

White House Press Office

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Office of the Press Secretary

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REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
BEFORE MARINE ONE DEPARTURE

South Lawn

5:53 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. The hurricane is roaring, and it could be a big one. We're hoping that it maybe makes a right and goes up north, but that's about a 5 percent chance. It's not looking good. And it's one of the biggest hurricanes we've seen in a long time. A long time. So it could be very devastating.

I just spoke to Rick Scott, and I just spoke to -- we have a lot of people that we're speaking to. I spoke with Marco Rubio. I spoke to your governors of both Georgia -- as you know, Georgia and Florida. And they're doing really well. They're working hard. Florida seems to be the main target at this moment. But I think a lot of good things are happening.

FEMA is there. Tremendous work is going on. Many, many gas trucks are coming in; they're bringing gas from Louisiana and all

Q Do you feel betrayed by Madeleine Westerhout? And what exactly did she say about your family that disappointed you?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I guess she said -- I think she said some things. And she called me. She was very upset. She was very down.

And she said she was drinking a little bit. And she was with reporters, and everything she said was off the record. And that still doesn't really cover for her. She mentioned a couple of things about my children.

But she's a very, you know, good person. And I thought -- I always felt she did a good job. And she's very down. And in all fairness, it was an off-the-record. And, of course, the press -- the press breaks off-the-records all the time because they are very dishonorable. Many of them. Not all of you, but many of them are very dishonorable. But nevertheless, you don't say things -- you don't say certain things. So, it was too bad.

But I just spoke to her just before I came out. She called. And I wish her well.

Q Thank you very much. Mr. President, the U.S. has been allocating money for the Ukrainian military that is (inaudible) Russian aggression. So can Ukraine count on further support and aid from your side?

THE PRESIDENT: Where?

Q In Ukraine.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're looking at Ukraine right now. In fact, I was going to meet with your new President. And because of the fact that we have this really massive hurricane coming in, I had to cancel my trip to Poland where I was going to meet the President of Ukraine, among many other things.

Mike Pence is going to Poland. He's taking my place. He'll do a great job. It was going to be a beautiful weekend and, really, celebration of the past. And Mike Pence will do a great job. I felt it was important that I stay here. And we'll be up at Camp David working hard. We have a lot of things happening

They can't compete.

So they've devalued their currency, they're pumping money in. And we're not paying much more. Now, let me tell you, we've taken in tens of billions of dollars. I gave the farmers \$16 billion, which makes them totally whole on China. That's what China spends in a good year. I gave -- given the farmers -- because they were targeted. The farmers were targeted by China.

So, out of the tariffs, which are much more than \$16 billion by a factor of a lot, I've given the farmers \$16 billion. And the farmers are very happy. And they want me to continue this fight. They want me to win the fight. And we're going to win the fight.

We're having conversations with China. Meetings are scheduled. Calls are being made. I guess the meeting in September continues to be on. It hasn't been cancelled. And we'll see what happens.

But China has lost a lot of companies. A lot of companies. A lot of companies have left China and a lot more are leaving. And they are not doing well. They are having the worst year they've had, I understand, in 61 years. That's a lot of years.

Yeah. Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, did you release classified information by tweeting that photo about Iran?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I just wish Iran well. They had a big problem. And we had a photo. And I released it, which I have the absolute right to do.

Q Where did it come from?

THE PRESIDENT: And we'll see what happens. You'll have to figure that one out yourself.

But we'll see what happens. They had a mishap. It's unfortunate. And so, Iran, as you probably know, they were going to set off a big missile, and it didn't work out too well. It had nothing to do with us.

And I hope that it's handled in a very humane way.

Q Mr. President, will you spend the entire weekend at Camp David monitoring the hurricane?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'll be coming back. We'll be spending - - we have an incredible conference area up there. We have a lot of experts coming up. We'll be running things. It's sort of a control center. We'll be running things. And we're going up with people, but we have a lot of people coming up to Camp David. I'll be coming back on Sunday morning, where I'm going directly to FEMA. And I think Senator Rubio and Senator Scott and -- I don't think the Governor should be there. I think he wants to be in Florida -- Governor DeSantis. He's doing a fantastic job, by the way. Doing a fantastic job.

Q How concerned are you about Mar-a-Lago being in the hurricane's path?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, I haven't even thought about it until the question was just broached a little while ago. Yeah, it would look like Mar-a-Lago is dead center. But, look, Mar-a-Lago can handle itself. That's a very powerful place. The thing I'm worried about is the state of Florida, because this hurricane is looking like it's -- this could be a record-setting hurricane.

