


Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister May of the United Kingdom in Joint Press Conference

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Remarks

Foreign Policy

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PRIME MINISTER MAY: Well, good afternoon. And I'm pleased to welcome the President of the United States to Chequers today on his first official visit to the United Kingdom. No two countries do more together than ours to keep their people safe and prosperous. And we want to deepen that cooperation even further to meet the shared challenges we face now and in the years ahead.

This morning, President Trump and I visited Sandhurst, where we saw a demonstration of joint working between British and American special forces. Just one example of what is today the broadest, deepest, and most advanced security cooperation of any two countries in the world.

Whether it is our pilots deterring the use of chemical weapons in Syria or defeating Daesh, our soldiers at the forefront of NATO's presence in Eastern Europe, our navies in the Pacific enforcing sanctions on North Korea, or our unparalleled intelligence-sharing partnership thwarting attacks, our security cooperation is saving lives here in Britain, in America, and right across the world.

That partnership is set to grow, with our armies integrating to a level unmatched anywhere, and the UK set to spend £24 billion on U.S. equipment and support over the next decade.

Today, we've also discussed how we can deepen our work together to respond to malign state activity, terrorism, and serious crime. In particular, on Russia, I thanked President Trump for his support in responding to the appalling use of a nerve agent in Salisbury, after which he expelled 60 Russian intelligence officers. And I welcomed his meeting with President Putin in Helsinki on Monday. We agreed that it is important to engage Russia from a position of strength and unity, and that we should continue to deter and counter all efforts to undermine our democracies.

Turning to our economic cooperation, with mutual investment between us already over \$1 trillion, we want to go further. We agreed today that, as the UK leaves the European Union, we will pursue an ambitious U.S.-UK free trade agreement. The Chequers Agreement reached last week provides the platform for Donald and me to agree an ambitious deal that works for both countries right across our economies, a deal that builds on the UK's independent trade policy, reducing tariffs; delivering a gold standard in financial services cooperation; and, as two of the world's most advanced economies, seizing the opportunity of new technology.

All of this will further enhance our economic cooperation, creating new jobs and prosperity for our peoples for generations to come.

The UK-U.S. relationship is also defined by the role we play on the world stage. Doing this means making tough calls, and sometimes being prepared to say things that others might rather not hear. From the outset, President Trump has been clear about how he sees the challenges we face. And on many, we agree.

For example, the need to deal with the longstanding nuclear threat of DPRK, where the agreement in Singapore has set in train the prospect of denuclearization, to which the UK is proud to be contributing expertise. Or the need to address the destabilizing influence of Iran in the Middle East, where today we've discussed what more we can do to push back on Iran in Yemen, and reduce humanitarian suffering.

Or the need for NATO Allies to increase their defense spending and capability, on which we saw significant increases at yesterday's summit. This includes Afghanistan, where this week I announced a further uplift of 440 UK troops — an ongoing commitment to a mission that began as NATO's only use of Article 5, acting in support of the U.S.

Finally, let me say this about the wider transatlantic relationship: It is all of our responsibility to ensure that transatlantic unity endures, for it has been fundamental to the protection and projection of our interests and values for generations.

With U.S. leadership at its foundation, its beating heart remains our democratic values and our commitment to justice. Those values are something that we, in the UK, will always cherish, as I know the U.S. will too. It is the strength of these values and the common interests they create that we see across the breadth of our societies in North America and Europe.

And that is why I'm confident that this transatlantic alliance will continue to be the bedrock of our shared security and prosperity for years to come.

Mr. President.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you very much. Thank you. Prime Minister, thank you very much. And it is my true honor to join you at this remarkable setting — truly magnificent — as we celebrate the special relationship between our two countries. On behalf of the American people, I want to thank you for your very gracious hospitality. Thank you very much, Theresa.

Last night, Melania and I were delighted to join you and Philip for dinner at the magnificent Blenheim Palace. It was a wonderful and memorable evening that we will not soon forget. It was really something very special.

Today, it's a true privilege to visit historic Chequers that I've heard so much about and read so much about growing up in history class, and to continue our conversation, which has really proceeded along rapidly and well over the last few days.

For generations, our predecessors have gathered at this stunning retreat to strengthen a bond that is like no other. The relationship between our two nations is indispensable to the cause of liberty, justice and peace.

The United Kingdom and the United States are bound together by a common historic heritage, language, and heroes. The traditions of freedom, sovereignty, and the true rule of law were our shared gift to the world. They are now our priceless inheritance to a civilization. We must never cease to be united in their defense and in their renewal.

Before our dinner last night, Melania and I joined Prime Minister May, Mr. May, and the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough for a tour of the Winston Churchill Exhibit at Blenheim Palace. It was something; it was something very special. It was from right here at Chequers that Prime Minister Churchill phoned President Roosevelt after Pearl Harbor. In that horrific war, American and British servicemembers bravely shed their blood alongside one another in defense of home and in defense of freedom. And together, we achieved a really special, magnificent victory. And it was total victory.

