

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Indianapolis, Indiana

April 26, 2019

The President. So I'm not allowed to comment on the new GDP numbers until about 10 or 15 minutes from now. So I will not comment on them.

The country, though, is doing very well in every respect. I mean, we're just doing well. We're knocking it out of the park, as they say. And we're very happy about that.

We did not pay money for our great Otto. There was no money paid. That was a fake news report that money was paid. I haven't paid money for any hostage. And I've gotten approximately—I think it's 20 or 21 out. We don't pay money for hostages. The Otto case was a very unusual case. But I just want to let you know, no money was paid for Otto.

Q. Measles, Mr. President, measles.

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, what did you tell Don McGahn about Mueller?

The President. I never told Don McGahn to fire Mueller. If I wanted to fire Mueller, I would have done it myself. It's very simple. I had the right to. And frankly, whether I did or he did, we had the absolute right to fire Mueller.

In the meantime, I didn't do it. I'm a student of history. I see what you get when you fire people, and it's not good. But there would have been nothing wrong with firing him. Legally, I had absolute right to fire, but I never told Don McGahn to fire Mueller.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. And by the way—and Mueller finished out his report: no collusion and no obstruction.

2020 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, how do you beat Joe Biden?

The President. I think we beat him easily.

Measles Vaccination

Q. Mr. President, measles cases are increasing. What do you tell parents?

The President. Speak. Up, up. You've got a——

Q. What do you tell parents about getting their kids vaccinated?

Q. Measles. On the measles.

Q. Measles. Tell parents about vaccination.

The President. Oh. They have to get the shot. The vaccinations are so important. This is really going around now. They have to get their shot.

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

The President's Age and Health

Q. Mr. President, how old is too old to be President?

The President. Well, I think that—I just feel like a young man. I'm so young. I can't believe it. I'm the youngest person. I am a young, vibrant man. I look at Joe—I don't know about him. I don't know.

Q. Is he too old? Is Bernie too old?

The President. I would never say anyone is too old, but I know they're all making me look very young, both in terms of age and I think in terms of energy. I think you people know that better than anybody.

Yes.

The President's August 2017 Remarks Regarding the Situation in Charlottesville, VA

Q. Mr. President, do you still think there were "very fine people on both sides" in Charlottesville?

The President. Oh, I've answered that question. And if you look at what I said, you will see that that question was answered perfectly.

And I was talking about people that went because they felt very strongly about the monument to Robert E. Lee, a great general. Whether you like it or not, he was one of the great generals.

I have spoken to many generals here, right at the White House, and many people thought—of the generals, they think that he was maybe their favorite general.

People were there protesting the taking down of the monument of Robert E. Lee. Everybody knows that.

Q. [*Inaudible*]. Mr. President, are you insulting Joe Biden——

North Korea

Q. On North Korea, Kim Jong Un has said that he wants Pompeo to not be part of negotiations and that a peace deal depends on the U.S. attitude. What do you think about that? And what's the prospects for talks with North Korea?

The President. I think we're doing very well with North Korea. A lot of progress is being made. I appreciated President Putin's statement yesterday. He wants to see it done, also.

I think there's a lot of excitement toward getting a deal done with North Korea. In the meantime, when I came here, there were nuclear tests, missile tests, rocket tests. We got our hostages back. We got remains back, and continue to come back from the war. Our great heroes, the remains. There's been no tests. There's been no nothing. So, at some point, you're going to report the facts.

I have a great relationship with Kim Jong Un. I appreciate that Russia and China is helping us. And China is helping us, because I think they want to. They don't need nuclear weapons right next to their country. But I also think they're helping us because of the fact that we're in a trade deal, which, by the way, is going very well.

Q. Mr. President, are you insulting Joe Biden—[*inaudible*]?

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election

Q. Will you let Don McGahn testify?

The President. What we're doing is executive——

Q. Did Don McGahn lie to Mueller?

The President. So what we're doing—in the history of our country, there has never been a President that's been more transparent than me or the Trump administration. I let White House Counsel McGahn testify. I let everybody testify. I think McGahn——

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Excuse me. I think McGahn was in there for 30 hours. Who ever heard of such a thing? But I said I want everybody to testify. Obviously, McGahn thought he testified fine because he was with the administration for a long time after that. And I think he said he was just joining up with respect to the appointment of judges by the administration. But I let everybody testify. There has never, ever been transparency like this.

So just so you understand—so we got a great——

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Excuse me.

We get the ruling, which I knew we were going to get, because I have nothing to do with Russia and the campaign. So we get a ruling: no collusion. We essentially get a ruling—no obstruction—based on the facts. Our great Attorney General made an immediate decision, there was no obstruction. So we have no collusion, no obstruction. We had total transparency.

We gave 1.4 million documents, if you can believe such a ridiculous thing. Five hundred people testified. We had 18 people that were Trump haters; that includes Mr. Mueller. He was a Trump hater.

Q. I'm talking about Congress, Mr. President. Congress.

The President. And wait a minute. Wait, wait. Wait.

Q. Letting testify——

The President. With all of this—with all of this—with all of this transparency, we finished "no collusion, no obstruction." Right? Then, I get out; the first the day, they're saying, "Let's do it again." And I said, "That's enough." We've got to—we have to run a country. We have a very great country to run.

And frankly, when I go through it with the House and the Senate and we have no collusion, no collusion, no obstruction, no obstruction. Then, we have—again, we have to go through it? This is a pure political witch hunt.

We did nothing wrong. And the only thing I did is make our country stronger, give it the numbers like people haven't seen before. What we're doing in this country, financially, with the military, with our veterans—if you look at veterans, we now have Veterans Choice. Nobody has ever done what I've done in their first 2 years.

So if I'm guilty of anything, it's that I've been a great President, and the Democrats don't like it, which is a shame.

Q. Mr. President—[*inaudible*]——

The President. I'm going to Indianapolis. We're going to the NRA, and we look forward to it.

2020 Presidential Election

Q. How do you beat Biden? How do you do it?

The President. I would say easily. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:21 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to boarding Marine One en route to Joint Base Andrews, MD. In his remarks, he referred to Otto F. Warmbier, a University of Virginia student from Wyoming, OH, who was returned from 17 months of detention by North Korean authorities on June 13, 2017, and died on June 19, 2017; Department of Justice Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III; former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr; Chairman of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong Un of North Korea; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and 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. A reporter referred to Sen. Bernard Sanders.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Barr, William P.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Kim Dong-chul; Kim Hak-song; Kim Jong Un; Kim, Tony; McGahn, Donald F., II; Mueller, Robert S., III; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: POW/MIA remains, recovery efforts; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Economy, national : Improvement; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Health and medical care : Preventive care and public health programs; Justice, Department of : Attorney General; Justice, Department of : Special Counsel; North Korea : Chairman, State Affairs Commission; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; Russia : President; Veterans : Health and medical care; Virginia : 2017 civil unrest and violence in Charlottesville.

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