

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018*

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Moon Jae-in of South Korea and an Exchange With Reporters**

*May 22, 2018*

*President Trump.* Thank you very much. It's a great honor to have President Moon of South Korea with us. We've become great friends over the years. And it's now—we've now known each other for quite some time.

We're working on many things. Obviously, North Korea is the big one. No matter how big trade is, North Korea, in this case, is the big one. And we'll be discussing that. We'll also be discussing trade. We have a very big trade arrangement that we're renegotiating right now with South Korea. They've been excellent people to work with for the Trump administration. And we will have some pretty good news, I think, on trade. And we'll be discussing other things.

But the big topic will be Singapore and the meeting. See what happens and whether or not it happens. If it does, that will be great. It will be a great thing for North Korea. And if it doesn't, that's okay too. Whatever it is, it is.

But I look forward to spending quite a bit of time with the President. And I think a lot of good things will happen. I want to thank everybody for being here.

Mr. President, great honor. Thank you.

*President Moon.* Well, I'd like to thank you, Mr. President, for your warm hospitality and for sharing much of your time with me. I know you have a very busy domestic calendar, as well as the all-important U.S.-North Korea summit approaching.

I heard the tragic news that many innocent lives were lost due to the shootings in a Texas high school a few days ago. So I'd like to convey my condolences to you and the American people.

On a brighter note, I would like to congratulate you for the safe return of the American citizens who had been detained in North Korea. Thanks to your vision of achieving peace through strength, as well as your strong leadership, we're looking forward to the first-ever U.S.-North Korea summit. And we find ourselves standing one step closer to the dream of achieving complete denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and world peace.

All this was possible because of you, Mr. President. And I have no doubt that you will be able to complete—accomplish a historic feat that no one had been able to achieve in the decades past.

The—I have to say that the fate and the future of the Korean Peninsula hinge on this. And as such, I'll spare no effort to the end to support the success of the upcoming U.S.-North Korea summit and stand with you all along the way, Mr. President.

*President Trump.* Well, thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

*North Korea*

Q. Mr. President, do you think President Kim is serious about denuclearization?

*President Trump.* I do think he's serious. I think he would like to see that happen. He will—at the same time, he's going into a future that's different from what they've had. But I think he's absolutely very serious. Yes.

#### *North Korea*

Q. Do you think the summit is going to happen?

*President Trump.* One second. Go ahead. Go ahead, John [John Roberts, Fox News].

Q. Can you give us an update, sir, just on where things stand with the summit? President Moon's National Security Adviser, on the way here, seemed to think that things are on track and that this will indeed happen.

*President Trump.* Well, we're moving along. And we'll see what happens. There are certain conditions that we want, and I think we'll get those conditions. And if we don't, we don't have the meeting. And frankly, it has a chance to be a great, great meeting for North Korea and a great meeting for the world. If it doesn't happen, maybe it will happen later. Maybe it will happen at a different time. But we will see.

But we are talking. The meeting is scheduled, as you know, on June 12 in Singapore. And whether or not it happens, you'll be knowing pretty soon. But we're talking right now.

#### *North Korea*

Q. Do you have an idea of how denuclearization would take place? Would it be all at once?

*President Trump.* I do. I have a very strong idea how it takes place. And it must take place. That's what we're talking about. It must take place.

But I have a very strong idea, and I have very strong opinions on the subject. I also have very strong opinions that North Korea has a chance to be a great country, and it can't be a great country under the circumstances that they're living right now. But North Korea has a chance, really, to be a great country. And I think they should seize the opportunity. And we'll soon find out whether or not they want to do that.

Yes.

#### *North Korea*

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken to Kim Jong Un?

*President Trump.* I don't want to say that. I don't want——

Q. Do you trust Kim Jong Un, going into these meetings?

*President Trump.* I—there's no reason to discuss that. I can say this: that for a short period of time, we've been dealing with North Korea, and it's been a, you know, good experience. We have three hostages back. They're home. They're living with their families. They're very, very happy. And so I can only speak for a very short period of time. But it's been a relationship that seems to be working, and we'll see how long it continues to work. Hopefully, it's going to work for a long time.

John.

