

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan and an Exchange With Reporters

July 22, 2019

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's my great honor to have the very popular and, by the way, great athlete—one of the greatest—but very popular Prime Minister of Pakistan.

We have many things to discuss: military and terrorism and trade. And I think we're going to spend a lot of time talking about trade because we do very little trade with Pakistan compared to what we could be doing and should be doing when our countries really get along perfectly. And I think we're having that start. We're going to have that start.

But there's tremendous upside with respect to trade. One of the things we're going to be discussing too is hostages; perhaps the polio vaccine, because Pakistan is one of the countries, and we'll talk about that as to, you know, what your feeling is on that. But we have a situation in Pakistan where we want to talk about the polio or the possible polio vaccine.

And I think we're going to have great meetings. We're going to be spending a long time together. We have our representatives meeting right after we're finished. And we just came out, Mr. Prime Minister, with tremendous economic numbers for the United States—the best we've ever had. We've got the best economy we've ever had. And I think we can shift some of that over to Pakistan. We should be doing tremendous business together. So I look forward to it.

Prime Minister Khan. Inshallah.

President Trump. And it is an honor to have you with us. Thank you very much.

Q. And, Prime Minister Khan, can you speak—[inaudible]—

President Trump. Please.

Prime Minister Khan. Well, I've been looking forward to this meeting since I assumed office as Prime Minister of Pakistan. I mean, United States is vital for Pakistan. We have links which have gone back since Pakistan became independent. You know, we've been fighting wars together: first Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Pakistan was a frontline state, allied to the U.S. And then, again the war on terror, which was after 9/11.

So I look forward to my conversation with you, Mr. President.

India-U.S. Relations/Pakistan-India Relations/Afghanistan

Q. Mr. President, Pakistan has been your ally for 14 years in the Afghan war. So first terrorism, first economy, disaster, and all that. And still, we were taken to the court with all the accusations that Pakistan is now a responsible state.

Now, when India has—India and U.S. has developed an alliance in the region. How do, you know, you plan to foresight about the Pak-U.S. relationship? How they can be strengthened when your preference is India? Number one.

And secondly, you know, after your campaign, what kind of promises—if you are elected again, what kind of promises you are going to fulfill?

President Trump. Okay. That's a big question. [Laughter] That could go on for hours, that answer.

I will say that we have a very good relationship with India. I know that your relationship is strained a little bit, maybe a lot. But we will be talking about India; a very big part of our conversation today. And I think maybe if we can help intercede and do whatever we have to do. But I think it's something that can be brought back together.

And we'll also be talking about Afghanistan. We've reduced our number of troops there by quite a bit. We are continuing to reduce troops in Afghanistan. We're working with Pakistan and others on getting an agreement signed, as you know. And we'll see what happens.

But we will be talking about India and Afghanistan very much so.

Q. Mr. President——

Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd./5G Wireless Development

Q. The Washington Post is reporting today that Huawei had a relationship with North Korea to build their commercial wireless network. Have you been briefed on that? Do you have concerns about it?

President Trump. I know all about it. I know all about Huawei. I know all about 5G. And we're working on it, and we have companies that are now getting very, very strong in that department.

Q. They have a relationship with North Korea.

President Trump. And we're going to have 5G. We're going to have the best 5G in the world, just like we have everything else. Our silicone—Silicon Valley cannot be competed with. There's nobody that can compete with Silicon Valley for the brainpower or for what we do.

And nobody was focused on 5G, but now they are. And we have great companies going into 5G. Even if they don't want to, a lot of them were very happy doing what they were doing. But now they're going—at my request, they're going into 5G. So we don't need—

Q. Do you have any additional concerns——

President Trump. We don't need anything from anybody.

North Korea

Q. Do you have any additional concerns with North Korea, sir?

President Trump. Say it? What?

Q. The Post is reporting about Huawei's relationship with North Korea.

President Trump. Well, we'll have to find out. Our relationship with North Korea has been very good. We've really established a good relationship with Kim Jong Un. I have personally. There's no rocket testing. There's no missile testing. We're getting our remains back. We got our hostages back.

And we have a very, very good relationship, the two of us, and that's very important. There's been no nuclear testing. And what they're doing with 5G will be, you know—we will have to see. I'll have to—I'll find out.

Q. This is—[inaudible]—from—[inaudible]—News TV Pakistan.

President Trump. Say it again.

Pakistan-U.S. Relations/Afghanistan

Q. This is—[inaudible]—from—[inaudible]—News TV Pakistan. Lindsey Graham, when he met Imran Khan, he says you both are kind of same personalities. You are the President who fulfill all your promises with the campaign.

President Trump. I do. I do.

Q. And the same Imran Khan; he's also fulfilling all his promises. So how do you see this meeting? Like, same kind of person? Straight to point?

