North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Press point

by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and US President Donald Trump ahead of Leaders meeting in London
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(As delivered. Transcript courtesy of The White House)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, thank you very much. It's a great honor to be with Secretary General Stoltenberg of NATO. This is our first meeting, meaning my first meeting of this trip. But we've met many times.

I think he's doing a fantastic job. I'm a big fan. His contract was extended; I was very happy about that. But you really are - you're doing a fantastic job. We appreciate it.

I think the Secretary General will tell you that, through some work and some negotiation, we've increased the budget of countries other than the USA, because we're paying far more than anybody else, and far more even as a percentage of GDP. But we've increased the numbers that other countries are paying, by $130 billion. It was going down for close to 20 years. If you look at a chart, it was like a rollercoaster down, nothing up. And that was going on for a long time. You wouldn't have had a NATO if you kept going that way.

And now we've really increased it incredibly well, and I'm happy to have helped. But the Secretary has been looking to do that for a long time. And, I can tell you, he's very happy about it.

And, just generally, we're going to have a very big couple of days. I believe we're going to have a tremendous couple of days, but very big, very important. We have tremendous spirit, as it pertains to NATO, I would say - except, perhaps, for one country. And we'll be talking to that one country. We'll see how it works out. And, actually, the one country has a couple of points, but those points are very devastating to NATO. But we'll find out about that during the next two days.

And, with that, I'd like to introduce the Secretary General. Say a few words. Please.

SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG: Thank you so much, Mr. President. It's good to see you again, and I'm looking forward to celebrate the 70th anniversary of our alliance together with all the other leaders, today and tomorrow.

We are making real progress, most importantly on the burden sharing. And your leadership on defense spending is having a real impact. Since 2016, Canada and European allies have

added $130 billion more to the defense budgets, and this number will increase to 400 billion U.S. dollars by 2024.

This is unprecedented. This is making NATO stronger. And it shows that this Alliance is adapting, responding when the world is changing.

We will, of course, also address a wide range of other issues, including the fight against terrorism, arms control, our relationship with Russia, the rise of China. And NATO is the most successful alliance in history because we have been able to change when the world is changing. That's exactly what we are doing again. And the fact is that we are doing more together in this Alliance now than we have done for many decades.

So, once again, thank you for your leadership and your strong commitment to NATO.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I loved your statement that we're able to change when the world is changing. And you do have to do that. Your original mission was somewhat different than it is now. Today, the world is a lot different than it was back then. But that's a very profound statement, and it's a statement that everybody has to understand. It's very - to me, it's very important.

Okay. Thank you very much, everybody.

Q Mr. President, you're here in London. Are you going to be seeing Prime Minister Johnson?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yes.

Q And do you have any thoughts on the upcoming election?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I have no thoughts on it. It's going to be a very important election for this great country. But I have no thoughts on it. I will be meeting with him, yes.

Q When will that be?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I don't know. I have the schedule over here. I have - I have many meetings. I have meetings set up with lots of different countries.

Q What do you think about President Macron's criticism about NATO, saying that it is "brain dead"?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Who said that?

Q President Macron.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I know. And then, Turkey responded by saying that he was brain dead, which was interesting.

Now, NATO serves a great purpose. It got to be unfair for the United States because the United States was paying a disproportionate amount. And I heard that President Macron said NATO is “brain dead.” I think that’s very insulting to a lot of different forces, including the man that does a very good job in running NATO.

No, it has a great purpose, especially with the fact that NATO is becoming much more flexible, in terms of what it looks at.

But I was very surprised. I’d like to ask you: What did you think? He made a statement about NATO being “brain dead.” What did you think?

SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG: Well, I - that’s not the case because, actually, NATO is active. NATO is agile. NATO is adapting. And we have just implemented the largest reinforcement of collective defense since the end of the Cold War, with high readiness of troops.

For the first time in our history, we have combat-ready troops in the eastern part of the Alliance. European allies and Canada are investing more also in high-end capabilities, and we are stepping up the fight against terrorism. And we are, as an Alliance, for the first time also addressing the security implications of the rise of China.

So the reality is that this Alliance has proven, once again, to be able to adapt, to change, responding to a changing world. So that’s the reason why we are a success: the ability to change when the world is changing.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: It’s a tough statement, though, when you make a statement like that. That is a very - a very, very nasty statement to, essentially, 28 - including them - 28 countries.

I think that - you know, you have a very high unemployment rate in France. France is not doing well, economically, at all. They’re starting to tax other people’s products, so therefore, we go and tax them. That’s just taking place right now, on technology, and we’re doing their wines and everything else.

And it’s - it’s a very tough statement to make when you have such difficulty in France. You look at what’s happened with the yellow vests, or you look at what’s going on during certain parts of their season. They’ve had a very rough year. And you just can’t go around making statements like that about NATO. It’s very disrespectful.

Q Mr. President, the Department of Justice Inspector General’s report is due out soon. And it’s been reported that the Attorney General disagrees with that conclusion. Do you agree with Attorney General Barr? Do you have any comments on that?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I just don’t know. Yeah, I just don’t know. I haven’t seen it. I purposefully stay out of it. We have a great Attorney General. He’s a very fair man. He’s a great gentleman.

