

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Moon Jae-in of South Korea and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City**

*September 23, 2019*

*President Trump.* Well, thank you very much. We're pleased to be with President Moon of South Korea. We have a long-term friendship, and we are making a lot of progress. We are working on tremendous trade deals. We—as you know, we've completed a trade deal, and that's working out very well for both countries. That deal is completed now, and it's been in existence for—solidly in existence for 6 months. And it's been very good.

And we intend to do some additional things on trade. Of course, we'll be talking about North Korea. We'll be talking the purchase of equipment. South Korea is one of our largest purchasers of military equipment. And we're working together very well.

*President Moon.* Mr. President, it's a great pleasure to meet you again 3 months after our last meeting. Your visit to Panmunjom will go down as a historic moment that embodied peace through action. And I have to say that I always marvel at your imagination and bold decisionmaking.

Thanks to your leadership, we have been able to achieve great progress in terms of inter-Korean relations. And this has also led to a dialogue between the United States and North Korea. And soon, I will be expecting the working-level negotiations between the United States and North Korea to prepare for the third—your third summit with Chairman Kim to resume—to be resumed soon.

And when you have your third summit with Chairman Kim, maybe I hope that this will go down as a truly historic moment in world history. This will be a great achievement that equals a great transformation in terms of a complete denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.

During the time I have been working together with you, the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance has been evolving in a great way, especially in the economic field. We have been able to revise a bilateral free trade agreement, and that has been a great success, while many Korean companies are increasing their investment in America.

And during the course of my visit to New York, we'll be signing the deal to increase the import of LNG from America, while we'll also be signing a deal regarding a joint venture between a Korean motor company and an automotive vehicle company in America. So I believe that all of this will come to reinforce our already strong alliance.

And furthermore, I do look forward to engaging in candid discussions with you today on how we could truly make great progress in our alliance in other aspects as well.

*President Trump.* Thank you very much.

*North Korea*

*Q.* What's it going to take to have a third summit with Chairman Kim, sir?

*President Trump.* Well, we'll see. Right now people would like to see that happen. I want to know what's going to be coming out of it. We can know a lot before the summit takes place.

We had, really, two very successful summits. There's been—as you know, there's been no lessening of the sanctions. There's only been an increasing of the sanctions. But very importantly, we have our hostages back. And that was a very big deal. And we got our hostages back. We have

the remains of our great heroes from the past back, a lot of them. And they're coming in, and they actually have a lot of them ready to start coming in again.

So a lot of things have happened. Plus, there's been no nuclear testing at all for the last—quite a long period of time, at least that we can detect. And the relationships have been very good.

So we'll see what happens. But we'd like to see if we can do something. And if we can, that would be great. And if we can't, that's fine. We'll see what happens. But there's been no nuclear testing for a long time. A long time.

*Gun Control/Former Representative Robert F. "Beto" O'Rourke*

*Q.* Mr. President, for guns, do you plan on announcing a gun plan in the coming days? And if so, is it going to include background checks?

*President Trump.* Well, we're working very much with the Republicans, and we're working also with the Democrats. But a lot of the Democrats are wasting their time on nonsense, on pure nonsense. So they don't have much time to work on guns, unfortunately. If they did, it would be probably pretty easy to do. But we always have to protect our Second Amendment. It's very important.

I saw where this character from Texas—I can't imagine he'll get one vote in Texas. He wants to start confiscating guns. That's not a good thing. That's no good. It makes it actually much harder to make a deal when this Beto O'Rourke comes out and starts talking about confiscating guns. When you do that, it makes it much tougher.

But the Democrats are really just wasting so much time on nonsense, on junk. And if they focused on this, they could get it done. But we have to protect our Second Amendment. We have to protect people that want and need guns. And we have to keep guns out of the hands of crazy people and sick people. Very simple. It's not very complicated.