President Trump. Well, I think we're going to have a great meeting today. I know that it's an important meeting. I consider this a very important meeting, because I think we haven't met the potential of either country. I think the potential with Pakistan and likewise, the opposite way, I think we have not even come close to meeting it. There is tremendous potential between our country and Pakistan.

I think Pakistan is going to help us out to extricate ourselves. We're like policemen. We're not fighting a war. If we wanted to fight a war in Afghanistan and win it, I could win that war in a week. I just don't want to kill 10 million people. Does that make sense to you? I don't want to kill 10 million people.

I have plans on Afghanistan that, if I wanted to win that war, Afghanistan would be wiped off the face of the Earth. It would be gone. It would be over in—literally, in 10 days. And I don't want to do—I don't want to go that route.

So we're working with Pakistan and others to extricate ourselves. Nor do we want to be policemen, because basically, we're policemen right now. And we're not supposed to be policemen. We've been there——

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. We've been there for 19 years, in Afghanistan. It's ridiculous. And I think Pakistan helps us with that, because we don't want to stay as policemen. But if we wanted to, we could win that war. I have a plan that would win that war in a very short period of time. You understand that better than anybody.

We've been in there not fighting to win, just fighting to—they're building gas stations; they're rebuilding schools. The United States, we shouldn't be doing that. That's for them to do. But what we did and what our leadership got us into was ridiculous. But we will——

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. I think we'll have some very good answers on Afghanistan, very quickly.

Q. Mr. President, Jerry Nadler says the Mueller report lays out evidence of high crimes and misdemeanors.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. Yes, go ahead. You go ahead. Go ahead.

Q. Do you have any concerns about Wednesday? Does that concern you about Wednesday?

Pakistan-U.S. Relations

Q. This is—[inaudible]—from GTV Network Pakistan. The Pakistani army has fought war against terror. And it has fought and protected and gave sacrifices in protecting Pakistan-Afghanistan border as well. But Pakistan's sincerity was always doubted. Coalition support fund was suspended by U.S. Defense Department. So, at this time, when Pakistani economy is facing great trouble. Are you going to restore any package for Pakistan?

President Trump. So we are going to—that's right—we were paying \$1.3 billion to Pakistan as aid, working on—for many years. The problem was Pakistan—this is before you—Pakistan was not doing anything for us. They were really, I think, subversive. They were going against us. And this is something we'll be—I ended that about a year and a half ago, the \$1.3 billion.

And I tell you what: To be honest, I think we have a better relationship with Pakistan right now than we did when we were paying that money. But all of that can come back, depending on what we work out.

We're working out things that are very important. We have a very—I consider this very important. We're working out things that are very, very important. And I think, at the end of this, at the end of a very short time, we're going to have a very great relationship with Pakistan. And we should. I mean, it's a great country. It's a great—they're great people. I have many friends from Pakistan. Living in New York, I have a lot of Pakistani friends—I will tell you that. And they're great people: smart, tough. They are tough. There's no question about that. They're like him; they're tough. [*Laughter*]

Q. Question to——

Former Department of Justice Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III/Investigation Into Russia's Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election/Decrease in Prescription Drugs Costs/U.S. Economy/2020 Presidential and Congressional Elections/House Procedural Vote on Impeachment Resolution

Q. Mr. President, are you worried about Wednesday?

President Trump. No, I'm not going to be watching. Probably. Maybe I'll see a little bit of it. I'm not going to be watching Mueller, because you can't take all those bites out of the apple.

We had no collusion, no obstruction. We had no nothing. We had a total "no collusion" finding. The Democrats were devastated by it. They went crazy. They've gone off the deep end. They're not doing anything. They're not doing health care. They're not going infrastructure.

They're not lowering drug prices. I'm lowering drug prices. First time in 53 years that drug prices went down last year. Fifty-three years. And I'm doing that without the help of Congress, which makes it much tougher to do. Because if they worked with us, I could get drug prices down in half. But the Democrats don't seem to care about drug prices. All they care about is a phony investigation where the report was written—it said "no collusion"—the report was written, and the Attorney General, based on the report, was easily able to find there was no obstruction. There's no nothing. They're wasting their time.

And Robert Mueller, I know he's conflicted—he had a lot—there's a lot of conflicts that he's got, including the fact that his best friend is Comey. But he's got conflicts with me too. He's got big conflicts with me. As you know, he wanted the job of the FBI Director. He didn't get it. And we had a business relationship where I said, "No." And I would say that he wasn't happy. Then, all of a sudden, he gets this position. But you know what? He still ruled—and I respect him for it—he still ruled "no collusion, no obstruction."

And this thing should've ended a long time ago. This has been going on for 2½ years. And we're never going to allow this to happen to another President again, because most of them wouldn't be able to take it.

On top of everything else, we have the strongest economy. We were just discussing this with the Prime Minister. We have the strongest economy that the United States has ever had. We have the highest stock market. Yesterday, literally, the highest stock market we've ever had on

Friday—Thursday. We've broken the record, I think, 109 times for highest stock market. But on, I believe, Thursday of last week, we hit the alltime highest in the history of our country.

