. We cannot let that situation fester. We cannot let it happen.

Q. Are you prepared to—

North Korea

Q. Do you have any preconditions for talks? Is there anything you would insist on having first?

President Trump. We're going to see happens. I don't want to talk about it. We're going to see what happens.

Sweden/North Korea

Q. Are you prepared to ask Sweden to be an intermediary in talks?

President Trump. Sweden will always be helpful. Sweden has been helpful in the past. They were very helpful, recently, with respect to something else. They are a great friend and a very competent friend.

Sweden-South Korea Relations

Q. What was Sweden helpful with? You said Sweden was helpful with something.

Q. Sweden has an Embassy in Pyongyang, which you don't.

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Sweden has an Embassy in Pyongyang. Are you going to talk to Mr. Löfven about this?

President Trump. Yes, I do know that. I know that. A lot of people know that. Thank you for pointing it out, but we all know that. [*Laughter*]

Okay, thank you very much. We'll see you later. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to Chairman of the Korean Worker's Party Kim Jong Un of North Korea.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Sweden, Prime Minister Löfven.

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