He didn't need this job. He took this job because he wanted to do something great for the country. As you know, he was a very successful man. Picked a great company to work - when he left, as you know, he picked a great company to work for. But this is a successful man. Didn't need the job. He's doing a great job.

I have not seen the report. Perhaps he's read the report. I think he was quoted incorrectly. I do believe that, because I'm hearing their - the report is very powerful. But I'm hearing that by lots of different things - not from inside information; it's really from outside information.

I think all we have to do is wait. Isn't it going to be released on Monday - Monday or so? I think we have to read it and we have to see it. But I hear there's a lot of devastating things in that report. But we'll see what happens. Look, we have a few days to wait. We've been all waiting a long time.

I do think the big report to wait for is going to be the Durham report. That's the one that people are really waiting for. And he's highly respected. And we're - and he's worked very hard. And he's worked long hours, I can tell you, and gone all over world. So we'll see. But the Durham report is the report people are really looking forward to.

But this is a very important report. The IG report is a very important report. If what I read is correct - I read it in your newspaper - if what I read is correct, that would be a little disappointing. But it was just one asset - one aspect of the report. We'll see what happens. We'll see it. It's coming out in a few days. I hear it's devastating, but we'll soon find out.

Q (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yes?

Q How do you plan to bring NATO together at the summit?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I think the Secretary General has done a good job in bringing NATO together. You know, it's been unfair because the United States is paying 4 percent, and some people could say 4.3 percent, of the largest GDP there is in the world, by far, because we've brought it to a level that nobody thought even possible. So we're paying 4 to 4.3 percent, when Germany is paying 1 to 1.2 percent - at max, 1.2 percent - of a much smaller GDP. That's not fair.

And it's - look, it's not - it's not fair also when you have the European Union - many of these are the same countries - but you have the European Union treating the United States very, very unfairly on trade. The deficit, for many, many years - for decades - but the deficit, for many, many years, has been astronomical with the United States and Europe - in their favor. And I'm changing that, and I'm changing it fairly rapidly.

But it's not - it's not right to be taken advantage of on NATO, and also, then, to be taken advantage of on trade. And that's what happens. And we can't let that happen. So, we're

talking to the European Union, and we're talking to various countries about NATO. But we're talking to the European Union about trade. And they have to shape up; otherwise, things are going to get very tough.

SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG: But let me just add that NATO is the only place where North America and Europe meet every day, where we discuss, decide, and take actions together, responding to a wide range of different security threats and challenges. And we do that more now than we have done for many, many years.

And the reality is that - not least because it has been so clearly conveyed from President Trump that we need fair burden sharing - Allies are stepping up. And we are also modernizing this Alliance, responding to new challenges in cyber, in space. We will declare space as a new operational domain for NATO, something we never had before.

So it just highlights that, well, there are differences because we are 29 different countries from both sides of the Atlantic, with different political parties in power, with different history, different geography. But despite these differences, we have always been able to unite around our core task to protect and defend each other because we are stronger and safer together. And I'm absolutely certain that that will also be the case now.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I would say - I would say that nobody needs NATO more than France. If you just look back over the last long period of time, nobody needs NATO more than France.

And, frankly, the one that benefits, really, the least is the United States. We benefit the least. We're helping Europe. Europe unites and they go against a common foe. That may or may not be a foe; can't tell you that. But there are other foes out there also.

But I think nobody needs it more than France. And that's why I think that when France makes a statement like they made about NATO, that's a very dangerous statement for them to make.

Q You mentioned the digital tax, sir. What would it take for you not to impose those tariffs on the French products?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, look, I'm not in love with those companies - Facebook and Google and all of them, Twitter - although I guess I do pretty well with Twitter, on the other side. But I'm not necessarily in love with those companies. But they're our companies. They're American companies. I want to tax those companies. They're not going to be taxed by France.

So France is going to put a tax on them. It was totally out of the blue. He just had the idea. Emmanuel had an idea: "Let's tax those companies." Well, they're American companies. I'm not going to let people take advantage of American companies. Because if anyone is going to take advantage of the American companies, it's going to us. It's not going to be France.

And so we're taxing - as you know, we're taxing their wines and everything else. And we have a very, very big tax to put on them. Plus, we have a tax going on on Airbus, and that'll be a good thing for Boeing. But we're only going to do that if it's necessary.

As you know, we won - in the World Trade Organization, we won seven and a half billion dollars. We never used to win before me, because, before me, the United States was a sucker for all of these different organizations. And now they realize - the World Trade Organization realizes that my attitude on them: If they don't treat us fairly, well, I'll tell you someday what will happen.

And we've been winning a lot of cases at the World Trade Organization. We virtually - very rarely did we ever win a case. They took advantage of the United States.

So that's where it is. We won seven and a half billion dollars. And if France puts a tax on our companies - again, these are companies that are against - you know, they were against me, if I read the papers correctly. I don't know why they were against me, but they were against me. They're supposed to be very powerful. And yet, I won. So maybe they're not so powerful.

But they're American companies. I don't want France taxing American companies. If they're going to be taxed, it's going to be the United States will tax them. Okay?

Q And why are you staying out of the British election, sir? Are you making a conscious decision -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Because I don't want to complicate it. I can - look, I've won a lot of elections for a lot of people. If you look, just over the last few months: two elections in North Carolina I won; I helped the governor of Kentucky. I mean, the press doesn't write it, but they went up, supposedly, 17, 18, 19 points because of my - he lost by just a little bit. But I lifted him 19 points.