Our country is doing phenomenally well. Unemployment is the lowest in 51 years, soon to be the lowest in history if it keeps going this way in a short period of time. Black, Hispanic, Asian unemployment, the lowest in history. Women, the lowest in 72 years.

Nobody has ever done what we've done. Nobody has done in 2½ years what we've done: the biggest tax cuts in history; the biggest regulation cuts in history. So many things for health care. We got rid of the individual mandate, which was the worst part of Obamacare. Going to end up—if we end up winning the House back, we keep the Presidency, we should keep the Senate. We should keep the Presidency, I would think easy, when you have the strongest economy in the history of our country. And somebody is going to run against that particular President even though, in this case, it's me. In theory, I have a big advantage. I don't know. I'm going to have to ask you. But in theory, I have a big advantage.

So a lot of great things are happening. But the Democrats, they don't want to talk about that. They want to stay off the economy subject. And what they're doing is just hearing after hearing after hearing. It's nonsense. Okay? They tried an impeachment vote, and they got slaughtered last week. They got absolutely slaughtered. It was the most ridiculous—I didn't even know they were going to do it.

And I'll tell you, just in finishing: I have a lot of respect for the Democrats, because most of them voted against impeachment last week. And I have a lot of respect for those Democrats that did that, because they're doing the right thing for the country. No collusion, no obstruction.

Okay. Anybody else?

Public Debt Limit Compromise/Federal Budget Negotiations/Defense Spending

Q. Mr. President, on the debt talks——

President Trump. Say it?

Q. Sir, on the debt talks, can you tell us if there is a deal soon?

President Trump. Yes, we're talking about it. Secretary Mnuchin is talking about it. We're having very good talks with the Speaker of the House—with Nancy Pelosi. We're having very good talks with Chuck Schumer and, of course, with Mitch McConnell and Kevin. We are—Kevin McCarthy.

We are, I think, doing very well on debt, if you look at debt limit, however you want to define that. But we're doing very well on that, and I think we're doing pretty well on our budget.

Very important that we take care of our military. Our military was depleted, and in the last 2½ years, we've undepleted it, okay? To put it mildly. We have made it stronger than ever before. We need another big year. So we had \$700 billion, we had then \$716 billion, and this year we're going to be asking for a number slightly larger than that.

We're putting our military back into a shape that it's never been in before. New—the best missiles in the world. The best equipment in the world. The best military equipment of all. We're building submarines—the finest. Nobody can even think about competing with what we're building. We're building, as you know, new submarines.

We have a new aircraft carrier coming online. It's the largest ship in the world. It's so large that maybe I could even land a plane on top of it, okay? [*Laughter*] But it's a big one. President Gerald Ford. It's a phenomenal ship.

So what we're doing——

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—Pakistan?

President Trump. What we're doing is incredible things for our country.

And you know, just about—just about—and I might say this about the military equipment: It's all made in the U.S.A., everything. A hundred percent. It's all made in the U.S.A. And you know, it's one of the reasons our job numbers probably are so good, lowest unemployment.

Yes. Go ahead.

Pakistan-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, will you be visiting Pakistan? As you've described, Pakistan is a great country. So he will be definitely extending you an invitation. So would you be visiting Pakistan?

President Trump. Well, I can't say that yet because, so far, he has not extended me an invitation. [Laughter] And after today's meeting, maybe he won't. But I have a feeling he might. Yes, I'd love to go Pakistan at the right time.

Q. On Pakistan, Mr. President—

President Trump. Yes, please.

Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Afghanistan/Reconciliation Efforts in Afghanistan

Q. Bahzad Saleemi, here from Pakistani News Channel—[inaudible]. Is there any exact date or timeframe of U.S. troops withdrawal under consideration under your administration?

President Trump. Are you talking about from Afghanistan?

Q. Yes.

President Trump. Yes, we have already withdrawn quite a few. And we're doing it very slowly, very safely. And we're working with Pakistan and with—as you know, we're negotiating with the Taliban. And we are doing, I think, very well in that regard.

Again, it's something that we could do—we could go one of two ways: We could do a number the likes of which they've never seen before, and win it very quickly. I don't want to do that.

Q. Mr. President, coming back to—

President Trump. I don't want to do that, because you're talking about millions of people, and I don't want to do that.

And we're working with Pakistan on getting a solution. And I think—I think it's being worked very well, wouldn't you say so, Mr. Prime Minister?

Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Afghanistan

Q. Will there still be troops there on election day?

President Trump. Say it?

Q. Will there still be troops there on election day in Afghanistan, U.S. troops?

President Trump. Well, I don't know. We're moving a lot of them out. And—

Q. Do you want them to be gone by then?

President Trump. And we've done what we're supposed to do. We've been there for 19 years, and we've acted as policemen, not soldiers. And again, if we wanted to be soldiers, it would be over in 10 days. One week to 10 days, if we wanted to.

