

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Leo Varadkar of Ireland and an Exchange With Reporters in Shannon, Ireland

June 5, 2019

Prime Minister Varadkar. Yes. And so I just want to welcome all the members of the press who traveled here. And it's a great pleasure to be able to welcome President Trump to the United States—to Ireland. And certainly not the first time he's been here or in County Clare. This is the first he's been here as President of the United States; only, I think, the sixth time an American President in office——

President Trump. I think so.

Prime Minister Varadkar. ——has visited Ireland. So we're very pleased to have you here and look forward to meeting later on.

President Trump. Well, I appreciate it. The Prime Minister has done a fantastic job. And we've become friends over the last fairly short period of time. And great relationship to Ireland. I think as good as it's ever been. Maybe better. Tremendous trade. We do a lot of business together. A lot of trade business together. A lot of tourism together.

And maybe most importantly, you are certainly one of the leading countries in terms of people moving and living in the United States. We have millions of Irish. And I think I know most of them, because they're my friends. We love the Irish.

So it's an honor to be here. We'll be discussing various things. Probably, you'll ask me about Brexit, because I just left some very good people that are very much involved with Brexit, as you know. And I think that will all work out. It will all work out very well. And also, for you, with your wall, your border. I mean, we have a border situation in the United States, and you have one over here. But I hear it's going to work out very well. I think it's both going to work out well. It's going to work out very well here.

And, again, both the military and the trade is such a big factor, and we're going to be discussing that very much. So it's an honor to be in Ireland with my friend, and he's doing a great job as your Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Varadkar. The main thing we want to avoid, of course, is a border or a wall between two different sides, so——

President Trump. No, I think you do. I think you do. The way it works now is good. You want to try and keep it that way. And I know that's a big point of contention with respect to Brexit, is your border. And I'm sure it's going to work out well. I know they're focused very heavily on it.

British Exit From European Union

Q. Mr. President, can I ask you: Do you think Brexit will be bad for Ireland? You said it's good for the U.K., but will it not be bad for Ireland?

President Trump. No, I think it should be good. I mean, the big thing is going to be your border, and hopefully, that's going to work out. I think it will work out. There are a lot of good minds thinking about how to do it, and it's going to be just fine. I think, ultimately, it could even be very, very good for Ireland. But the border will work out.

Climate Change/U.S. Air and Water Quality

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of our President's comments, where he said your stance on climate change was "pernicious" and "reckless"?

President Trump. Well, I haven't heard those comments. But you know, we have the cleanest air in the world, in the United States, and it's gotten better since I'm President. We have the cleanest water; it's crystal clean. And I always say I want crystal clean water and air. So I haven't heard his comments, but we do have—we're setting records, environmentally.

Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned that Ireland is not sufficiently worried about the threat from Huawei? I know that issue came up in Britain. Some people worry about it in this country, as well.

President Trump. Well, I know that. And we deal very closely, as you know, with your intelligence and your security. And we're working on that together, and I know you're concerned like we're concerned. We're all concerned about it. So we'll have it——

Prime Minister Varadkar. Well, that's something——

President Trump. Right.

Prime Minister Varadkar. That's something that the Irish Government is concerned about as well, and we've been offered some further briefings, information, from the U.S. side, just to give us a security briefing on that. And we'll do our own security analysis first and then at the European level. But it is something that we're also concerned about.

President Trump. We're working on that together, very much with not only Europe, but with Ireland.

The President's Travel to Ireland and France

Q. Mr. President, you'll be spending a few days in Doonbeg. What's your plan? What will you be doing in Doonbeg?

President Trump. So we'll be going there, and then, as you know, I'm making a trip tomorrow to Normandy. We had an incredible time today. This was just something that—the likes of which few people have seen anything like it. We were with the Queen and the royal family, and we were with the Prime Minister, and it was something very special. And many of you were there; I think almost all of you were there. But it's been very well covered, and it was truly beautiful.

And tomorrow we go to where it all took place; we go to Normandy. And I'll be leaving from Doonbeg. I'm staying here overnight, and I thought this would be the best place. I'd love to come to Ireland and stay at Doonbeg, and tomorrow we'll be leaving and going to Normandy. So many of you will be coming with us.

The President's Travel to Ireland

Q. Is this trip about promoting your golf club?

President Trump. Say it?

Q. Mr. President, is this trip, for you, just about promoting your golf club?

President Trump. No, this trip is really about great relationships that we have with the U.K. And I really wanted to do this stop in Ireland. It was very important to me because of the relationship I have with the people and with your Prime Minister.

Extension of E-3 Visa Program to Irish Citizens

Q. Mr. President will you give Irish citizens access to the E-3 visa? Will you give Irish citizens access to the E-3 visa?

President Trump. Yes, we're looking at that. We almost made it last time. It was one vote; you know that. And we're looking at that, and I'm sure that's something we're going to discuss. And I spoke to the one vote, who's a great Senator, by the way. And—he really is; he's a great Senator. And we think we're going to be successful. He's a terrific person. He doesn't mean to do any harm—that, I can tell you. He was telling me he loves Ireland, actually. So I think we're going to be in good shape.

We had just about a unanimous vote. And——

Prime Minister Varadkar. [*Inaudible*—yes, yes.

President Trump. And if we get a unanimous vote, we do something that they've been trying to do for a long time. So I want to do that for the people of Ireland, but I want to do it for the people that are in the United States that want this vote to happen, that happen to be of Irish descent.