In Louisiana, I got them into a runoff. And after getting them into a runoff, he picked up 14 points because they thought he was going to lose to a popular governor - John Bel Edwards. Good guy. Popular governor. He almost won. He lost by less than a point.

But with the exception of those two races, where I had a huge impact because I raised them up almost to victory and they had no chance - with the exception of those two, I've won virtually every race that I've participated in.

But this is a different country. And, you know, I say often: In Germany, they like Obama. The reason they like Obama is because Obama gave the ship away. He allowed them to take everything. He gave them things that I wouldn't do.

And I love Germany. I love this country. I love a lot of countries. But I'm representing the U.S. So they may not like me because I'm representing us. And I represent us strong. President

Obama did not represent us strong. He gave everything away, and he shouldn't have done that. And that's why we're still paying a price for what he did.

So I'll stay out of the election. You know that I was a fan of Brexit. I called it the day before. I was opening up Turnberry the day before Brexit. You were there; many of you were there. I mean, I recognize that many of you were there. And they asked me whether or not Brexit would happen. I said "yes," and everybody smiled and they laughed. And I said, "Yes, it's going to happen, in my opinion." It was just my opinion. The next day, they had the election, and I was right.

But I stay out of it. I think Boris is very capable, and I think he'll do a good job.

Q How is your relationship with President Macron -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Say it?

Q How is your relationship with President Macron, going into this meeting this afternoon?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I think it's fine. I've always had a good relationship with Emmanuel. And sometimes he'll say things that he shouldn't say. And I disagree with some of his policies with respect to France, but he's got to do what he's got to do. And sometimes I think he does things that are counterproductive for his own country.

Q Mr. President, could you work with a possible Prime Minister Corbyn? Or is that beyond your -

Q Would you be able to work with a possible Prime Minister Corbyn? Or is that -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I can work with anybody. I'm a very easy person to work with, you know. You wouldn't believe it. Look at this gentleman. When I came in, I was angry at NATO. And now I've raised $130 billion.

And, by the way, you're talking annually. You know, you're talking about a tremendous amount of money. You're talking about -

Q And would you want to see -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: You're talking about numbers that are astronomical. And yet, you still have many delinquent - you know, I call them "delinquent" when they're not paid up in full.

And then, I asked the other question: When they don't pay up in full, what happens to the past year? So let's say Germany is at 1 percent and they stay at 1 percent and another 1. Well, does that mean it disappears over the last five years or if they haven't paid? You know, nobody has ever asked that question.

It's not a bad question for you to be asking. Because, you know, it's not like, "Oh, gee. Let's start a brand-new year." A lot of countries haven't paid. And you could make the case that they haven't paid. They're, really, delinquent for 25, 30 years. And then you add all that up, and NATO is a very rich system. You know that, right?

So, you know, they haven't chosen to go that way. But when Germany is at 1 to 1.2 percent, and when they don't pay up to the 2 - and, let me tell you, the 2 is a very low number. You know, it really should be 4. It shouldn't be 2; it should be 4. But that's the way it is.

Yeah. Please.

Q Mr. President, are you concerned at all that the impeachment inquiry back home - Congress is preparing to impeach you - that it weakens your position, as the President, here at NATO?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I don't think so. You know, I know most of the leaders. I get along with them.

It's a hoax. The impeachment thing is a hoax. It's turned out to be a hoax. It's done for purely political gain. They're going to see whether or not they can do something in 2020, because otherwise they're going to lose.

It's turning out - and you see it better than anybody. I read something in your paper the other day that it's having a reverse effect, which some people thought it might have; I didn't know.

But I can tell you, the districts where I won, and then they had an election in between mine - but they had an election and other people got in; Democrats got in - those districts are leaning very big toward me. Now, I wasn't in the race in 2018. So it's not really the same thing. And a lot of my voters say they're not going to vote unless Trump is actually in the race.

But it's really having a tremendous impact on - and a lot of Democrats, I hear, are very upset. They just got back from their district, and I hear they're very upset.

The impeachment witch hunt - it's really just a continuation of the hoax that's been taking place for the last three years. And I think you know that.

Q And does it cast a cloud, though, as you're trying to negotiate on behalf of the United States?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I would say this: I think it's very unpatriotic of the Democrats to put on a performance where they do that. I do. I think it - I think it's a bad thing for our country. Impeachment wasn't supposed to be used that way. All you have to do is read the transcripts; you'll see there was absolutely nothing done wrong. They had legal scholars looking at the transcripts the other day, and they say, "These are absolutely perfect. Trump is right when he uses the word."

Those concept - those calls that we made - two of them - were absolutely perfect calls. And I think it's a very bad thing for our country.

Does it cast a cloud? Well, if it does, then the Democrats have done a very great disservice to the country, which they have. They've wasted a lot of time. We're trying to get prescription drugs reduced very substantially. We could do it easily. They don't have any time to do anything. I call them the "Do Nothing Democrats." They are hurting our country very badly.

Q Mr. President, will you meet with President Erdoğan here? And is there still -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I may. I may. I have a very good relationship. I may. I - you know, it could be - I don't know - I don't know if it's on the schedule. But if it isn't, I would.