Prime Minister May and I have just come from a very productive NATO summit — that was truly a productive summit — where my top priority was getting other NATO members to pay their full and fair share. And the Prime Minister was right there with me.

I want to thank you, Prime Minister, for the United Kingdom's contribution to our common defense. The UK is one of the handful of nations — 5 out of 29 — not good, but it's going to get better really fast — in addition to the United States meeting the 2-percent GDP minimum defense spending commitment.

During the summit, I made clear all NATO Allies must honor their obligations, and I am pleased to report that we have received substantial commitments from members to increase their defense spending and to do so in a much more timely manner.

In our meetings today, the Prime Minister and I discussed a range of shared priorities, including stopping nuclear proliferation. I thanked Prime Minister May for her partnership in our pursuit of a nuclear-free North Korea. She's been a tremendous help.

The Prime Minister and I also discussed Iran. We both agree that Iran must never possess a nuclear weapon and that I must halt, and we must do it — and I'm going to do it and she's going to do it, and we're all going to do it together. We have to stop terrorism. It's a scourge. We have to stop terrorism. And we have to get certain countries — and they've come a long way, I believe — the funding of terrorism has to stop, and it has to stop now.

I encouraged the Prime Minister to sustain pressure on the regime. And she needed absolutely no encouragement, because she, in fact, also encourages me. And we're doing that, and we're doing that together — very closely coordinated.

The United Kingdom and the United States are also strengthening cooperation between our armed forces, who serve together on battlefields all around the world.

Today, the Prime Minister and I viewed several U.S.-UK Special Forces demonstration — we saw some demonstration today, frankly, that were incredible. The talent of these young brave, strong people. We saw it at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. Seamless cooperation between our militaries is really just vital to addressing the many shared security threats. We have threats far different than we've ever had before. They've always been out there, but these are different and they're severe. And we will handle them well.

We also recognize the vital importance of border security and immigration control. In order to prevent foreign acts of terrorism within our shores, we must prevent terrorists and their supporters from gaining admission in the first place. Border security is a national security problem. And in the United States, we are working very hard to get the Democrats to give us a couple of votes so we can pass meaningful and powerful border security.

I also want to thank Prime Minister May for pursuing fair and reciprocal trade with the United States. Once the Brexit process is concluded, and perhaps the U.K. has left the EU — I don't know what they're going to do, but whatever you do is okay with me. That's your decision. Whatever you're going to do is okay with us. Just make sure we can trade together; that's all that matters. The United States looks forward to finalizing a great bilateral trade agreement with the United Kingdom. This is an incredible opportunity for our two countries, and we will seize it fully.

We support the decision of the British people to realize full self-government, and we will see how that goes. Very complicated negotiation and not an easy negotiation, that's for sure. A strong and independent United Kingdom, like a strong and independent United States, is truly a blessing on the world.

Prime Minister May, I want to thank you again for the honor of visiting the United Kingdom — a special place. My mother was born here, so it means something maybe just a little bit extra; maybe even a lot extra. And we had a wonderful visit. Last night, I think I got to know the Prime Minister better than at any time. We spent a lot of time together over a year and a half. But last night, we really — I was very embarrassed for the rest of the table. We just talked about lots of different problems and solutions to those problems. And it was a great evening.

As we stand together this afternoon at Chequers, we continue a long tradition of friendship, collaboration, and affection between ourselves and also between our people. The enduring relationship between our nations has never been stronger than it is now.

So, Madam Prime Minister, thank you very much. It's been an honor. Thank you. Thank you, Theresa.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you. (Applause.)

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Now we will — we're going to take four questions each. I'll start off with Laura.

Q Thank you very much, Prime Minister and Mr. President. Laura Kuenssberg, BBC News. Mr. President, you seem rather to have changed your tune from what you said earlier this week, when you said that, on the current Brexit plan, that would probably kill the possibility of a trade deal with the UK. Our countries are meant to have a special relationship, yet you publicly criticized the Prime Minister's policy and her personally for not listening to you this week. Is that really the behavior of a friend?

And, Prime Minister, is it a problem for you that some of the things Mr. Trump has said about your Brexit plan are right? It will limit the possibilities of doing trade deals easily in the future. Can you also tell us how it felt for him to criticize you in the way he did in that interview?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, maybe I'll go first, because I didn't criticize the Prime Minister. I have a lot of respect for the Prime Minister. And, unfortunately, there was a story that was done, which was generally fine, but it didn't put in what I said about the Prime Minister. And I said tremendous things. And, fortunately, we tend to record stories now, so we have it for your enjoyment, if you'd like it. But we record when we deal with reporters. It's called fake news. You know, we solve a lot of problems with the good, old recording instrument.