But I have not chosen that. Why are we—why would we kill millions of people? It wouldn't be fair. In terms of humanity, it wouldn't be fair. So we're doing very well, and I think that Pakistan is going to be a big help.

Afghanistan

Q. What role do you see for India in Afghanistan?

President Trump. Say it?

Q. What role do you see for India in Afghanistan? And, Mr. Prime Minister, same question to you. What—does India has a role to bring peace in Afghanistan?

Prime Minister Khan. You see, this is the closest we've been to a peace deal in Afghanistan.

President Trump. Yes.

Prime Minister Khan. And there is no military solution in Afghanistan. There is no military solution, because as Mr. President says, if you go all-out military, there will be millions and millions of people who will die.

So there is only one solution. And I feel—and I think we will discuss this—it's the closest we have been to a peace deal. And we hope that in the coming days we will be able to urge the Taliban to speak to the Afghan Government and come to a settlement, a political solution.

President Trump. And what the Prime Minister——

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. Excuse me. What the Prime Minister just said is a very big story. And that's a hundred-percent percent true. We're—we've made a lot of progress over the last couple of weeks, and Pakistan has helped us with that progress.

But a lot of great things are happening. A lot of things are happening for the United States, and I think a lot of great things are going to be happening for Pakistan too, under your leadership. I really feel that.

Prime Minister Khan. Thank you. Thank you.

President Trump. Okay?

Iran/U.S. Naval Action in the Strait of Hormuz/Central Intelligence Agency/Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

Q. Mr. President, on Iran, are we closer to negotiations or to armed conflict?

President Trump. I think Iran doesn't know where they are. I've been watching and reading a lot of reports. And right now they're a very mixed-up country. They don't know whether they're coming or going. They have tremendous problems economically. Their country is in turmoil. They're having demonstrations all over Iran. They're inflation rate is at 75 percent. They have a lot of problems.

So whatever it is, it is. I'm just going to sit back and wait. Let's see what happens. But I will say——

Q. What can you tell us about the CIA assets?

President Trump. ——they are doing very poorly as a country, and we'll see what happens.

We did, actually—because they said no—and you know, it's a religious country, or religious leaders, but they lie a lot. We did shoot down—unfortunately, we had to shoot down a drone. The

drone came down. You know how it—how it came down, with a new technology that's actually quite amazing. But we took down one of their drones. Instead of saying, "Yes, that happened," they lied. They say it didn't happen.

So we have—there's a lot of proof. It's called "take a look at it on the ocean floor." Just go down there—take your scuba gear and go down there in the—one of you would do that, I know. But we took down a drone.

I think very importantly—I read a report today about CIA; that's totally a false story. That's another lie. They put out propaganda. They put out lies. I don't think Pakistan would ever do a thing like that, right? You—Pakistan——

Prime Minister Khan. Definitely not.

President Trump. Pakistan never lies.

Prime Minister Khan. Definitely not.

President Trump. But Iran does, unfortunately. So let's see what happens with Iran. We are ready for the absolute worst. And we're ready for sense too. But we are very geared up. And if they—they are really the number-one state of terror in the world. Now, I have to say, they've pulled back, because their money is running very low. The deal that President Obama made was a disaster because it was such a short term. It didn't cover ballistic missiles. And they couldn't see the important sites. Under this, you couldn't inspect the important sites. There were many things wrong.

And of course, they gave 150 billion dollars plus 1.8 billion in green—green, beautiful cash. That's called many plane loads of cash. I think Pakistan would like to have some of that cash. But they gave \$1.8 billion in cash, which is unthinkable.

And instead of being respectful and thankful—which, frankly, they should have been to the United States and to President Obama for making that ridiculous deal—instead of being respectful, they put their finger up in the air—this finger, the thumb—they put their finger up in the air, and they disrespected the United States. They shouldn't have done that. That was a big mistake.

One of the best things I've done is terminate that ridiculous deal. If they want to make a deal, it's—frankly, it's getting harder for me to want to make a deal with Iran, because they behave very badly. They're saying bad things. And I'll tell you, it could go either way very easily. Very easily. And I'm okay either way it goes.

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]——

President Trump. Yes, go ahead. Are you from Pakistan?

Q. Yes, I'm from Pakistan.

President Trump. I want a couple of Pakistani reporters. I like them. I like them much better than our reporters. [Laughter]

Pakistan-U.S. Relations/Afghanistan

Q. [Inaudible]—News—[inaudible]. Question is: What do you think Pakistan could not deliver in 18 years? And you do have so much hope now that it could deliver? What are those things that Pakistan could do right now?

President Trump. You mean what they didn't do to end the war?

