

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Andrzej Duda of Poland and an Exchange With Reporters

September 18, 2018

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's a great honor to have President and Mrs. Duda of Poland in the Oval Office and the White House.

We've had a great relationship. As you know, about a year ago, I went, and we made a speech in Poland, and it was really a very special day. It was a great day for our countries.

And I'll never forget the reception we got, how beautiful it was, how tremendous the people of Poland are. And I will certainly never forget the crowds. They stretched 10 blocks long, down the roadways, and they were all over. We had just tremendous crowds, because I think that's really a sign of affection for the United States by the people of Poland.

So the relationship between the President and myself has been outstanding, and it's really, I think, gotten even better between our countries. And I just want to say that, on behalf of the United States, it's an honor to have you both.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

President Duda. Thank you very much, Excellency. We are very happy to be here. And thank you for your kind invitation, and especially, thank you for your great, unforgettable speech in Warsaw that was very moving for the Polish people. And you talked about the Warsaw Uprising and all of these very important moments in our history.

So thank you very much, once again, because it was wonderful. [*Laughter*]

President Trump. Well, we have a tremendous relationship on trade. We're doing a lot of trade, a lot of security, obviously. We talk about the pipeline going to Germany, where Germany is paying billions and billions of dollars to Russia, which, frankly, we don't think that's appropriate. I never thought it was appropriate. I think it's ridiculous. And I think it's certainly a very bad thing for the people of Germany. I've said it very loud and clear.

But we discuss that, and we'll be discussing various other things. But trade is going to be a big factor today and security.

So I want to thank you all for being here. Thank you. Thank you.

Potential U.S. Military Base in Poland

Q. Mr. President, will you say yes to a U.S. permanent base in Poland?

President Trump. Well, I think we're going to be discussing that. Poland is willing to make a very major contribution for the United States to come in and have a presence in Poland, and certainly, it's something we'll discuss. If they're willing to do that, it's something we will certainly talk about.

Q. Are you convinced that there should be a permanent base in Poland?

President Trump. Well, we're looking at it very seriously. I know Poland likes the idea very much. And it's something that we are considering, yes.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, on China, are you still considering the \$267 billion in tariffs, the additional \$267 billion in tariffs?

President Trump. So we're having a tremendous impact on China. As you know, we're doing a very good job with China. China has been taking advantage of the United States for a long time, and that's not happening anymore. We can't let that happen.

I have a great relationship with President Xi; he's a friend of mine. But we can't—you know, I've been telling him, we can't let it happen. So we may make a deal at some point, but right now we just imposed \$200 billion at 25 percent. We—it just went on. It actually kicks in on January 1st at 25 percent. It starts off at 10 percent, but shortly thereafter, it goes to 25.

And if there's a retaliation against our farmers and our industrial workers, our ranchers, if any of that goes on, we're going to kick in another \$257 billion. And that will be also at 25 percent, which we don't want to do it, but we probably—we'll have no choice.

So we'll see what happens. But we're making a lot of headway with China. China wants to come over and talk, and we are always open to talking. But we have to do something. We have a tremendous trade imbalance with China, tremendous trade deficit. And the way I look at it: Last year, we lost over \$500 billion to China. We can't do that. I don't want to do that. And that's been going on for many years. Other Presidents should have taken care of this situation, and they didn't. But I'm going to.

Yes.

Q. Mr. President, what negotiations—[inaudible]—from Poland?

Russia-Germany Nord Stream II Natural Gas Pipeline

Q. Sanctions on companies involved in Nord Stream II—Russia and Germany—project?

President Trump. We're not looking to do that. We just think it's very unfortunate for the people of Germany that Germany is paying billions and billions of dollars a year for their energy to Russia. And I can tell you the German people don't like it.

Polish Immigration to the U.S.

Q. Mr. President, on the visa—the waiver program for Poland?

President Trump. We're looking at that very strongly.

Q. Mr. President, how long of a delay is acceptable?

Q. Mr. President, you have 10 million Polish Americans in the United States. You were in Chicago—

President Trump. Say it? I can't hear you.

Q. There are about 10 million Polish Americans in the United States—

President Trump. Yes.

Q. You were in Chicago 2 years ago, a great meeting. So when are you returning to Chicago? And will you—

President Trump. Did you say it was cut off? It was cut off?

Q. No, it was great. It was great.

President Trump. What is he referring to, Mr. President?

President Duda. The visa waiver program, I think.

President Trump. We love the people of Poland coming to the United States in any way, shape, or form. Okay? Does that answer your question?

Q. Yes, it does—[inaudible].

President Trump. Any way, shape, or form. It's our honor.

