

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks During a Meeting With Former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and an Exchange With Reporters

October 10, 2017

The President. Thank you very much. Henry Kissinger has been a friend of mine. I've liked him; I've respected him. But we've been friends for a long time, long before my emergence in the world of politics, which has not been too long.

But we have been really in, I guess you'd say, the New York scene a little bit—but we got to know each other very well. He's a man I have great, great respect for. He's also somebody—usually, I say, "Have you ever been in the Oval Office?" And with Henry Kissinger, I didn't bother asking that question because he has been in this office many, many times.

But it's an honor to have Dr. Kissinger with us, a man of immense talent and experience and knowledge. And I'm going to talk to him for a while, and we're going to learn a lot. But I can say, from a world standpoint and with many of the countries that Henry and I would talk about before the election—because I would talk with Henry before the election—we've made a lot of progress with many of them. We have some outstanding, and we'll handle that as we have to handle it.

But we've made a lot of progress in the Middle East with ISIS and so many other things. It's a much calmer place. But, Henry, I say often, I inherited a mess, but we're fixing it.

So you may want to say something. And thank you for being here, Henry. Thank you very much.

Former Secretary Kissinger. Mr. President, I didn't expect this opportunity. [Laughter] It's always a great honor to be in this office, and I'm here at a moment when the opportunity to build a constructive, peaceful world order is very great.

And the President is leaving on a trip through Asia, which I think will make a big contribution to progress and peace and prosperity.

Thank you for inviting me.

The President. Thank you very much, Henry. I appreciate it.

Senator Robert P. Corker, Jr./U.S. Foreign Policy

Q. Mr. President, is Senator Corker right that you're putting the U.S. on the path to World War III?

The President. We were on the wrong path before. All you have to do is take a look. If you look over the last 25 years through numerous administrations, we were on a path to a very big problem, a problem like this world has never seen.

We're on the right path right now, believe me.

Q. Mr. President, what about your Secretary—Secretary Tillerson and the IQ. What were you trying to get at, sir?

Q. Mr. Secretary, do you worry that we're on the path to World War III?

Tax Reform/Health Care Reform

Q. Are you concerned that the Bob Corker dispute will affect tax reform at all, sir?

The President. I don't think so, no. I don't think so at all. I think we're well on our way. It's very—the people of this country want tax cuts. They want lower taxes.

We're the highest taxed nation in the world. Our companies are not leaving so much now, because we have them coming back. You see what happened. You see the announcements from companies building car plants now in Michigan; now, they're going to various different States. They're actually picking some additional locations. But just last week, five plants announced that they're going to build in this country.

But I will say that we're the highest taxed nation in the world. People want to see massive tax cuts. I'm giving the largest tax cuts in the history of this country. In addition to that, there will be reform.

So I think that it's politically—it's very positive. The people of the country want it. We're also bringing back \$3 trillion from offshore. That's money that's been there for years that wants to come back into the country, but the tax situation didn't allow it to happen and the bureaucracy. And that's going to come back as part of the deal, \$3 trillion. It could even be more than that.

People want to see tax cuts, they want to see major reductions in their taxes, and they want to see tax reform. And that's what we're doing. And we'll be adjusting a little bit over the next few weeks to make it even stronger. But I will tell you that it's become very, very popular.

And I'll also be signing something probably this week, which is going to go a long way to take care of many of the people that have been so badly hurt on health care. And they'll be able to buy, they'll be able to cross State lines, and they will get great, competitive health care, and it will cost the United States nothing. Take care of a big percentage of the people we're talking about too.

So with Congress the way it is, I decided to take it upon myself. So we'll be announcing that soon as far as the signing is concerned. But it's largely worked out, a very—it's very simple in one way, but very intricate in another. But it will be great, great health care for many, many people, a big percentage of the number of people that we were talking about for failed Obamacare.

Now, we're going to have to do something with Obamacare because it's failing. Henry Kissinger does not want to pay 116 percent increase in his premiums, but that's what's happening. And it's actually getting worse; it's getting worse by the minute. So we're going to have to do something with Obamacare, and that will work out.

But very importantly, a big percentage of people will be able to get health care. And they'll be able to go across State lines, they'll be able to buy from many, many competitors—and meaning the insurance companies—and it will not cost our country anything, but they'll have great, great health insurance again.

Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson

Q. Did you undercut the Secretary of State today with the IQ comment?

The President. No, I didn't undercut anybody. I don't believe in undercutting people. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

Q. Do you still have confidence in Secretary Tillerson, sir?

The President. Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

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