Q. [Inaudible]—18 years they could do now.

President Trump. Well, I don't think Pakistan—look, I don't think Pakistan respected the United States. I don't think Pakistan respected its Presidents. And I think Pakistan could have done a lot. I think Pakistan can do tremendous amount against—with respect to Afghanistan. They didn't do it, and I don't blame them, because they were dealing with the wrong President. Who knows? But I think Pakistan could have done—they're helping us a lot now.

I think they could have helped us a lot in the past. But it doesn't matter. We have a new leader; he's doing to be a great leader of Pakistan. And we have a new leader here. Sort of new; I'm 2½ years now—getting to be 3 years, can you believe it? [*Laughter*] You're going to find time flies.

But no, I think Pakistan could have done a lot, but they chose not to. And that's because they did not respect U.S. leadership. That's all.

Pakistan-U.S. Relations/Afghanistan

Q. Is Pakistan doing enough now? Is Pakistan doing enough now?

President Trump. Well, I'll let you know that very quickly. I'll let you know. I mean, I'm going to know soon. It's not going to be like a long-term thing. I figure things out very quickly.

So the question was—that's probably the best question you've asked in a long time. [*Laughter*] First time—she's always asking: "Mueller. Mueller. Mueller." It's been—she's been asking this Mueller thing for 3 years. It's your best question. So I have to focus on that, because that's such a great question.

I think Pakistan is going to do a lot. I really do. I think Pakistan is going to make a big difference. I think Pakistan will save millions of lives in Afghanistan because I really believe that they can—they have a power that other nations don't have with respect to Afghanistan.

And I will say, as of this moment, they're working very hard and very nicely, and we appreciate it.

Q. Mr. President—

China-U.S. Trade Relations/Political Demonstrations in Hong Kong

Q. [*Inaudible*]—reports and video of protesters in Hong Kong—in these ongoing protests—being beaten by gangs. And potentially, the Hong Kong and Chinese governments, sort of, looking the other way, allowing these peaceful protesters to be beaten. Have you seen any of that footage? Have you been briefed on any of that? Do you have any—[*inaudible*]—in China?

President Trump. Well, I have.

Q. —message to Beijing and China?

President Trump. And you know, I know President Xi. We're working on trade deals right now. We'll see what happens. In the meantime, they're paying us billions and billions of dollars of tariffs, which is fine with me.

But I know that they're working—I know that's a very important situation for President Xi. And, you know, you could say what you said, but you could also say that he has allowed that to go on for a long time, and you know, it's been relatively—I think it's been relatively nonviolent.

Q. Do you believe that protesters should be allowed to protest on the streets of Hong Kong, as they've been doing peacefully?

President Trump. Well, they are. I mean, they are. I don't think China has stopped them. But China could stop them if they wanted. I think—I think that—again, I'm not involved in it very

much—but I think President Xi of China has acted responsibly. Very responsibly. They've been out there protesting for a long time.

I've never seen protests like it, where you have that many people. It likes 2 million people. Those are big protests. But I think that President—I hope that President Xi will do the right thing. But it has been going on a long time. There's no question about it.

Do you want to do a couple more? Do you have anybody you want to take a question from?

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. President made good remarks about Pakistan and said that Pakistan can help a lot to end the violence in Afghanistan, the dialogue process and reconciliation process. So what really Pakistan can do to bring peace? Because you are also—[*inaudible*—]—by your military commander, General Bajwa and other security team.

So what solution Pakistan—what strategy paper you have to push forward the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan and assurances to the U.S.?

Prime Minister Khan. Well, number one, this is the longest war that the United States has ever fought. It's almost 19 years. Number two, I am one of those who always believed that there was no military solution, because anyone who knows the history of Afghanistan—you just have to look back at the history—there was always going to be a political settlement at the end.

And I have to compliment President Trump because he has now forced people to end the war, to have a settlement. And that's where I think Pakistan is playing a very important role, because Pakistan has a 1,500-mile border with the—Afghanistan, and all the areas where the trouble is—which is the eastern side of Afghanistan.

So this is a critical time. I'm looking forward to my talks with President Trump. We have our military leadership here, because this is obviously a security situation. And what we want is understanding between the two countries. I can assure President Trump that whatever we will be saying will be the—we will be straight with them. There will never be any question of any doubt on Pakistan's intent, because apart from Afghanistan, the country that wants peace in Afghanistan more than any other country is Pakistan, because we get directly affected by it.

And Pakistan needs stability. We have had 15 years of fighting this war on terror, over 70,000 Pakistani casualties, over \$150 billion lost to the economy. So we desperately want peace. And I'm happy that President Trump has pushed this forward. So we hope—I'm looking forward to these talks.

Pakistan-India Relations/Afghanistan

Q. Disrupting the peace in the region, and apart from Afghanistan, there is another security threat in South Asia, and that is Kashmir dispute unresolved even by the United Nations and even by the U.S., who voted in support of that resolution in the U.N.