Q And is there still a place for Turkey in NATO after its invasion of Syria a couple weeks ago?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I'd have to ask the other countries. I mean, I have my own views, but I wouldn't say it here.

Good relationship with Turkey. We left their border. We've been on their border long enough. They're doing just fine on their border. We kept the oil. I kept the oil. The only people we have over there now - we have a few that - a small group that are fighting the remnants of ISIS because they've popped up again and we put them down.

We've defeated the ISIS caliphate. Nobody thought we could do that so quickly. I did it very quickly. When I came in, it was virtually 100 percent. And I knocked it down to 0. I knocked it down to 0. But it pops up every once in a while.

So we have a very small group there. And we're - and we're doing it with others, in all fairness. But, importantly, we kept the oil. And the oil is what fueled ISIS. That's what fueled them. That's what they - that's what gave them the economic strength to do what they did.

And, of course, we killed al-Baghdadi. And we also killed his second. So that was very important, because he was trying to re-form ISIS.

Q Should the National Health Service be on the table on trade talks with the United Kingdom?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Say it.

Q Should the National Health Service be on the table in trade talks with the United Kingdom?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No, not at all. I have nothing to do with it. Never ever thought about it, honestly. We have enough -

Look, we are going to have a great healthcare system. We're doing great healthcare work. We've got things really running well. And if we get - if we get elected - if we take the House,

keep the Senate, keep the White House - we'll have phenomenal healthcare.

But right now, we've made it very good. And we have 180 million people on plans that they absolutely love - private plans that they absolutely love.

But in this country - no, they have to work that out for themselves. We have absolutely - I don't even know where that rumor started. We have absolutely nothing to do with it, and we wouldn't want to. If you handed it to us on a silver platter, we want nothing to do with it.

Q There's some talk of - among lawmakers - of censuring you, instead of impeachment. What do you think about that?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Unacceptable. I did nothing wrong. I heard about it. Now they want to go to censure because they have no case for impeachment, so they want to go to censure. I don't want them to go to censure. I did nothing - I don't mind be censured if you do something wrong. I did nothing wrong.

I had a great conversation, very respectful conversation with the President - a good person, by the way - with the President of Ukraine. It was flawless. People have analyzed it from 15 different ways. It was flawless.

You know, there were many people on that line, including the Secretary of State. And one person - two people had a complaint. And you take a look at those two people, and you tell me. But many people - and I know there were many people on the line. I mean, there's always a lot of people when you speak to a head of state. Not only our people, they had people also. Many people, probably.

No, I wouldn't be happy with that at all. No. That's - to me, it's unacceptable. I did nothing wrong. You don't censure somebody when they did nothing wrong.

They're in search of a crime - that's what they are. They're what you call an "investigation in search of a crime." There was no - not only wasn't there a crime; it's not even a word that should be used.

I had a very, very good conversation with the head of Ukraine. And, by the way, yesterday, he came out again and reaffirmed again that we had a very, very respectful, good conversation - that President Trump did nothing wrong. He doesn't even really understand what's going on over here. They look at us like, "Is this country crazy?" The Democrats have gone nuts. They're crazy. And it's very bad for our country.

Q Do you see a greater divide between the U.S. and Europe now, in NATO?

Q Do you see a greater divide in NATO between the U.S. and the rest of Europe?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No, not with us, but I do see France breaking off. I'm looking at him and I'm saying, you know, he needs protection more than anybody, and I see him breaking

off. So I'm a little surprised at that.

Q Is Turkey a dependable ally or dependable member of NATO? And when will you bring sanctions against them for -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: But the first part of your question, say it again.

Q Thank you. Is Turkey a dependable member of NATO? And when will you bring sanctions against them for buying Russian S-400 missiles?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, it's a country that I happen to have a good relationship with. We did a deal that everybody was very critical of and now they're saying it works. And I read a couple of stories just two days ago that, "Wow, that deal that Trump did with Turkey" - because I want to get our soldiers out of there. I don't want to be policing a border that's been fought over for 2,000 years. I want to get them out, but I wanted to keep the oil. And now they're saying, "That was a great deal that Trump made." I took a lot of heat over that deal.

No, I think that, as far as I'm concerned, I like Turkey and I get along very well with the President. And I - you know, I would hope that he's a very good member of NATO, or will be. But we'll see what it is in the future.

Could I ask you that question?

SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG: Yes, but Turkey is an important NATO Ally - and you can just look at the map. They're bordering Iraq and Syria - the only Ally that borders that part of the world. And Turkey has been enormously important in our joint efforts to fight ISIS/Daesh. We have been able to liberate, in the U.S.-led coalition to defeat ISIS, all the territory that ISIS controlled just a few months ago, and more than 8 million people that were under ISIS control. And we have done that not least by using infrastructure bases in Turkey. So, in the fight against ISIS, Turkey has played a key role.

Then, many allies have expressed a concern about Turkish military operation into northeast Syria. But following the agreement between the United States and Turkey, when Vice President Pence went to Ankara, we have seen that Turkey has stalled its military operations in northeast Syrian, and has seen a significant reduction in violence. And now we have to build on that and try to find a political solution to the crisis in Syria.