*North Korea*

*Q.* Are you considering sanctions—considering actions first before denuclearization as part of your new method for the—in the denuclearization talks?

*President Trump.* Sanctions where?

*Q.* Sanctions first before denuclearization, as part of your new method in denuclearization talks.

*President Trump.* I can't—you're going to have to speak up. You don't—say it again. Sanctions. Go ahead. What was——

*Q.* Sanctions—considering actions first before denuclearization?

*President Trump.* Where?

*Q.* For North Korea in the denuclearization talks.

*President Trump.* I'm not considering actions. We're getting along very well with North Korea. I have a good relationship with Kim Jong Un. And we're not considering actions at all. There's no reason for actions.

I will say this: If I weren't President, you'd be at war with North Korea, in my opinion. If the same group was in that preceded me, you'd be in a war with North Korea.

So we're not looking at any actions. We have a good relationship with Kim Jong Un. We'll see what happens. Maybe we'll be able to make a deal. Maybe not.

*Q.* Mr. President, I meant the sanctions first. I beg your pardon.

*President Trump.* Go ahead.

*Q.* Sanctions first before——

*Q.* Mr. President, there is breaking news just now——

*President Trump.* More breaking news?

*Q.* More breaking news, yes.

*President Trump.* There's always breaking news. It's usually breaking fake news. Go ahead.

### *Iraq*

*Q.* Two rockets just landed in the Green Zone in Baghdad. Do you see this as an escalation in the Middle East? And could——

*President Trump.* I don't know anything about it. You just told me it's breaking news, so I'll have to see it. You know, right now I'm here. I haven't heard it.

*Q.* But this is not the first time.

*President Trump.* When did this happen?

*Q.* Just now, but this is not the first time. Many rockets landed before.

*President Trump.* No, that is not the first time. Nope. We'll look into it. We're going to look into it.

*Q.* But are you worried about the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, the security there?

*President Trump.* We're going to look into it. I know nothing about it. You just told me it's breaking, so therefore, I assume it's relatively new, like within the last 4 days. [Laughter]

### *North Korea/Short-Range Missile Tests in North Korea*

*Q.* Mr. President, do you plan on discussing the North Korean short-range missile tests with your counterpart?

*President Trump.* Yes. We're going to discuss that.

*Q.* And, Mr. President, yourself: Do you have any comment——

*President Trump.* I will be discussing that.

*Q.* ——on the North Korean missile tests?

*President Trump.* Yes. I will be discussing. We didn't have an agreement on short-range missiles. And a lot of people and a lot of countries test short-range missiles; there's nothing spectacular about that. But we will be discussing that also. Okay?

### *Short-Range Missile Tests in North Korea*

*Q.* Can we hear from President Moon if he is troubled by the short-range missiles and if he'd like to see you maybe try to stop it from happening, talk to Chairman Kim?

*President Trump.* Well, we'll take a look at it. We're going to talk about it. But I didn't really discuss that with Kim Jong Un. That was never a part of our discussion. We did discuss nuclear testing and other things. And frankly, he's lived up to his word on those things that we discussed. And we actually signed an agreement in Singapore. We actually had two very good meetings.

You would have been at war right now with North Korea if I weren't President.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:29 p.m. at the InterContinental New York Barclay hotel. In his remarks, he referred to 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. President Moon spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: New York City; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : South Korea, President Moon.

*Locations:* New York City.

*Names:* Kim Dong-chul; Kim Hak-song; Kim Jong Un; Kim, Tony; Moon Jae-in; O'Rourke, Robert F. "Beto".

*Subjects:* Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: POW/MIA remains, recovery efforts; Civil rights : Firearm rights; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Congress : Bipartisanship; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; New York : President's visits; North Korea : Ballistic missiles, testing and development; North Korea : Chairman, State Affairs Commission; North Korea : International and U.S. sanctions; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; South Korea : Free trade agreement with U.S.; South Korea : President; South Korea : Relations with U.S.

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