Now, are you going to make any kind of submission and intervention, President Trump? And the same question to Mr. President Trump——

Prime Minister Khan. I——

Q. Is he going to play any role in that Kashmir, where millions have been dead?

Prime Minister Khan. I will——

President Trump. Okay, he's got it. He's got it.

Q. Thank you.

Prime Minister Khan. I will be asking President Trump. He's—it's the most powerful country in the world, the United States. It can play the most important role in bringing peace in

the subcontinent. You know, there are over a—well, over a billion and a quarter people in the subcontinent. They are held hostage to the issue of Kashmir. And I feel that only the most powerful state, headed by President Trump, can bring the two countries together.

From my point, I can tell you, we have tried our best. We've made all overtures to India to start dialogue, resolve our differences through dialogue. But unfortunately, we haven't made headways as yet. But I'm hoping that President Trump would push this process.

President Trump. So I was with Prime Minister Modi 2 weeks ago, and we talked about this subject. And he actually said, "Would you like to be a mediator or an arbitrator?" I said, "Where?" He said, "Kashmir." Because this has been going on for many, many years. I was surprised at how long; it's been going on a long—

Prime Minister Khan. Seventy years.

President Trump. And I think they'd like to see it resolved. And I think you'd like to see it resolved. And if I can help, I would love to be a mediator. It shouldn't be—I mean, it's impossible to believe two incredible countries that are very, very smart, with very smart leadership, can't solve a problem like that. But if you want me to mediate or arbitrate, I would be willing to do that.

Prime Minister Khan. President, I can tell you that, right now, it would—you would have the prayers of over a billion people if you can mediate and resolve this issue.

President Trump. Yes. It should be resolved. So it—but he asked me the same, so I think there's something. So maybe we'll speak to him, or I'll speak to him, and we'll see if we can do something, because I've heard so much about Kashmir. Such a beautiful name. It's supposed to be such a beautiful part of the world. But right now there's just bombs all over the place. They say everywhere you go, you have bombs, and it's a terrible situation. Been going on for many years. If I can do anything to help that, let me know.

Let me give you one thing on Afghanistan, as an example. So a lot of you don't know this, but we dropped the largest nonnuclear bomb ever built in history. We dropped it in Afghanistan. We were getting ready to make many of those bombs. This left a hole that was—it took out a lot of the tunnels and everything else. But it left a hole in the Earth that looked like the Moon; it looked like a crater from the Moon. It's still there. It was—nobody has ever seen anything like it. People heard it 15 miles away. They said, "What was that?" It shook the Earth. Nonnuclear, the largest ever made, by far.

And they were going to make many of them. And I said: "No, we don't have to. I don't want to drop that. I don't want to do that." So many easy solutions. That's actually the easy solution. And they'd come in, and they'd say, "Let's have peace." But you don't have to do that. I think we're going to be very successful with having to go that route. And I have tremendous confidence in the Prime Minister.

All right, one or two more. Go ahead. Go ahead, please.

Q. This is Nadeem from Voice of America. Are you going to raise the issue of Dr. Shakil Afridi with PM Imran Khan? And, PM, question to you regarding the freedom of the press in Pakistan: There are a lot of curbs on the freedom of press, on the media, on the journalists. Can you comment on that?

President Trump. Go ahead, please.

Prime Minister Khan. Pakistan press—to scorn Pakistan press—[laughter]—as if there's curbs on it. Pakistan has one of the freest presses in the world. All you have to do is—since I've

been the Prime Minister in the last 10 months—I mean, the criticism I have received from my own press: unprecedented.

I—so to say that there are curbs on Pakistan press is a joke.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, I—

President Trump. When you say "unprecedented," it can't—

Q. Mr. Prime Minister—

President Trump. Wait a minute. Wait, wait, wait. There's no way you're treated worse than I am. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Khan. [Laughter] It's worse than you. It's worse than you.

President Trump. I mean, that can't be.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, you are fighting—Mr. Prime Minister, you are fighting—

Imprisonment of Pakistani Physician Shakil Afridi

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. You're going to have to speak because I didn't hear your words.

Q. Yes, the question was: Are you going to raise the issue of freedom or the release of Dr. Shakil Afridi? Dr. Shakil Afridi.

President Trump. Freedom of the press?

Q. Dr. Shakil Afridi.

Q. Dr. Shakil Afridi. The doctor who helped—

President Trump. Oh, yes. We will do that. We will—we're talking about hostages. We're talking about hostages being held in various places. I've had very good luck with hostages with North Korea, with many places. They've treated us with respect, and I appreciate it. It made a big difference.

We have two or three hostages that we're talking about. That's one of the gentlemen that we have heard about. And we'll be—we will be discussing that with many other subjects. Yes, we will.

Prime Minister Khan. And President Trump—

Q. [Inaudible].

Prime Minister Khan. Just a minute. President Trump, we will be giving you a good news about the two hostages in advance.