Let me also add, on the question about Europe and North America: Yes, there are differences, as there has always been, dating back to the Suez Crisis in '56, all the way to the Iraq War in 2003. So it's nothing new that 29 allies have different views on many different things: trade, climate change, and other things.

But again, the strength of NATO is that, despite these differences, we have proven again and again able to unite around our core task to protect and defend each other. And that's exactly

what they're doing now. We are doing more together, North America and Europe, than have done for many decades.

So the paradox is that, despite so much, as I say, some political differences, we are always able to agree and unite around our core task to stay together.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I will say this: Three weeks ago, when we got al-Baghdadi, Turkey was very helpful. We flew over areas that were totally controlled by Turkey and the Turkish military. We say, "We're coming." They absolutely were very supportive, actually. We didn't tell them what we were doing and where we were going. Turkey could not have been nicer, could not have been more supportive. And that's important.

And I wanted to say that, in keeping the oil, ISIS was trying to, as you know, regain control of the oil. And we have total control of the oil. And, frankly, we had a lot of support from a lot of different people. But, right now, the only soldiers we have, essentially, in that area, are the soldiers keeping the oil. So we have the oil, and we can do with the oil what we want.

Q But Turkey bought Russian missiles. How is that being on the side of NATO?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, they did. And they tried to buy ours, and the Obama administration said, "You can't have them." Okay?

Q Would you give them to them?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: The Obama administration said, "You can't have the Patriots. You can't - we're not going to sell them to you." And they said that a number of times. And then Turkey went out and bought the Russian missile. So we'll see what happens. We're still talking about it. But they wanted to buy the Patriots; they tried to buy the Patriots. I think most of you know that. And they were shut off from buying the Patriots. They were not allowed to buy it. So that puts him in a bind also.

SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG: But the Russian system will not be integrated into the Integrated NATO Air and Missile Defence Systems, because these Russian systems cannot work together with the rest of the NATO systems, of course.

And I welcome the fact that there are talks going on between the United States and Turkey, looking into some alternative systems - the Patriots - and also the fact that NATO actually augments - we have deployed - we augmented the Turkish air and missile defense system today with the deployment of Patriot batteries by NATO, in Turkey.

So we address this issue and we try to find a way to solve it because it's now creating some problems internally in the Alliance.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And, as you know, Turkey bought billions and billions - it was one of the largest orders of F-35s, which is the greatest fighter jet in the world. And all they're going

to do now is go to another country, whether it's Russia or China. They don't want to do that; they want to buy the best planes. But, you know, they're making it very difficult for, in a way, themselves, but they're also making it difficult in Washington for them to buy that plane.

But they want to buy. They have a very big order out. They've already put up billions of dollars; they've given it to Lockheed Martin.

Q Mr. President, have you made a decision as to whether you'll have counsel present at future impeachment hearings?

Q Have you made a decision as to whether you'll have White House counsel present at future impeachment hearings?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I'm not even thinking about it. I'm only thinking about this: The impeachment hoax is going nowhere. We have tremendous support. In the history of the Republican Party, there has not been this support. We have 196 to nothing, in terms of votes in the Congress. And as far as I'm concerned, I hear the Senate is angry about - the Republican senators are very angry about what's going on because they hurt our country. They're hurting our country - the other side - very badly.

We have tremendous support. Probably the most united that our Party has ever been. I just had a 95 percent approval rating. It's the highest in the history of the Republican Party. Ronald Reagan was 87; he's second. The Party has never been this united - the Republican Party.

The impeachment is going nowhere. It is a waste of time. They're wasting their time. And it's a disgrace. It's a disgrace to our country.

Q How will you convince the Republican senators to agree that your conduct with Ukraine was perfect and flawless? Because a number of them, as you know, have been critical of your conduct, even though they say (inaudible).

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, that's only - the only people that are critical are people that haven't read the conversation that I had. And in some cases, they haven't read.

Are you okay back there? What happened? You getting into a fistfight or something?

Q Secretary Pompeo is causing trouble. (Laughs.)

Q I'm wondering if you think he should run for Senate.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No - oh, oh. Oh, I thought you (inaudible) something. Who is that?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm right back here, sir.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Oh, okay. I thought they got into a little fistfight back there. That's happened a couple of times with you people.

No, I think the Republican Party is, right now, more united than they've ever been. When people read the - I always say, "Read the transcript." I also say, "Take a look at what the President of Ukraine said." And he said it numerous times, including, very powerfully, yesterday. Because that's the only thing that really - that's it. Then you have people heard third-hand, fourth-hand, second-hand.

No, we have tremendous support in the Republican Party. There never has been support like this. In fact, I would always complain that the Democrats, I think, are lousy politicians with horrible policy: open borders, sanctuary cities, high taxes - they want to raise your taxes. But they've always stuck together. I respect that. And the Republicans, I've always said, have better policy, but, historically, they haven't stuck together the same way.

There has never been a time where the Republican Party has been more united. This is a witch hunt by the Democrats. It's a continuation. It's been going on now for three years. Actually, from before the election it's been going on. You'll probably see that after the report is released on Monday or Tuesday.

But this is just a witch hunt that's very bad for our country. But I'll tell you, it's been very unifying for the Republicans and for my base.