Now, maybe things change. We're hoping for one element that might happen, and that's that it makes a right turn, it goes up north, just prior to equal to hitting shore. That would be great. But that's a pretty small percentage at this point.

Q Mr. President, on Afghanistan, the plan to reduce troops around --

THE PRESIDENT: Say it?

Q On Afghanistan --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q Around 8,600.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

and they're having a bad quarter, or if they're just unlucky in some way, they're likely to blame the tariffs. It's not the tariffs. It's called "bad management."

So a lot of companies are coming out and they're not affected by the tariffs. Not a lot, but there are some. The tariffs have put us in an incredible negotiating position, and I say that to China directly. And it's only going to get worse for China. But I say it to China directly. Because of the tariffs, we're in an incredible negotiating position, and we happen to be taking in billions and billions and billions of dollars. And we haven't taken in 10 cents from China.

And the people that support me most are the farmers. Now, as I said, I gave the farmers -- we've given the farmers \$16 billion out of a much larger purse than that. But we're doing very well with respect to what we're doing.

I do notice that -- and it was on one of the important shows, and I read it this morning someplace, that some companies, for their poor performance, are blaming tariffs, even though they don't mean that. They're just getting away with it.

Q Do you see a connection between what's going on in Hong Kong and the trade talks? Do you -- will you put any --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I do. I do. The question was, do I see a connection between Hong Kong and what's going on with the trade talks.

I think if it weren't for the trade talks, Hong Kong would be in much bigger trouble. I think it would've been much more violent. I really believe China wants to make a deal, and they know it puts us in a very bad position if there's not a humane way of handling the problems. And I let them know that: "Look, handle it in a humane fashion." And we'll see.

But I do believe that because of what I'm doing with trade, that's very much keeping down the temperature in Hong Kong. I think it's by really a lot. Because China wants to make a deal. I actually think China has to make a deal. But that's holding it down in Hong Kong. You understand that.

ready. It may have to be evacuated. Sections may have to be evacuated. We'll probably make that determination on Sunday.

Q Mr. President, Polish government demands reparations from Germany for the Second World War. Do you support those demands -- such demands?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that's going to be between Poland and Germany. I get along with them both. That's between Poland and Germany.

Q Are you concerned that you don't have a permanent FEMA Administrator or a confirmed Homeland Security Secretary as you go into this hurricane?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I like the word "Acting." I think Acting is great. As far as I'm concerned, "Acting" to me is good.

Q But you've nominated a FEMA Director?

THE PRESIDENT: And if I like the people, I make them permanent.

I have Acting. And Acting gives you great flexibility that you don't have with permanent. So I'm okay with the word "Acting." But when I like people, I make them permanent. But I can leave Acting for a long period of time.

Q Thank you, President Trump. Many studies have shown that legal access to marijuana results in less opioid abuse and fewer overdose deaths. Many states have legalized marijuana. Do you think that it will happen federally during your presidency?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to see what's going on. It's a very big subject. And right now we're in -- we're allowing states to make that decision. And a lot of states are making that decision. But we're allowing the states to make that decision.

Q Mr. President, what do you make of allegations that Ilhan Omar misused campaign funds to pay for an affair?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's terrible. I think those allegations are absolutely terrible.

But we're so far ahead of everyone since my two and a half years. You look at it. Look, you go back to Election Day, and go the day after -- so you take November 9th, and you look. We're up over 50 percent. And that's pretty much amazing. If you look at our jobs, our jobs numbers are fantastic; probably 3.6 percent. African American, Hispanic American, Asians -- we're talking about in the history of our country -- the best job numbers we've ever had.

And on this very day -- I just saw a number -- almost 160 million people are working. The most ever in the history of our country. I mean, we have incredible numbers.

Now, if our Fed lowered the rate, I think our stock market would be like a rocket ship. It's already very close to a new record. We're not very far away from a new record. We've had some very good days in the last week.

But if the Fed lowered the rate, like they should -- the fact is they went up way too fast and they also did quantitative tightening. They did a double. Big mistake.

Fortunately, the economy is so strong it was able to handle that. But if they lowered the rate, you would see our stock market be like a rocket ship.

Q By how much?

THE PRESIDENT: It would be good for us.

Q By how much, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it would go up a lot. I don't know --

Q On Colombia, how do you feel about former FARC leader calling to return -- for return to war?

THE PRESIDENT: Colombia, you said?

Q Yeah, on Colombia. Former leader of FARC.

THE PRESIDENT: You're talking about the country of Colombia?