President Trump. Good. Thank you.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, you are fighting—

Q. On North Korea, sir. On North Korea, sir—

The President's Criticism of Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna S. Pressley, Ilhan A. Omar, and Rashida H. Tlaib/U.S. Economy

Q. On your tweets this morning—why are you escalating the feud with the four Congresswomen? The racial tensions—

President Trump. I'll tell it in a second.

Go ahead. Ask again.

Q. On your tweets—why are you escalating your feud with the four Congresswomen and racial tensions in so doing?

President Trump. Well, I think they're very bad for our country. I really think they must hate our country. I think the four Congressmen we're talking about—the Congresswomen, what they've said about Israel, what they've said about our country, when they talk about "disgusting people," when they talk the way they talk; when the one mentioned that "brown people should speak for brown people," and "Muslim people should speak for Muslim people," and you hear all this, it's not what our country is all about.

No, I think they're very bad for our country. I think they're very bad for the Democrat Party. I think you see that. And they're pulling the Democrats way left. Nobody knows how to handle them. I feel they're easy to handle. To me, they're easy to handle, because they're just out there. They're very bad for our country. Absolutely.

Q. Are you stoking racial tensions? But are you stoking racial tensions in so doing?

President Trump. No, I don't think—no, no, no racial tension. No, no, there's no racial tension.

Look, I had my best numbers recently, and it's because of the economy and what I've done for the African American. When you look at—the African Americans are doing better than they've ever done in our country. They're—we're creating numbers—look at the poverty numbers. Look at so many different—look at the unemployment numbers. The best they've ever had.

No, we have fantastic relationships with the African American community. I think you'll see that. Certainly, you're going to see that in 2020, I believe.

Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, even your critics say that you're going to win the 2020 elections. And you're obviously very confident about that. Same thing, Imran Kahn. Sir, you are also heading up a big war against corruption in Pakistan. So can you just give us a little bit about that?

President Trump. Well, I think he's going to win. And I think what's going to happen—of course, he's got a little ways to wait—[laughter]—but I'll go over—I'm going to campaign for you. I'm going to help him win his campaign.

Pakistani-U.S. Relations/U.S. Trade Opportunities With Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, I'm—[inaudible]—representing Associated Press of Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that Pakistan is looking for trade and economic relationships and investment in Pakistan. Are you willing to do that?

President Trump. Yes. I am.

Q. Because many experts say that economic prosperity is the best antidote to extremism and militancy.

President Trump. I agree. And I think that's very true. And that's actually a very good question. The answer is yes. I see great trade with Pakistan. And I'm not talking about a little bit more. I'm talking about—we could go 10 and even 20 times what we're doing right now.

You know, Pakistan is a big country. It's actually a very big country, and they have tremendous product. They make great product. They make tremendous—I've bought from Pakistan over the years when I was in the private sector. They make incredible product. They're brilliant people. They're hard-working people.

I think we're going to have a fantastic trade relationship. I don't mean we'll increase it by 20 percent. I mean, I think we can quadruple it. I think you could go—I mean, literally, it sounds crazy—you could go 10 times more. You could go 20 times more. Because what we do right now is not much, and we should do a lot.

So I think that's going to be—and I also do agree that that has so much to do with great peace. Having a great trading relationship has so much to do with peace and extremism, in this case. I think it can have a—so I expect that we will, within a very short period of time, start having very significant trade with Pakistan.

North Korea

Q. Sir, are there any lower, working-level talks with North Korea scheduled at this point since you met with Kim Jong Un at the DMZ?

President Trump. No, we just have a very good relationship, and probably, they would like to meet. And we'll see what happens. There was a little correspondence recently—very positive correspondence—with North Korea.

Q. Between you or your staff?

President Trump. Again, there's no nuclear testing. There's no missile testing. There's no nothing. I think we will—yes, at a certain point.

Q. What's the roadmap to working-level talks, sir?

President Trump. When they're ready—when they're ready, we'll be meeting.

Q. They're not ready yet, sir?

Q. One question, please?

President Trump. Go ahead.

Imprisonment of Pakistani Physician Shakil Afridi

Q. One question, please. [Inaudible]—from—[inaudible]—Pakistan. Did you raise the case for Dr. Afridi?

Prime Minister Khan. Well, there will be things discussed. So you know, that would be for afterwards. We'll discuss this.

Q. Mr. President, on Puerto Rico?

President Trump. We'll be discussing it.

India-Pakistan Relations

Q. A question on India. Pakistan—one of the—[inaudible]—Pakistan—[inaudible]—where India—[inaudible]—a nonstate actors to destabilize them. And the people from there are going to Europe and other places. And they're getting refused. They're getting asylum in India, which is actually an indication that India is helping those non-state actors to infiltrate in Pakistan and create that. One of the guy Pakistan is holding—which was the—[inaudible]—network. So you do you think that the U.S. will be playing a role in stopping India to, you know, destabilizing the region?