#### *Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election*

Q. Unrelated, Mr. President, can you tell us more about your meeting with Rod Rosenstein and Director Wray yesterday?

*President Trump.* Well, it was just a very routine meeting. As you know, the Congress would like to see documents opened up. A lot of people are saying they had spies in my campaign. If they had spies in my campaign, that would be a disgrace to this country. That would be one of the biggest insults that anyone has ever seen, and it would be very illegal, aside from everything else. It would make, probably, every political event ever look like small potatoes.

So we want to make sure that there weren't. I hope there weren't, frankly. But some man got paid—based on what I read in the newspapers and on what you reported, some person got paid a lot of money. That's not a normal situation, the kind of money you're talking about. So hopefully, that would be—and I think the Department of Justice wants to get down to it. And I can tell you Congress does.

So hopefully they'll all be able to get together. General Kelly is going to be setting up a meeting between Congress and the various representatives, and they'll be able to open up documents, take a look, and find out what happened. But if they had spies in my campaign, during my campaign, for political purposes, that would be unprecedented in the history of our country.

Yes.

#### *China-U.S. Trade/ZTE Corporation*

Q. Can you give us an update on trade talks with China? Is there a deal about ZTE?

*President Trump.* No.

Q. And what specifically have you agreed?

*President Trump.* No. President Xi and I have a great relationship, as President Moon can attest. But there is no deal. We will see what happens. We are discussing deals. We're discussing various deals. We can do a 301. We can do—where we don't need China, where we can just say, look, this is what we want, this is what we think is fair. That's always a possibility if a negotiated deal doesn't work out.

As I said, we lost \$500 billion a year for many years. And then, it varied from \$100 billion to \$500 billion. When you're losing \$500 billion a year, you can't lose in terms of a negotiation. It's really easy to win. But I want this to be a great deal for the United States, and I want it to be a very good deal for China too if that's possible. It may not be possible.

As far as ZTE is concerned, the President asked me to look into it, and I am doing that. And don't forget, for the ones who say, oh, gee, maybe Trump is getting a little bit easy, ZTE, we closed it. It wasn't another administration. It was this administration that closed it. It's a phone company, for those that don't know, a very large phone company. But it's also a phone company that buys a large portion of its parts that make up these phones that are sold all over the world from American companies.

So when you do that, you're really hurting American companies, also. So I'm looking at it. But we were the ones that closed it. It wasn't done by previous administrations. It was done by us. So we'll see what happens.

But as a favor to the President, I am absolutely taking a look at it. A lot of the stories on trade were incorrectly written, and I'm not saying that's the reporter's fault; I'm saying that I'm not talking about the trade deal. I don't like to talk about deals until they're done. So we'll see what happens. But that deal—I will say, that deal could be much different from the deal that finally emerges. And it may be a much better deal for the United States.

*Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein*

Q. Mr. President, do you have confidence in Rod Rosenstein?

*President Trump.* What's your next question, please?

Q. I'm a reporter from——

*President Trump.* Excuse me, I have the President of South Korea here, okay?

Q. Yes, I have a question on——

*President Trump.* He doesn't want to hear these questions, if you don't mind.

*South Korea-U.S. Relations/North Korea*

Q. President Trump, I'm a reporter from South Korea. How much confidence and trust do you have in my President in playing the mediator role in resolving this North Korea issue and the denuclearization process?

*President Trump.* I have great confidence in your President. I think that he's brought a different perspective to the talks with North Korea. He wants to be able to make a deal. Now, you've had some very hardline administrations, and you have President Moon, and you've had others before President Moon, who also had more or less this attitude.

I think he's a very capable person. I think he's an extremely competent man. I think he's a very good person. And I think he wants to have what's good for the Korean Peninsula—not just North or South—for the entire Korean Peninsula.

So I have tremendous confidence in President Moon. And I think that his way—the way he is—really is helping us to potentially make a deal. Whether the deal gets made or not, who knows. It's a deal. Who knows. You never know about deals. If you go into deals that are a hundred-percent certain, it doesn't happen. If you go into deals that have no chance, and it happens and sometimes happens easily. I've made a lot of deals. I know deals, I think, better than anybody knows deals. You never really know. And that's why I said to you.