Q And a point of clarification. In your opening remarks, you were very critical of one country but you didn't name the country. What country were you talking about?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I'd rather have you guess. You're a very good reporter. I'd rather have you guess. I'll probably agree with your assumptions.

Q Mr. President, would you like to see Secretary Pompeo run for Senate in Kansas?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: So, he's a tremendous guy doing a tremendous job. And I would say this: If I thought we were going to lose that seat - because we shouldn't lose that seat; it's a great state; it's a state that I won overwhelmingly, as you know; we shouldn't lose that state - then I would sit down and talk to Mike. But you could never find anybody that could do a better job as Secretary of State.

But if we thought we were going to lose that, I would have a talk to Mike. If - Mike is - if you look at polling, Mike would walk away with that seat. If I thought there was a risk to losing that seat, I would say that I would sit down very seriously and talk to Mike, and find out how he feels about it.

He loves what he's doing. He's doing a great job, as you know.

Q Could I ask you about NATO? Why is China such an important subject for this NATO Summit? What threat do they pose?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, China has become very powerful and much more so than in the past. They've done it, largely, with United States money, because our past Presidents allowed them to steal the cookie cutter. And that's okay - I don't begrudge China for that. I begrudge - I'm very disappointed in our past Presidents and leadership. They allowed this to happen. There's no way it should've happened.

And, by the way, I'm doing very well in a deal with China, if I want to make it. If I want to make it. I don't think it's "if they want to make it"; it's "if I want to make it." And we'll see what happens. But I'm doing very well, if I want to make a deal. I don't know that I want to make it, but you're going to find out pretty soon. We'll surprise everybody.

SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG: But, as you know, historically, NATO has been focused on the Soviet Union and Russia, so it's not something new that we now are also addressing the implications for our security by the rise of China. But we have to do that because China is now the second-largest defense spender in the world, after the United States.

They recently displayed a lot of new advanced military weapons systems, including new intercontinental ballistic missiles able to reach the whole of Europe and the United States; hypersonic weapons, gliders; and they also deployed hundreds of intermediate-range missiles that would have violated the INF Treaty if China had been part of that treaty.

It's not about moving NATO into the South China Sea, but it's about taking into account the fact that China is coming to closer to us. We see them in the Arctic. We see them in Africa. We see them investing heavily in European infrastructure. And, of course, we see China in cyberspace.

So the rise of China - there are some opportunities, but also some challenges, and we need to face them together. And I think it's a good thing that Europe and North America do that together. Because, together, North America and Europe, we are 50 percent of world GDP and 50 percent of the world's military might. So as long as we are together, we are bigger and stronger than any other potential adversary.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I think that's important because it's a very different NATO. I mean, this has become - I really think since I've joined, since I've come in - we have a very good relationship.

This used to be a NATO on one country. They didn't even talk about anything else. And now, really, we are looking at all over the world, because they're - you know, the world changes. Seventy years it is; it's a long time. And the world has changed a lot. And I don't think, frankly, before us, that NATO was changing at all with it. And NATO is really changing right now. So

it's a different NATO. It's covering a lot more territory. It's covering hotspots. It's covering a lot of things that were never even contemplated or thought of even five years ago. If you go back five years, they wouldn't even be thinking about the things that we're doing now.

So - and I've become a bigger fan of NATO because they've been so flexible. If they weren't flexible, I think I would probably be not so happy. But they are very flexible, and this gentleman is doing a great job.

Okay?

Q Are you still - are you still planning to come to Germany?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I will come to Germany, sure. I love Germany. I love the people of Germany.

Q Mr. President, why has North Korea continued its nuclear program despite your various meetings?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, we'll see. I have confidence in him. I like him. He likes me. We have a good relationship. We'll see. We'll see what happens. He definitely likes sending rockets up, doesn't he? That's why I call him "Rocket Man."

Q Was that helpful do you think - calling him "Rocket Man"?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: But we have a very good - we have a very good relationship and we'll see what happens. It may work out; it may not. But, in the meantime, it's been a long time.

President Obama said it's the number-one problem. And it would've been war; you'd be in a war right now if it weren't for me. If I weren't President, you'd be in a war right now in Asia, and who knows where there that leads. But that brings in -

Q Mr. President, you've met with -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: - that brings in a lot of other countries.

Q Mr. President, you've met with Kim Jong Un three times now, and yet he continues to build his nuclear program and test his missiles. So what more will it take?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, you don't know that. Number one, you don't know that. And number two, very importantly, I have met and, in the meantime, we still have peace. We have peace. And at least, speaking for myself, I have a very good personal relationship, and he has with me. I'm possibly the only one he has that kind of relationship with in the world. They call it the "Hermit Kingdom."

I know a lot about his "Hermit Kingdom," but I have a very good relationship. If you would've listened to President Obama, we'd be in a World War Three right now. So we'll see what

happens.

Hey, look - we are more powerful, militarily, than we ever have been. And I will tell you, when I took over the United States military, when I became Commander-in-Chief, our military was depleted, our military was in trouble. You know that better than anybody. We had old planes; we had old everything. We didn't have ammunition. Now we have the most powerful military we've ever had and we're by far the most powerful country in the world. And, hopefully, we don't have to use it, but if we do, we'll use it. If we have to, we'll do it.