Senate Confirmation Hearings for Supreme Court Nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh

Q. Mr. President, how long of a delay is acceptable, sir, on the hearings for Judge Kavanaugh? There's some discussion that the accuser may not be coming in on Monday? How long of a delay—

President Trump. Well, I mean, I think it's a great question, frankly. We are looking to get this done as quickly as possible. He is a truly outstanding person, as you know. He's got an unblemished record. This is a terrible thing that took place, and it's, frankly, a terrible thing that this information wasn't given to us a long time ago, months ago, when they got it. They could have done that, instead of waiting until everything was finished, and then all of a sudden spring it. But that's what the Democrats do. That's what they do. It's obstruction; it's resist. It's whatever you have to do.

With all of that being said, it's a process. And we all feel—speaking for all of the Republicans, we feel that we want to go through this process, and we want to give everybody a chance to say what they have to say.

So we have time available. We will delay the process until it's finished out. I guess we've invited everybody. I know—I can tell you this—that Judge Kavanaugh is anxious to do it. I don't know about the other party, but Judge Kavanaugh is very anxious to do it.

And a delay is certainly acceptable. We want to get to the bottom of everything. We want everybody to be able to speak up and speak out. The fact is, though, this should have been done a long time ago. And when Senator Feinstein had Judge Kavanaugh in her office for a long time, she never even mentioned this. And that was a long time ago. Never even mentioned it. So why wouldn't you bring this up, when he is sitting in her office for a pretty extended period of time?

So it's unfortunate. He is an incredible man. He's an incredible intellect. He will make an incredible Supreme Court Justice. But we feel that we want to go through a process. We want to hear both sides.

Senate Confirmation Hearings for Supreme Court Nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh

Q. Will you ask the FBI to open his file?

President Trump. I don't think the FBI really should be involved, because they don't want to be involved. If they wanted to be, I would certainly do that. But as you know, they say this is not really their thing. But I think, politically speaking, the Senators will do a very good job. They really will. They're going to open it up, and they will do a very good job.

Q. Do you think this is all politics, sir?

Poland-U.S. Relations

Q. The security of Poland—how important is it to you, security of Poland?

President Trump. Oh, very important. The security of Poland, to me?

Q. Yeah.

President Trump. Almost as important as it is to this man. I can't say "as," but "almost."

President Duda. For me, it's the most important, and I hope that we will build Fort Trump in Poland together, Mr. President.

President Trump. That's right. You know what? It's very important to me. Extremely important. They're very special people. It's a very special country. It's a very brave country.

I think one of my best moments was making that speech in Poland. People liked me, and I like them. They're very, very exceptional people. The security of Poland is very important to me, and it's very important to our country. Okay?

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, are you willing to declassify other items regarding the Russia investigation?

President Trump. Well, we're going to see. We want transparency. What I want is I want total transparency. This is a witch hunt. Republicans are seeing it. The Democrats know it's a witch hunt too, but they don't want to admit it, because that's not good politics for them. But it's a terrible witch hunt, and it's hurt our country.

And the things that have been found over the last couple of weeks about text messages back and forth are a disgrace to our Nation. And I want transparency, and so does everybody else. As you know, congressional committees came to me and they wanted this. And I did it based on their request. But I think it's a good thing, because we should open it up for people to see.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Q. Do you think this is all politics, sir?

Senate Confirmation Hearings for Supreme Court Nominee Brett M. Kavanaugh

Q. Have you talked to Judge Kavanaugh?

President Trump. No, I haven't.

Q. Why not?

President Trump. Specifically, I haven't wanted to. I think it's something that he will do very well. I think, specifically, I haven't wanted to speak to Judge Kavanaugh, because I knew somebody would ask me the same question that you asked me: "Have you spoken to Judge Kavanaugh?" So, specifically, I thought it would be a good thing not to. He can handle himself better than anybody. He's a very outstanding man. Thank you.

Q. So you still support him. He knows you support him though.

President Trump. Oh, I'm totally supportive. Yes, I'm very supportive. He's a—I would say few people that I've ever seen, that I've ever known—and I know people of great success—have been so outstanding as Judge Kavanaugh.

Q. Is this all politics?

President Trump. I don't want to say that. I'll—maybe I'll say that in a couple of days, but not now.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Aren't you afraid of hostile Russia reaction to this close friendship with Poland? Sir, aren't you afraid of hostile Russia reaction to the close friendship with Poland?

President Trump. I love our friendship with Poland. I love our friendship with Poland.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:26 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Agata Kornhauser-Duda, wife of President Duda; and Christine Blasey Ford, professor of statistics, Palo Alto University, who has accused Associate Justice-designate Kavanaugh of sexual assault at a party they attended while in high school.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchange with reporters :: White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Poland, President Duda.

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