

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters

June 7, 2018

President Trump. Thank you very much. It's my great honor to have the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, a great gentleman, highly respected. No matter where he goes anywhere in the world, highly respected. And we've really become friends over the last period of time. Since becoming President, we've gotten to know each other very well. Okay?

We'll be discussing today trade. And obviously, we will be talking at great length on North Korea. We'll be getting some of your ideas. I'll be giving you some of our ideas. Things are moving along well. It looks like the meeting is set. The summit is all ready to go, subject always to change. You never know in this world. Subject to change. But the summit is all ready to go.

North Korean representatives are in Singapore right now working very hard, as are people from the United States. And it's all going along very fine. I hope it continues on this track. If it does, the world will be a very happy place.

Japan buys large amounts of military equipment from us, including jet fighters and, in particular, the F-35, which is now the hottest airplane anywhere in the world. We make the best equipment in the world by far. Japan is a big buyer. Obviously, we buy a lot of things from Japan, particular automobiles. We'll have to talk about that. But we are buying a lot of things from Japan. So we're going to be talking about our trade deficit that we have with Japan.

And we're going to have a very good discussion today. The relationship has never been better between the United States and Japan. And I look forward to spending time with you.

Then, we're going up to the G-7 very shortly, as you know, in Canada. And we'll be having some further discussions, in addition to other countries being there with us. But we'll have some pretty good discussions. And as you know, we leave from there—we leave for Singapore. So it will be a pretty crowded number of days, but very exciting. And I think a lot of good results can come about.

And just in finishing, recently, I was in Japan, and Shinzo said, "Let's play a round of golf." We played a round of golf, and he does it the right way. He set us both up with the number-three player in the world or thereabouts—[*laughter*]—one of the greatest golfers in the world. And they call him, in Japan, the "Great Matsuyama." See, here we don't use the word "great" to describe a lot of people. But there, they say the "Great Matsuyama."

And I realized he was a longer hitter than I was. That I will tell you. [*Laughter*] He hit the ball a little bit further, Peter [Peter Alexander, NBC News], than I did. But it was a great honor, great fun. We had a great time, and we discussed a lot of really fantastic things. And I think this is going to be very productive.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, it's an honor to have you with us.

Matsuyama, I might add, he is the number-two celebrity in Japan.

[*At this point, President Trump pointed toward Prime Minister Abe.*]

He's the number-one celebrity in Japan. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Abe. So both Japan and the United States share a very long history, but I would like to underscore that we are at the best moment, in terms of the strength of bond between the two nations.

And also, just prior to the planned summit meeting between the United States and North Korea, I am very pleased that we, too, have this opportunity to have our thorough discussion as to the summit meeting. So this is my sincere pleasure. And also, up until now, you have been demonstrating great leadership, as well as efforts, and I would like to applaud what you have demonstrated up until now.

And my sincere hope is that the upcoming planned U.S.-North Korea summit meeting will serve as an opportunity through which we will have greater peace and stability and also this will be a dramatic and transformational moment in terms of the situation in the Northeast Asia.

So through my discussion with you today, I am ready to confirm and also reaffirm our close collaboration between the two nations so as to have a very successful summit meeting between the United States and North Korea and also in order for us to achieve progress on our efforts to address outstanding issues of concern, including the nuclear and missile and the abductions issue.

And also, I would like to take this opportunity to make sure that we, too, have the utmost policy coordination as to our approach to the planned summit meeting that you will have with the North Korean leader in the very near future.

And on top of the issue of North Korea, I very much look forward to having a discussion with Donald on issues including trade, investment, and our economic relationship.

Well, despite the fact that we now enjoy this gorgeous weather, we will not be able to play golf this time, which is a pity for me.

President Trump. That's right. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Abe. But next time, let's play golf together.

President Trump. Good. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

North Korea

Q. President Trump, what are you doing to prepare for the summit with North Korea? What are you doing to prepare for the summit with North Korea, President Trump?

President Trump. I'm very well prepared. I don't think I have to prepare very much. It's about attitude. It's about willingness to get things done. But I think I've been preparing for the summit for a long time, as has the other side. They've been preparing for a long time also.

So this isn't a question of preparation, it's a question of whether or not people want it to happen. And we'll know that very quickly.

Q. [Inaudible]—do you have any assurances when it comes to short-term missiles?

North Korea/Iran

Q. If the critics say it's just a photo op, what do you tell them?

President Trump. Well, it's going to be much more than a photo op. I think it's a process; I've told you that many times before. I think it's not a one-meeting deal. It will be wonderful if

it were. You know, they've been doing this for a long time. There's been a lot of enemies out there, a lot of dislike—a lot of hatred—between countries.

This will not be just a photo op. This will be—at a minimum, we'll start with, perhaps, a good relationship. And that's something that's very important toward the ultimate making of a deal. I'd love to say it could happen in one deal, and maybe it can. They have to denuke. If they don't denuclearize, that will not be acceptable. We cannot take sanctions off; the sanctions are extraordinarily powerful. We cannot—and I could add a lot more, but I don't—I've chosen not to do that at this time. But that may happen.

By the way, with Iran, we're adding tremendously powerful sanctions. They understand that very well. I think Iran already is not the same country, if you look—I don't think they're looking so much to the Mediterranean like they were 2 months ago. So it's a big difference. It was, number one, nuclear, but also, out of it, you also get the side benefit that Iran is a different place. And we'll see what happens. And maybe, ultimately, something will happen with Iran.

But for our meeting next week, I think it's going to be a very fruitful meeting. I think it's going to be an exciting meeting. I think we're going to get to know a lot of people that our country never got to know. This is something that should have been handled many years ago by other Presidents. It shouldn't be handled now. It should have been handled years ago. But it is being handled now, and I'll take care of it.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

North Korea

Q. How long will you stay? How long are you willing to stay?

President Trump. One, two, three—depending on what happens.

Q. Any chance you'll play golf during the summit?

President Trump. No. I'd love to, but no.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Q. Were the Japanese invited to the meeting? Will you be meeting with everybody?

President Trump. In Singapore, Peter? No.

Former National Basketball Association Player Dennis Rodman

Q. Will Dennis Rodman be involved at all in negotiations?

President Trump. Dennis Rodman? No. I didn't know about Dennis. [*Inaudible*] I like him. He's a nice guy. No, he was not invited. But he's a nice guy. I like him.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:11 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to professional golfer Hideki Matsuyama. Prime Minister Abe referred to Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong Un of North Korea. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abe, Shinzo; Matsuyama, Hideki; Rodman, Dennis.

Subjects: Commerce, international : Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Iran : Nuclear program, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; Japan : Prime Minister; Japan : Relations with U.S.; Japan : Trade with U.S.; North Korea : International and U.S. sanctions; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts.

DCPD Number: DCPD201800407.