

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019*

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

*April 26, 2019*

*President Trump.* Thank you very much. It's an honor to have my friend, Prime Minister Abe—Japan. We have many things to discuss, including trade, including some of the numbers that just came out this morning. We had a very big number at 3.2 GDP for the first quarter, usually the worst quarter. That also included the little bit of a dispute we had during the quarter. So 3.2 is far above expectation. I guess many people were thinking it would be in the 1s, maybe between 1 and 2. And 3.2 is great.

Knowing that first quarter seems to always be the lowest, we're off to a very good start for the year. If we had the previous administration's low interest rates and quantitative easing, meaning pouring money into the system, that 3.2 could have been 5. Could have been a lot higher, but it could have been five. So it's really quite a—I wouldn't like to say "surprise," but for a lot of people, it was a big surprise. Very big number.

The Prime Minister just, two moments ago, said to me that "congratulations on your number." The 3.2 number was even a surprise to Japan.

I just returned from Indiana, the big NRA conference, which was really terrific. And the weather was very rough. They said we might have to circle for an hour. And I said, "I hope you don't have to do that, because we can't keep this great gentleman waiting." And we have the greatest pilots in the world, and we have awfully good equipment in Air Force One, so he landed it beautifully. No problem.

And tonight the Prime Minister and the great First Lady of Japan will be having dinner with us. We're celebrating our First Lady's birthday. It's her birthday. So I said to Melania, "Would you like to have Mr. and Mrs.—Prime Minister and Mrs. Abe join us for your birthday? And she said, "I can't think of anybody I'd rather have."

So we'll be having dinner tonight at the White House. And we'll be actually, right after this meeting, having our representatives with us in the Oval and then a larger group of representatives in the Cabinet Room. And I think a lot will be accomplished.

We're talking about a lot on trade. It's gotten very complex with what's happened to Brexit and what's happened with various other trade deals throughout the world. We're doing very well in our negotiations with China. Some of our people are leaving for China on Monday. And we're getting there. It could be very interesting. We'll see. I don't like to talk about things, and I won't talk about things, because who knows what happens. Lots of strange things can happen for better or worse.

But we are doing very well in those trade negotiations. And actually, we have a very big trade negotiation going on right now with Japan, which is, I would imagine, the primary reason that the Prime Minister is here.

And the other thing we'll be discussing is trade, as it relates to our two countries. Japan is buying a tremendous amount of military equipment and other equipment from the United States. We make the greatest jet fighters in the world, and missiles and rockets and everything else. We make the best in the world, by far.

And we'll be discussing that. We'll be discussing, very strongly, agriculture. Because, as the Prime Minister knows, Japan puts very massive tariffs on agriculture—our agriculture—going for many years, going into Japan. And we want to get rid of those tariffs. Because we don't tariff their cars, so I think that that will—something we'll work out. But this should have been done by previous administrations. Many previous administrations. It's been a long time, but I'm sure we'll be able to work that out. And ultimately, we have a chance to make a very good and long-term trade deal with Japan.

And tomorrow we'll be very early leaving for a quick round of golf on a very beautiful place on the Potomac River. I won't name the place, but it's beautiful. And so we're going to play a quick round of golf.

And then, I'm going to Wisconsin tomorrow. And we have a tremendous crowd tomorrow night for a speech and rally and whatever you want to call it. It's very big. A lot of people. We had 69,000 people sign up. And I think the arena holds about 10 [thousand].<sup>°</sup> So it will be interesting. But it's always that way.

And there's a lot of great spirit in our country. Again, we had some great numbers released this morning. And our country is doing very, very well economically. Doing very well with the military. Our military is being rebuilt—all being built from within. All jobs within the United States. And our country is—they're very proud right now, what's happening.

So thank you very much for being here. And we're going to have a lot of fun. Thank you. Please.

*Prime Minister Abe.* So, at the outset, I'd like to express my deep appreciation for the great hospitality that you extended to me, again, here at the White House. And also, as you mentioned, we are going to celebrate Madam First Lady's birthday today, together with my wife Akie. And I do look forward to celebrating this special day with you.

*President Trump.* Thank you.

*Prime Minister Abe.* On the first of May, his Imperial Highness, the Crown Prince, accedes to the Imperial Throne. And Japan will enter a new era named "Reiwa," under the new Emperor. Under the new era of Reiwa, President Trump and Madam First Lady will be the very first state guests that we will invite. And it is a great pleasure and honor for us to welcome you and Madam First Lady.

And also, this state visit will show, both inside and outside, that the—still under the new era of Reiwa, the bond between Japan and the United States, under our alliance, will remain unwavering. And also, we will demonstrate our strong commitment to addressing various challenges that we see in the international community.

And also, as you touched on earlier, I would like to congratulate you for your great performance, as well as achievements, namely the 3.2 percent of the GDP growth in the first quarter of this year, as well as the quite—the excellent condition that you see in the job status in the United States.

Since President Trump took office, Japanese business community has additionally announced a total of 23 billion U.S. dollar investment to the United States, which will create

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<sup>°</sup> White House correction.

43,000 jobs in the United States. Japan is ranked number one for its investment to the United States, as well as the number of jobs it creates in the United States.

So in order for us to see further development of the economies of both Japan and the United States, and also realize how those economies, which will become mutually beneficial for both of the nations, I look forward to having a discussion with you also on the trade deal that we're now negotiating with each other.

