

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks Prior to an Expanded Bilateral Meeting With President Emmanuel Macron of France

April 24, 2018

President Trump. Thank you very much, everybody. Please. Well, we were going to have a short little meeting, and it turned out to be a long meeting, and it could have gone on for another 2 hours.

We discussed a lot of things, a lot of problems in the world, a lot of problems that we think can be solved. But we've come a long way, just the two of us, I think, as understanding. We talked about Iran; we talked about Syria. We talked about a lot of subjects that really are big, big, hard situations. And we think we have solutions to a number of them.

So we're going to continue that now, and then Emmanuel and myself will meet again, I think, after this meeting. But we wanted to get the opinion of some of the experts in the room. We have great experts on both sides, so we wanted to get the opinion of some of the experts.

So, very good numbers are coming out on our businesses. You're seeing the numbers that are getting released on our companies and our businesses. They're very strong. The economy has been really incredible. Unemployment now is at the lowest point ever in history in many, many States. The States were enumerated last night. Late last night the numbers came out. And we've hit the lowest unemployment numbers in many decades, in some cases. And in some cases, the lowest numbers, period.

It was just reiterated that unemployment for African American families, it's been the best in history; for Hispanic families, the best in history; for women, the best in 18 years. And that's very close to going much higher than that. So it's really something very special. So we're very happy about that.

The President and I are working on trade. The trade with France is complicated because we have the European Union. I would rather deal just with France. The Union is very tough for us. They have trade barriers that are unacceptable. Our farmers can't send their product into the European Union easily, as they should. And we accept their products. So we have to make a change, and they understand that.

And we're negotiating—Wilbur and Steve and everybody—we're negotiating with the European Union. But it's been very unfair for a long time. We had a trade deficit with the European Union of \$151 billion last year. That's unacceptable. This has been going on for many years, and that's unacceptable.

The Treasury Secretary, Steve Mnuchin, will be going to China in a few days to negotiate on trade. I think China is very serious; we're very serious. And we have no choice, but to be very serious. You know we've put on very substantial tariffs, and that will continue unless we make a trade deal. I think we're—we've got a very good chance of making a deal.

As you know, they've just stated—President Xi, a terrific guy and a friend of mine, but he's representing China, and I'm representing the United States. President Xi made a speech 4 days ago where he said that China is going to be opened up. Well, because it's not opened up right now. They trade with us; we can't trade with them. They did \$504 billion last year, and we did \$120 billion. That's a tremendous imbalance, and we can't have that. So we're going to have a delegation, at their request, go to China. They came here recently, and we're going there. And that'll be good.

European Union, by the way, we are going back to that. We are negotiating with the European Union. They had their representatives come here. And I think we're negotiating very, very seriously.

NAFTA, as you know, is moving along. They have an election coming up very soon, and it'll be interesting to see what happens with that election. But we're doing very nicely with NAFTA. I can make a deal very quickly, but I'm not sure that that's in the best interest of the United States. We'll see what happens. But we're doing very well.

In South Korea, on our trade deal, we're doing very well. And as far as North Korea is concerned, we are going to be having a meeting with Kim Jong Un, and that will be very soon. We have been told directly that they would like to have the meeting as soon as possible. And we think that's a great thing for the world. That's a great thing for North Korea and South Korea and Japan and France and everybody.

So we're having very good discussions. Kim Jong Un, he really has been very open and, I think, very honorable from everything we're seeing. Now, a lot of promises have been made by North Korea over the years, but they've never been in this position.

We have been very, very tough on maximum pressure. We have been very tough on, as you know, trade. We've been very, very tough at the border. Sanctions have been the toughest we've ever imposed on any country. And we think it will be a great thing for North Korea and it will be a great thing for the world. So we'll see where that all goes. Maybe it will be wonderful and maybe it won't. And if it's not going to be fair and reasonable and good, I will—unlike past administrations, I will leave the table.

But I think we have a chance of doing something very special with respect to North Korea. Good for them, good for us, good for everybody.

And with that, thank you all very much. Mr. President, would you like to say something?

President Macron. Thank you, Mr. President, for these words. We will have this enlarged meeting with—[inaudible]—together again before the press conference, just to say we have had very good discussion, indeed, on Syria, on Iran, the overall region, and some other very important topics regarding our security.

And I think we have to work together, because we've always worked together on these issues, and it's very important to preserve the stability and—of this region. And I think what we want to do in the interest of our people is precisely to preserve stability of sovereign states, without any hegemon.

As for the trade issue, you presented your perception of the situation, and you were fair to remind everybody that the relationship—the bilateral relationship—is balanced between France and the U.S.

President Trump. It's true.

President Macron. And I think it's very important to bear in mind that, between allies, I mean, regarding so important security issues, it's impossible to make any trade war.

We have to deal with common global challenges regarding our trade. One of these global challenges is definitely overcapacities in steel and aluminum. And we have to fix the situation. I think we have now to work fairly on that. We need several discussions and serious discussions and as you mentioned. But I think our willingness is precisely to preserve this multilateral framework and to work very closely together in the middle interest to deal with this current destabilization of trade situations.

As for the other aspects, we discussed, as well, about the Paris Agreement and our outcome and challenges regarding climate. And I have to say that our businesspeople, our scientists, work very closely together, and we want to increase this cooperation. We know everything about the treaties and the international agreements, but I think beyond that, we have a lot in common to work on, and we will follow up this discussion in the coming weeks and months. And now we will have the opportunity to go into details on a lot of these issues.

But thanks very much, again, Mr. President, for the very direct and fruitful discussion we have, you and me, and for the opportunity to discuss with your Vice President and your Secretaries on these issues. Thanks very much.

President Trump. Well, we have had a great relationship on just about everything. And too bad it's not just us doing the negotiating for the rest of the world. But we have had a great relationship.

And our trade situation with France by itself has been very good. The trade product and the trade deals we—that we do with France—unfortunately, the European Union represents, to a large extent, France—and we've had a pretty unfair situation with the European Union, but a very fair one with France. So that will continue. That will always continue.

We will always be very close to, really, our oldest ally, when you think of it. France is our oldest ally. And we will—we are going out of our way to do that.

I think we've really had some substantive talks on Iran, maybe more than anything else, and we're looking forward to doing something. But it has to be done, and it has to be done strongly. And they've very much been butchers, and we can't allow that to happen.

So we understand each other, and we'll see how that comes out. And we could have at least an agreement among ourselves fairly quickly. I think we're fairly close to understanding each other. And I think our meeting, our one-on-one, went very, very well. I hope you feel the same way.

President Macron. Definitely.

President Trump. Thank you very much, Emmanuel.

President Macron. Thanks you, Donald.

President Trump. Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

Q. Are you going to be staying in Syria, Mr. President?

President Trump. Thank you.

Q. Did you find the agreement that you need on Iran, sir?

President Trump. You'll find out. You'll find out. [*Laughter*]

Q. Dr. Jackson?

President Trump. Thank you, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.; and Chairman of the Korean Worker's Party Kim Jong Un of North Korea. A reporter referred to Physician to the President and Chief White House Physician Ronny L. Jackson, whose Senate confirmation hearing to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs was postponed over allegations of misconduct.

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