But I will tell you, this is a good man and he is a very capable man. And I think South Korea is very lucky to have him. Do you want to interpret that for him so he can hear it? Because, you know, he's not hearing what we're doing here. Go ahead.

Wait, we'll just let that be interpreted.

Q. He might surprise you, Mr. President.

*President Trump.* He probably does. He probably knows better than we do.

Did I do a good job? [*Laughter*] Huh? I can't do better than that. That's called an A-plus rating, right? I can't do better.

Okay, we'll take a couple more. Go ahead.

*North Korea*

Q. Mr. President, what are your conditions for meeting with Kim Jong Un? You said you had—

*President Trump.* Well, I'd rather not say. But we are working on something. And you know, there's a chance that it will work out. There's a chance—there's a very substantial chance—it won't work out. I don't want to waste a lot of time, and I'm sure he doesn't want to waste a lot of time. So there's a very substantial chance that it won't work out, and that's okay. That doesn't mean it won't work out over a period of time. But it may not work out for June 12. But there's a good chance that we'll have the meeting.

#### *North Korea*

Q. Mr. President, if I could ask you and President Moon this question. In terms of denuclearization, should it be an all-in-one? Or could it be incremental, with incentives along the way for Kim Jong Un to denuclearize?

*President Trump.* Well, all-in-one would be nice, I can tell you. I'm not going to go beyond that. It would certainly be better if it were all-in-one. Does it have to be? I don't think I want to totally commit myself. But all-in-one would be a lot better. Or at least for physical reasons, over a very short period of time. You know, you do have some physical reasons that it may not be able to do exactly that. So for physical reasons, over a very short period of time. Essentially, that would be all-in-one.

#### *North Korea/South Korea*

Q. President Trump, I'm a reporter from South Korea. If the North Korea and Kim Jong Un decide the CVID, will you literally guarantee the safety of the regime of North Korea?

*President Trump.* I will guarantee his safety. Yes, we will guarantee his safety. And we've talked about that from the beginning. He will be safe. He will be happy. His country will be rich. His country will be hard-working and very prosperous. They're very great people. They're hard-working, great people.

Look at what happened with South Korea. Don't forget, we helped South Korea. We have spent trillions of dollars—not billions—trillions of dollars over many, many years. We helped South Korea. And South Korea is one of the most incredible countries in terms of what they do. You know that. That's what you are. That's where you're from. Same people. Same people.

So, yes, I think that he will be extremely happy if something works out. And if it doesn't work out, honestly, he can't be happy. But he has a chance to do something that maybe has never been done before. And I think it would be—if you look 25 years into the future, 50 years into the future, he will be able to look back and be very proud of what he did for North Korea and, actually, for the world. But he will be very proud of what he did for North Korea.

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President, what do you want to ask President Moon about his own summit with Kim?

*President Trump.* One second.

[*At this point, an interpreter translated President Trump's above remarks into Korean.*]

And just to finish that, because it's a very important question, South Korea, China, and Japan—and I've spoken to all three, one I happen to have right here—they will be willing to help and, I believe, invest very, very large sums of money into helping to make North Korea great.

### *South Korea-North Korea Relations*

Q. Mr. President, what do you want to hear from President Moon about his own summit with Kim Jong Un? What can he tell you as you're preparing for the meeting in Singapore?

*President Trump.* Well, that's what we're here for. He's going to tell me. He's got his own meetings that he's had. We're going to discuss that. He may have a meeting coming up; he may not. The word is that he may not. It may be directly with us. It may go directly to us in Singapore, or it may be at a later date. But that's one of the reasons that he's here, to talk about that.

### *South Korea-U.S. Relations*

Q. Is there is anything you want to ask him specifically that you can tell us?

*President Trump.* Nothing. No. We speak a lot on the phone. This should not be that long a meeting, actually.

### *South Korea-North Korea Relations*

Q. You mean President Moon may have a meeting with Kim Jong Un instead of yourself?

*President Trump.* He may or may not. He may or may not. Right now he doesn't know whether or not he has a meeting. But he may or may not have a meeting with Kim Jong Un.

Okay.