With regard to the tariffs on autos, Japan has put no tariffs on American autos. But, in contrast, the United States has put on the 2.5-percent tariff on the Japanese autos. But, in any case, we would like to proceed with the further negotiation that we are now having for that. We'll see a mutually beneficially outcome for both of our countries.

And also, I'm going to host the G-20 Osaka summit in the month of June this year. And in order for us to bring this summit to a successful conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our close collaboration, as well as partnership, at today's meeting.

*President Trump.* Good.

*Prime Minister Abe.* And I cannot wait to play another round of golf with you tomorrow.

*President Trump.* Good.

*Prime Minister Abe.* And I hope that certainly tomorrow will be a sunny day.

*President Trump.* And it will be. It will be beautiful. It's always beautiful.

Well, I want to thank you. The fact is that Japanese car companies are coming in at a level that we haven't seen in many decades. Toyota is investing \$14 billion over a short period of time, and others too. They're going to Michigan. They're going to Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky.

We're going—we're really getting a lot of business from Japan. I appreciate that. We're trying to bring some balance to the surplus that they have with the United States for many, many years. But it will all work out. It's all working out. But they're making the biggest investments they've ever made in the United States and, in particular, car companies. They're really coming in. A lot of that has to do with our new agreements that we've been making, and some will have to do with the trade agreement that we're in the process of making. That should even increase that number. So I very much look forward to discussing that today.

As far as your very big event—and that's a very big event—and when we were in Japan together, we were talking about it, and the invitation was made. And I said: "Gee, I don't know if I can make it. Let me ask you a question. How big is that event compared to the Super Bowl for the Japanese?" And the Prime Minister said, "It's about a hundred times bigger." [*Laughter*] I said: "I'll be there. If that's the case, I'll be there."

So it really is. It's many years. Isn't it 130 some-odd years that it's happened? It's a very unusual thing. And you're talking about reigning through blood for over 3,000 years, the longest in the world. So it's a very, very big event. And maybe you could explain the event, because it's very exciting, actually.

*Prime Minister Abe.* So, for Japan and the entire Japanese people, having the new Emperor itself means a lot. And this will be a historic event and also a tremendous event for everyone in Japan.

What I would like to underscore here is that we will have the abdication of the living Emperor leading to the succession of the Crown Prince to the Emperor. And this will happen for the first time in approximately 200 years.

And under such a historic situation, and also under the new Emperor, President Trump and Madam First Lady will be the very first state guests. And that is why I do look forward welcoming you to Japan.

*President Trump.* That's really nice, yes. Well, that's really nice. And that's an honor on behalf of our country, not just the First Lady and myself. So we really do look forward to that.

And I think, on a little bit lighter note, we will also be going, perhaps, to a sumo wrestling match. [*Laughter*] I've always found that fascinating. So, in fact, we're having a trophy made in this country. We're going to give the trophy to the winner of the championship. So that should be good. And I'm sure the media will like that. But I think something I'll enjoy very much. So we may very well be doing that. We'll see what the time is.

But again, Mr. Prime Minister, you're my friend, and I really very much appreciate the visit. And I think we will accomplish a lot. We'll also be talking about, by the way, North Korea, where we're working together very closely with others. And I think it's going pretty well.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

#### *Japan-U.S. Trade*

Q. What's your timeframe for a new Japan trade deal? Is it possible to get it done by May?

*President Trump.* I think it can go quickly. Yes. I think it can go fairly quickly. Maybe by the time I'm over there. Maybe we sign it over there. But it's moving along very nicely, and we'll see what happens.

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

Q. Mr. President, is there a situation where you could see where Don McGahn is charged with perjury? You seem to be contradicting what he is saying.

*President Trump.* Well, I don't want to talk about that now. We have other things that we're talking about. But I'll respond to that question at a later date, okay? Thank you.

Q. And just to follow up on your comments early today and last night about—you said there was an attempted coup to topple your Presidency.

*President Trump.* Oh, I think absolutely. If you look at—yes, if you look at—

Q. What do you mean by a "coup"? Is it—was there actually a coup?

*President Trump.* If you look at what's been happening and all of the things you've been seeing with the "insurance policy" statement from two agents that are now gone; if you look at many of the elements of intrigue—and frankly, we're going to be seeing a lot over the next couple of weeks, things that a lot of people haven't seen.

What took place here was a very, very terrible situation. How this whole ridiculous 35-million-dollar unlimited personnel—how this all started, I think you will find of great interest. Most of you know the answer to it anyway. The fair press, the good press, the—really, the people that know what they're doing or the people that are indeed fair, they know the answer to it.

So we're going to see. It's going to be very interesting. But what took place over the last period of almost 2 years—and really, before that; it was really much before that. In all fairness to Robert Mueller, things happened long before he even started. And what took place is a disgrace to our country, and it hurt our country. And a lot of people have been let go. And I don't mean by mean by me. They've been dismissed. They've been fired. They've left in disgrace. And it really is a sad moment for the country. But I think ultimately it's going to be very good. It's going to be a healing factor.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:35 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agent Peter P. Strzok II, in his former capacity as lead investigator of former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's use of a private e-mail server and the investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 Presidential election; Lisa Page, former legal counsel to former FBI Deputy Director Andrew G. McCabe; and Department of Justice Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III. Prime Minister Abe referred to Crown Prince Naruhito and Emperor Akihito of Japan. A reporter referred to former White House Counsel Donald F. McGahn II. Prime Minister Abe spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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

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