Northern Ireland/British Exit From European Union

Q. President Trump, as U.S.A. is coguarantor of the Good Friday agreement, what assurances can you offer the Government in helping to protect peace in Northern Ireland and avoid a hard border?

President Trump. Well, I think what's going to happen is, over the next period of time—first, they're going to have to see who's going to be Prime Minister. And I think it's a very important decision. We'll see what happens over in the U.K., because that's going to be decision number one: Who is going to be Prime Minister? And once that happens, that person will get in and try and make a deal. And maybe if they don't make a deal, they do it a different way.

But I know one thing: Ireland is going to be in great shape. Ireland is, we—you know, a special place. It's going to be in very good shape. I don't think the border is going to be a problem at all.

North Korea

Q. Sir, did you see those reports of executions in North Korea of the folks who were involved in your summit? Does that worry you at all that Kim would execute these people?

President Trump. Well, I don't know if the reports are correct, because one of the gentlemen who we deal with is—this is North Korea they're talking about—is somebody that we know well. He's a strong man. He's a strong person. And they like to blame Kim Jong Un immediately. But they said he was killed, and he wasn't. He was at the theater the other night, so he wasn't killed. The other four people I know nothing about. But it is—it's an interesting situation.

And I think that they would like to make a deal, and we'd like to make a deal with them. We'll see how it goes. It's been going pretty well because there hasn't been testing of anything major, and frankly, there's been no nuclear testing in a long period of time.

When I became President, and before that, as you know, it was all the time: nuclear testing, ballistic missile testing. And now there's nothing. I think that Chairman Kim would like to make a deal, and I'd like to make a deal with him. I look forward to seeing him and at the appropriate time.

And again, one of the people they were talking about that was supposedly executed wasn't executed at all.

Q. Mr. President, one last word, sir——

Corporate Tax Rate in Ireland

Q. Corporation tax—Ireland's corporation tax over here——

President Trump. Say it?

Q. Are you going to talk about Ireland's corporation tax with the Prime Minister?

President Trump. Well, the corporation tax—you mean the fact that it's so low? [*Laughter*] It is a very low tax. I have to agree.

You know, we have our tax very, very low, but they've done a very good job in Ireland. And your Prime Minister has kept it there. And he's—they have a lot of great companies here. They've done a good job. They should try keeping it low; I with agree that.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Prime Minister Varadkar. Thanks, everyone.

Mexico-U.S. Trade/China-U.S. Trade

Q. [*Inaudible*]—the tariffs——

President Trump. Oh, it's true. They're having a meeting at 3 o'clock today. And look, I think Mexico has to step up. And if they don't, tariffs will go on. And if they go high, the companies are going to move back into the United States. That's all. It's very simple.

The people aren't going to have to worry about paying the tax, because the companies are going to move back into the United States. There won't be any tariff.

As far as China is concerned, China wants to make a deal. I have no doubt about it. And the—every signal is they want to. And at the right time, probably that will happen. But right now they're paying many billions of dollars to the United States. We never got that before from China. And we haven't even started. It's relative peanuts compared to the numbers that we're talking about.

But I think China wants to make a deal, and Mexico, you know, wants to make a deal. They have their entire delegation right now going over to, probably, the White House location, but to negotiate with our people. It's headed up by Mike Pompeo and Bob Lighthizer, and Mike Pence is involved. So we have a great group.

But Mexico—look, the drugs that are coming in, the people that are coming in unchecked, they're swamping our border. They're coming up by the millions. Mexico can stop it. They have to stop it. Otherwise, we just won't be able to do business. It's a very simple thing.

And I think they will stop it. I think they want to do something. I think they want to make a deal. And they sent their top people to try and do it. We'll see what happens today. We should know something.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5 p.m. in the VIP Lounge at Shannon Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Theresa May of the United Kingdom; and Sen. Thomas B. Cotton. He also referred to H.R. 7164. A reporter referred to President Michael D. Higgins of Ireland.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: Shannon, Ireland;
Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Ireland, Prime Minister Varadkar.

Locations: Shannon, Ireland.

Names: Cotton, Thomas B.; Elizabeth II; Higgins, Michael D.; Kim Jong Un; Lighthizer, Robert E.; May, Theresa; Pence, Michael R.; Pompeo, Michael R.; Varadkar, Leo.

Subjects: China : Trade with U.S.; Defense and national security : Border security; Drug abuse and trafficking : Foreign narcotics traffickers; Environment : Air quality, improvement efforts; Environment : Water management policy, improvement efforts; Europe : European Union :: United Kingdom, membership status; Immigration and naturalization : Illegal immigration; Immigration and naturalization : Visa policy, U.S.; Ireland : President; Ireland : Prime Minister; Ireland : Relations with U.S.; Ireland : Security cooperation with U.S.; Ireland : Trade with U.S.; Ireland : U.S. visa policy; Legislation, proposed : Legislation to add Ireland to the E-3 nonimmigrant visa program; Mexico : Immigration enforcement, cooperation with U.S.; North Korea : Ballistic missiles, testing and development; North Korea : Chairman, State Affairs Commission; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; State, Department of : Secretary; Taxation : Corporate tax rates; Trade Representative, Office of the U.S.; United Kingdom : European Union, membership status; United Kingdom : Prime Minister; United Kingdom : Queen; United Kingdom : Relations with U.S.; White House Office : Vice President.

DCPD Number: DCPD201900371.