President Trump. I think I can very well. I have a very good relationship with Prime Minister Modi. And I think we're going to have a phenomenal relationship with the Prime Minister of Pakistan. I do think that it's a two-way street. You know, you say India is coming in

and destabilizing Pakistan, but India is saying that Pakistan is coming in and destabilizing. So there's a lot of room right there where we can meet. I think we can meet.

You had a question on Puerto Rico?

Governor Ricardo A. Rosselló Nevares of Puerto Rico/Federal Aid to Puerto Rico

Q. Should the Governor of Puerto Rico step down right now?

President Trump. Did he step down?

Q. Should he? Should he? He says he's not going to, because he's not going to run for reelection.

President Trump. Oh. Look, he's a terrible Governor. I think you have an even worse mayor of San Juan. She's horrible. I think she's horrible. I watched her—my people did nothing, but complain about her when we helped them with their hurricane problem. The mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, is a horror show. She's incompetent. Grossly incompetent. At the same time, the Governor is not good.

So the United States Congress—you won't believe this; please close your ears, because this would be—gave Puerto Rico \$92 billion last year for hurricane relief. No, they haven't gotten the money, all of it, but they've got a lot of it, but they're scheduled to get. The Congress of the United States handed them \$92 billion. And that \$92 billion is in the hands of incompetent people and very corrupt people.

But the Governor has done a terrible job. And the mayor of San Juan has—she's horrible. I think she's just terrible. She's so bad for her people. And I think the Government of the United States, they have to be careful.

I'm the best thing that ever happened to Puerto Rico, because we did a great job in Puerto Rico. They don't like to give me the credit for it, but we did a great job. I have many Puerto Rican friends. I have a real understanding of Puerto Rico. I've had jobs in Puerto Rico.

I had—I think the most successful—I owned the Miss Universe contests and pageants, and we had them in Puerto Rico twice. And I'll tell you, we had tremendous successes. In fact, they said literally a hundred percent—this never happens—almost—I think it was close to a hundred—but a hundred percent of the island itself was watching. They liked those pageants.

No, I've had a great relationship with Puerto Rico. I'm the best thing that ever happened to Puerto Rico. But Congress has given them \$92 billion. Pakistan would like some of that, right? Ninety-two, not 1.3—because Pakistan was getting 1.3—\$92 billion, and the money is squandered and wasted and stolen.

And I'll tell you what: The Senators are not happy about it, and Congress is not happy about it. Because you really do—you have incompetent—totally grossly, incompetent leadership at the top of Puerto Rico. The people of Puerto Rico are great. And the people of Puerto Rico like me, and they should because nobody has given them what I give them. But the leadership is corrupt and incompetent.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 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, 2018; former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr.; Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India; and Mayor Carmen Yulín

Cruz Soto of San Juan, PR. Reporters referred to Sen. Lindsey O. Graham; Rep. Jerrold L. Nadler; and Chief of Staff of the Pakistani Army Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Afridi, Shakil; Barr, William P.; Comey, James B., Jr.; Cruz Soto, Carmen Yulín; Khan, Imran; Kim Dong-chul; Kim Hak-song; Kim Jong Un; Kim, Tony; McCarthy, Kevin O.; McConnell, A. Mitchell; Mnuchin, Steven T.; Modi, Narendra; Mueller, Robert S., III; Obama, Barack; Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria; Omar, Ilhan A.; Pelosi, Nancy; Pressley, Ayanna S.; Rosselló Nieves, Ricardo A.; Schumer, Charles E.; Tlaib, Rashida H.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Afghanistan : Reconciliation efforts; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: POW/MIA remains, recovery efforts; Budget, Federal : Public debt limit; China : Political demonstrations in Hong Kong; China : President; China : Trade with U.S.; Civil rights : Freedom of press; Communications : Broadband and wireless technologies; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : House of Representatives :: Minority leader; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; Congress : Senate :: Majority leader; Congress : Senate :: Minority leader; Economy, national : Improvement; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Foreign policy, U.S. : Diplomatic efforts, expansion; Foreign policy, U.S. : Foreign aid policies and funding; Government organization and employees : Federal regulations, review; Health and medical care : Individual insurance mandate, tax penalty; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.; India : Prime Minister; India : Relations with Pakistan; India : Relations with U.S.; Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Iran : Nuclear program, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; Iran : Terrorism, sponsorship; Iran : U.S. naval action in Strait of Hormuz; Justice, Department of : Attorney General; North Korea : Ballistic missiles, testing and development; North Korea : Chairman, State Affairs Commission; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; Pakistan : Health and medical care, strengthening efforts; Pakistan : Prime Minister; Pakistan : Relations with India; Pakistan : Relations with U.S.; Pakistan : Security cooperation with U.S.; Pakistan : Trade with U.S.; Puerto Rico : Governor; Puerto Rico : Hurricane Maria, damage and recovery efforts; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; Science and technology : Global competitiveness; Taxation : Tax relief; Terrorism : Global threat; Treasury, Department of the : Secretary.

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