But, you know, my relationship with Kim Jong Un is really good, but that doesn't mean he won't abide by the agreement we signed. You have to understand. You have to go and look at the first agreement that we signed. It said he will denuclearize. That's what it said. I hope he lives up to the agreement, but we're going to find out.

Now, in the meantime, we're working with South Korea because it's burden sharing. And we're spending a tremendous amount of money to protect South Korea, and we think that it's fair that they pay substantially more.

Last year, I asked them to pay more and they agreed. And nobody knows this - I'll say it now, I think, for the first time - but they agreed to pay approximately $500 million a year or more for protection. That's $500 million. Now we only had a month or two before the budget ended, so they said, "No, no, no." And, you know, they're very good businesspeople; you see how they do on trade. But they agreed to pay almost $500 million a year more. That got them up to a billion dollars - close to a billion dollars. That's a lot of money. I did that with a number of phone calls and a meeting.

Now, we're negotiating for them to pay more, because the United States is paying a lot of money to protect South Korea and we think it's fair that they pay up and pay more. We have a very good relationship, but we think it's fair that they pay more. I'm not sure if anybody knows. Did you know about the $500 million that they agreed to pay more?

Q No, sir. Can you tell us more about it? (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yeah. I met with them six, seven months ago - maybe a little bit longer than that. And I said, "You're not paying enough. It's not fair."

They were paying $500 - they were paying less than $500 million a year and it costs us billions. And I said, "It's not fair. We do a great job. We have 32,000 soldiers there. It cost us, you know, many times what you're paying. And you have to pay up."

And they said - again, in a very good way, very fine negotiation. And they were very close to being at the end of their budget, and we agreed to $500 million more, almost - around $500 million. And that got them up to close to a billion dollars from $500 million - really less than $500 million, which has been that number for many, many years - decades. And I got $500 million more a year.

So, it's $500 million a year. That's a lot of money. But it's still substantially less than it costs. So now we're in a negotiation for them to pay more. And they can do that because they're a very rich country.

Q And is it -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Did - you didn't know about that, did you?

Q No. That's interesting. Do you -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Good. I wonder if I'll get a good story for that. I don't think so.

Q Do you believe it's in America's -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I don't get - I don't get good stories.

Q Is it in America's national security interests to continue to have all of those troops in the Korean Peninsula in the region?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: It can be debated. I can go either way. I can make arguments both ways. But I think it's - I do think this. I think if we're going to do it, I think it's - you know, they should burden share more fairly. It's not fair for the United States to defend many countries - not only that country, but many countries where we - and they're rich countries. I could tell you there's five other countries that I've had the same conversations with.

You know, Saudi Arabia - we moved more troops there. And they're paying us billions of dollars. Okay? You never heard of that before. You've never heard of that in your whole life. We moved troops and we paid nothing. And people took advantage and the world took advantage of us. But we do - we have a good relationship with Saudi Arabia, but they needed help. They were attacked. And, as you saw, we just moved a contingent of troops, and they're paying us billions of dollars and they're happy to do so.

The problem is nobody ever asked them to do it until I came along. Nobody ever asked. Obama didn't ask. Bush didn't ask. Clinton didn't ask. Nobody asked. In fact, they said to me, "But nobody has ever asked us to do this." I said, "I know, King, but I'm asking."

And they're paying us - they've already sent us billions of dollars. It's already in the bank. So - and that's right. And they're happy to do it. But we never had a President who would ask. And it's not right. So - and we have many other countries that were doing the same thing - wealthy countries.

Now, in some cases, you have countries that need help that don't have money. They're poor and there's tremendous trauma. There's tremendous problems and things going on that shouldn't be going on. And that's a different situation.

But we have wealthy countries - I've asked Japan. I said to Prime Minister Abe - a friend of mine, Shinzo. I said, "You have to - you have to help us out here. We're paying a lot of money. You're a wealthy nation. And we're, you know, paying for your military, essentially. You have to help us out." And he's doing - he's going to do a lot. They're all going to do a lot. But they were never asked. Now they're being asked.

Q Sir, do think you'll be able to get a China trade deal by the end of the year?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I think it's a very important point. You understand. I mean, it's a point nobody probably really knows about. I don't talk about it, but this is the first time I've talked about it publicly. But, no, South Korea is paying us almost $500 million more. And now we're starting a negotiation for millions of dollars.

Q In those recent talks with the King of Saudi Arabia that you just referenced -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yeah, very recent.

Q - did you bring up the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, the American?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, we've had that discussion and we've had it many times. And they, you know - I mean, you know their position; you know my position, too. Yeah. It's always - it's brought up. But, you know, we - I also brought up - and I'll bring it up right now - the fact that Iran is killing perhaps thousands and thousands of people, right now, as we speak. That's why they cut off the Internet. So, they cut off the Internet so people can't see what's going on.

But thousands of people are being killed in Iran right now. And, frankly, I don't know how you get in there; I don't know how you do your business - but the press ought to get in there and see what's going on because the word is that thousands of people are being killed in Iran that are protesting. And you're hearing that, too. Not just -

Q Mr. President -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Not just small numbers, which are bad; big numbers, which are really bad, and really big numbers.