### *China-U.S. Trade/North Korea*

Q. Mr. President, are you pleased with how the trade talks with China went?

*President Trump.* No, not really. I think that they're a start, but we need something—look, China has been—I really call it a dereliction of duties. That if you look at it—it's called—in the military, they'd say it's dereliction of duty. What happened to our country, that our representatives allowed other countries—and I'm not just talking about China; China is the big one—to take advantage of us on trade the way we've been taken advantage of. So China, as an example, has made a fortune. I mean, a transfer of wealth like nobody has ever seen in history. They're the big one. They're almost all bad, but China is the big one.

So, no, I'm not satisfied, but we'll see what happens. We have a long way to go. But I want it to go fairly quickly. You know, you're talking about numbers like that; you're talking about billions of dollars a week. Okay? So when they say, "Oh, let's meet in a couple of weeks"—oh, that's \$2 billion, right? I view it that way. You know, we're talking about billions of dollars a week that we suffer, we lose. And so we're looking to go quickly.

I will say I'm a little disappointed, because when Kim Jong Un had the meeting with President Xi, in China, the second meeting—the first meeting we knew about—the second meeting, I think there was a little change in attitude from Kim Jong Un. So I don't like that. I don't like that. I don't like it from the standpoint of China.

Now, I hope that's not true, because we have—I have a great relationship with President Xi. He's a friend of mine. He likes me. I like him. We have—I mean, that was two of the great days of my life being in China. It was—I don't think anybody has ever been treated better in China, ever in their history. And I just think it was—many of you were there—it was an incredible thing to witness and see. And we built a very good relationship. We speak a lot.

But there was a difference when Kim Jong Un left China the second time. And I think they were dedicating an aircraft carrier that the United States paid for. Okay? Because we paid for a lot.

*China/North Korea*

Q. Do you think China had a role in that?

*President Trump.* That was built in China.

Q. Do you think China maybe discouraged Kim from having the summit?

*President Trump.* No, but I think that President Xi is a world-class poker player. And I'd probably, maybe, doing the same thing that he would do. But I will say this: There was a somewhat different attitude after that meeting, and I'm a little surprised. Now, maybe nothing happened. I'm not blaming anybody, but I'm just saying, maybe nothing happened, and maybe it did.

But there was a different attitude by the North Korean folks when—after that meeting. So I don't think it was a great meeting. Nobody knew about the meeting, and all of a sudden, it was reported that he was in China a second time. The first time everybody knew about. The second time it was like a surprise.

And I think things changed after that meeting. So I can't say that I'm happy about it. Okay?

Q. Mr. President, what's—

*President Trump.* Let them—

*[The interpreter translated President Trump's above remarks into Korean.]*

Now, President Moon may have a different opinion. I'd like to have your opinion on that—what you thought of the second meeting with President Xi. What is your feeling? You may have an opinion. And I don't want to get him in trouble. He lives right next to China. You know, he's not too far away. *[Laughter]*

*President Moon.* Well, first of all, I am very much aware that there are many skeptical views within the United States about whether the upcoming U.S.-North Korea summit will truly be successful and whether the complete denuclearization of North Korea will be realized.

But I don't think there will be positive developments in history if we just assume that because it all failed in the past, it will fail again. There have been many agreements between the United States and North Korea previously, but this will be the first time that there will be an agreement between the leaders.

And moreover, the person who is in charge is President Trump. And President Trump has been able to achieve this dramatic and positive change that you see right now. And I have every confidence that President Trump will be able to achieve a historic feat of making the upcoming U.S.-North Korea summit successful and end the Korean war that had been lasting for the past 65 years and also, along the way, achieve complete denuclearization of North Korea, establish a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and also normalize relations between the United States and North Korea. I have every confidence that he will be able to make a historic turnaround in this sense. And I will spare no effort to provide all necessary support.

And I believe that all of this will lead to a great thing, that it will also guarantee the security of the North Korean regime, and also promise peace and prosperity for North Korea as well.

### *China/North Korea/China-U.S. Trade*

Q. Mr. President, do you believe that President Xi is committed to peace and committed to North Korea's denuclearization?