Q Mr. President, is there something you want to do about that - about those killings in Iran? Is there anything more that you can do, that the United States can do?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I'd rather not say right now. But I think it's a terrible thing that I think the world has to be watching. But many people are being killed. You're hearing that, too. Many, many people are being killed in Iran right now for protesting - for the mere fact that they are protesting. It's a terrible thing.

Q Harry Dunn's family is demanding that the U.S. diplomat's wife return to the UK. Will you do that?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: You're talking about the woman who had the accident with the young man on the motorcycle?

Q Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, you know, I had his parents up, and they're lovely people. And I've spoken to the woman, who works for government, who has diplomatic immunity. And we're trying to work something out.

Q Mr. President, on the China trade deal, sir? Do you think you'll be able to get it by the end of the year? Is that your goal?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Let me tell you, the China trade deal is dependent on one thing: Do I want to make it? Because we're doing very well with China right now and we can do even better with the flick of a pen. And China is paying for it. And China has their worst year, by far, that they've had in 57 years. So, we'll see what happens. But we're doing very well, right now. And I gave the farmers, as you know, $28 billion and had a lot left over.

Because the farmers were targeted by China. I gave them $28 billion over a two-year period, and that got them whole. That was everything that China took out. I gave them from the tariffs that China paid us, and I had billions left over - many billions left over.

Q So you don't really have a deadline?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I have no deadline. No.

Q Mr. President, are you concerned about the -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: In some ways, I think it's better to wait until after the election, you want to know the truth. I think, in some ways, it's better to wait until after the election with China.

Q But why? Why is that, sir?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: But I - I'm not going to say that. I just think that. I'll just tell you: In some ways, I like the idea of waiting until after the election for the China deal. But they want to make a deal now. And we'll see whether or not the deal is going to be right. It's got to be right.

Look, China has been ripping off the United States for many, many years. Again, because of leadership, or lack of leadership, or it wasn't their thing. It's like I told you about the military and the kind of money we're taking in. And, you know, every one of these countries - these are rich countries I'm talking to. They would always say, "But nobody has ever asked us to do that." Like, "Therefore, why should we do it now?"

I said, "Well, they haven't because they were foolish, but I am." And that's where we are. And that's why - with Saudi Arabia, with South Korea, with so many other countries - they're

paying a lot of money to the United States that they weren't paying. And they will be paying a lot more.

Q Mr. President, do you think that Jeremy Corbyn needs to -

PRESIDENT TRUMP: That's a big story. Right? That's a big story, you.

Q A lot of big stories.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I don't know - I don't how you can make that a bad one. But you'll figure a way, right?

Q Do you think that Jeremy Corbyn needs to do more to denounce anti-Semitism?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I know nothing about the gentleman, really - Jeremy Corbyn. Know nothing about him.

Q Do you have a comment on Prince Andrew stepping -

Q Mr. President, do you think that NATO should strengthen the dialogue with Russia? French President Emmanuel Macron is asking to talk more to Russia. Do you support him?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I think NATO should always be in dialogue with Russia. I think you can have a very good relationship with Russia. I don't think that there is any problem at all with the Secretary General speaking with Russia. I think it's a very important thing to do.

SECRETARY GENERAL STOLTENBERG: And, actually, we are talking to Russia because I strongly also, as the President, believe in the importance of having dialogue with Russia. Russia is our biggest neighbor and Russia is here to stay, and we will strive for a better relationship with Russia. But we do that based on what we call the dual-track approach by NATO. We have to be strong and we have to provide a credible deterrence and defense, combined with dialogue.

So, for us, it is deterrence, defense, and dialogue, and that's exactly what we are doing, especially when it comes to arms control. We need to avoid a new arms race. We need to avoid a new Cold War. A new arms race is dangerous. It is expensive. And therefore, we also very much that Russia has violated the INF Treaty, which banned all of the intermediate-range missiles in Europe.

The good thing is that NATO was able to respond in a unified way. We all agreed that Russia was in violation. We all supported the U.S. decision, because a treaty will not work if it's only respected by one side.

And now we sit together again - North America, Europe, U.S., and the rest of the NATO Allies - and address how should we respond. We will respond in a coordinated way. Together, we

will respond in a defensive way. But we have to make sure that we still provide credible deterrence and defense also in a world with more Russian missiles in Europe.

Arms control is something I know that the President is very focused on. I really would like to see progress on arms control with Russia. But also, in one way, we will have to find ways to include China. Because, in the future, China has to be part of the arms control efforts.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I have to say this: Russia wants to make a deal on arms control. And I terminated the deal because they weren't living up to it. And it was an obsolete deal anyway. They weren't living up to it.

But Russia wants to make a deal. As recently as, like, two weeks ago, Russia wants to make a deal very much on arms control and nuclear. And that's smart. And so do we. We think it would be a good thing.

And we'll also certainly bring in, as you know, China. And we may bring them in later, or we may bring them in now. But Russia wants to do something badly and so do we. It would be a great thing to do.

Q Mr. President, do you have a comment on Prince Andrew stepping down from his royal duties?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: On who?

Q Prince Andrew stepping down from his royal duties.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No. I don't know Prince Andrew. But it's a - that's a tough story. That's a very tough story. I don't know him. No.

Okay. Anybody else? Thank you. So we'll see you during the next two days. Interesting, right? Huh? A lot of money. A lot of money. Okay. Bye, folks.

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