*President Trump.* I would like to think so. I hope so. I mean, we're dealing mostly on trade. But you see, when I'm dealing on trade, I have many other things in mind also. Every time I talk to China about trade, I'm thinking about the border. Because that border is a very important element in what we're doing. It has been cut off largely, but it's been opened up a little bit lately. I don't like that. I don't like that.

So we have a very powerful hand on trade. And when I'm thinking about trade—you know, I read you folks, and you say, "Well, why doesn't he"—there's a much bigger picture that I have in mind. Trade has always been a very important element in my life, in talking about other countries ripping off the United States. I've been watching them do it for 35 years. I've been watching them do that for so many years.

And nothing has changed, other than over the last 15, 20 years, it's gotten worse. And it's not just China. But when I think of trade with China, I'm also thinking about what they're doing to help us with peace with North Korea. That's a very important element. So we'll see how it all works out.

But in the end, it will work out. Can't tell you exactly how or why, but it always does. It's going to work out. Okay?

Thank you all. John, you have one more. Go ahead.

### *North Korea/South Korea*

Q. One more, sir. I'm just wondering, what is your vision for the long game with North Korea? Is it two Koreas peacefully coexisting? Or would you like to see reunification at some point down the road?

*President Trump.* Well, I think what's going to happen is, you'll start off, certainly, with two Koreas. And then, it's going to be largely up to them as to whether or not they get together. You know, that border was artificially imposed many, many years ago—and imposed, to a certain extent and to a very large extent, by us. It's an artificial border, but it's a border that nevertheless, it took seed, and that's what you have.

I would say that we are looking, certainly, right now, at two Koreas, two very successful Koreas. You're going to have a very, very successful North Korea, and you're going to have a very successful—and you already do—South Korea. I mean, South Korea was in condition that was as bad as North Korea many years ago, when they started this great experiment that worked out so well for them.

Now, you look at Samsung and LG and the ships that they're building, and what they're doing. It's incredible. When I was over there, I flew over plants that are incredible. What they are—what they have done is incredible. So I see two Koreas, and then ultimately, maybe someday in the future—it wouldn't be now—but someday in the future, maybe they'll get together, and you'll go back to one Korea. And that would be okay with me, too, as long as they both wanted that.

Okay? Thank you all very much. Thank you.

Yes, go ahead.

*ZTE Corporation/China-U.S. Trade*

Q. You mentioned that you were looking into ZTE, as a favor to President Xi.

*President Trump.* I am, yes.

Q. How do you anticipate that ending up?

*President Trump.* Well, again, ZTE buys a tremendous amount of equipment and parts for their telephones. They're, as you know, the fourth largest in the world. And they buy them from American companies. So immediately, when I looked at it, it was my administration that closed them down. But when I looked at it, I said, "You know, they can pay a big price without necessarily damaging all of these American companies," which they are, because, you know, you're talking about tremendous amounts of money and jobs to American companies.

So I envision a very large fine. I envision, perhaps, new management, new board of directors, very tight security rules. But we caught them doing bad things. We caught them, not anybody else. We caught them doing bad things, and we essentially made it so difficult that it was shut down.

By shutting them down, we're hurting a lot of American companies, really good American companies. Don't—and I will tell you, don't think that we didn't hear from them by shutting down this massive phone company.

So what I envision is a very large fine of more than a billion dollars. Could be a billion-three. I envision a new management, a new board, and very, very strict security rules. And I also envision that they will have to buy a big percentage of their parts and equipment from American companies.

Okay? Thank you all very much. Thank you. Thank you.

[A reporter asked a question in Korean, and no translation was provided.]

*President Trump.* He's a friendly reporter. They're friends. So let them—like you. Except, he kills me. For a friendly reporter, he kills me.

[*President Moon made remarks in Korean, and no translation was provided.*]

*President Trump.* And I don't have to hear the translation, because I'm sure I've heard it before. [Laughter]

Goodbye, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong Un of North Korea; Kim Hak-song, Tony Kim and Kim Dong-chul, U.S. citizens formerly detained by North Korean officials who returned to the U.S. on May 10; Stefan A. Halper, professor emeritus, Cambridge University; and White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly. Reporters referred to National Security Office Director Chung Eui-yong of South Korea; Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Christopher A. Wray; and the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization (CVID) of North Korea. President Moon spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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