But what happens is that — look, the Prime Minister, as I really just said, she's going to make a decision as to what she's going to do. The only thing I ask of Theresa is that we make sure we can trade, that we don't have any restrictions, because we want to trade with the UK, and the UK wants to trade with us. We're, by far, their biggest trading partner. And we have just a tremendous opportunity to double, triple, quadruple that.

So if they're going a slightly different route — and I know they do want independence. It's going to be independence; it's just your definition. But if they're going to go a certain route, I just said that I hope you're going to be able to trade with the United States. I read reports where that won't be possible, but I believe after speaking with the Prime Minister's people and representatives and trade experts, it will absolutely be possible.

So, based on that, and based on just trade in general, and our other relationship — which will be fine — but the trade is a little bit tricky. We want to be able to trade, and they want to be able to trade, and I think we'll be able to do that. Okay? And I think she's doing a terrific job, by the way.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Thank you, Mr. President. And just to confirm what the President just said, Laura, there will be no limit to the possibility of us doing trade deals around the rest of the world once we leave the European Union, on the basis of the agreement that was made here at Chequers and that I've put forward to the European Union. And just to be clear, that is an agreement that delivers on the Brexit vote that we had in 2016 here in the UK, that delivers what I believe is at the forefront of people's mind when they were voting to leave the European Union.

So at the end of these negotiations, we will ensure that free movement will come to an end. The jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice here in the UK will come to an end. The sending of vast sums of money every year to the EU will come to an end. We will come out of the Common Agricultural Policy. We will come out of the Common Fisheries Policy. And we will ensure, by not being in a customs union, that we are able to have an independent trade policy and do those trade deals around the world. And as you've heard from the President, the United States is keen for us. We're keen to work with them. And we will do a trade deal with them and with others around the rest of the world.

Mr. President, would you like to select a —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Jonathan Swan, go ahead.

Q Jonathan Swan from Axios. Mr. President, two questions, if I may. The first one: Now your British trip is coming to a close, could you tell us the three or four things you hope to achieve in your meeting with Vladimir Putin? And the second question: What's the benefit to America of having tens of thousands of American troops stationed in Europe? Thank you.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: So I'll be meeting with President Putin on Monday. We go into the meeting with a tremendous meeting that we had with NATO. Most of you have reported it correctly. It was — certainly it was testy at the beginning, but at the end, everybody came together and they agreed to do what they should do — and actually, what they've committed to do, which you fully adhered to. You didn't have a problem, but some people did. And we left that meeting, I think, probably more unified and wealthier as a group than ever before. So we go in strong.

We'll be talking to President Putin about a number of things: Ukraine. We'll be talking about Syria. We'll be talking about other parts of the Middle East. I will be talking about nuclear proliferation, because we are massively — you know — you know what we've been doing. We've been modernizing and fixing and buying. And it's just a devastating technology. And they, likewise, are doing a lot. And it's a very, very bad policy. We have no choice. But we are massively big and they are very big. And I'll be talking about nuclear proliferation. That would be a great thing if we can do.

Now, it's not only us. It's not only Russia and the United States. It's other countries also. But we're the two leaders. We would be the leader; they would be second. I guess China would be third. I think we'll all be talking about that. To me, Jonathan, I think that

would be a tremendous — that would be a tremendous achievement if we could do something on nuclear proliferation.

And we'll be talking about other things. I know you'll ask will we be talking about meddling. And I will absolutely bring that up. I don't think you'll have any "Gee, I did it. I did it. You got me." There won't be a Perry Mason here, I don't think. But you never know what happens, right? But I will absolutely firmly ask the question.

And hopefully we'll have a very good relationship with Russia. You know, I think having — and the Prime Minister would agree. We have a good relationship with Russia and with China and with other countries. That's a good thing, not a bad thing. So hopefully that will happen, Jonathan. Okay?

Q Here's the second one, which was about the troops. What's the benefit to America? The benefit to America —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yeah. The troops where, though? Where?

Q Europe.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, look, there is a benefit. There's a psychological benefit and there's a military benefit. There's also a benefit not to do it. I mean, I was prepared to do things that would have been somewhat harsh yesterday. A lot of people were surprised that NATO all came together at the end.

But — and it wasn't a threat. I mean, it was just an unfair situation. The United States was paying, you know, anywhere from 70 to 90. And I choose 90, depending on the way you want to calculate. We were paying 90 percent of the cost of NATO. And NATO is really there for Europe, much more so than us. It helps Europe whether — no matter what our military people or your military people say, it helps Europe more than it helps us.

That being said, it is a great unifier. You know, we have 29 countries. And there was a lot of love in that room. So I think — and we have a lot more than — you know, Jonathan, when you say 10,000 troops, we have a lot more than 10,000 troops.

Q Tens of thousands.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: How much?

Q Tens of thousands.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Oh, tens of. I thought you said 10,000. Because in Germany, we have 52,000 troops. And we have — we have a lot of troops in Europe.

That being said, we're helping Europe. They're helping us. We're all together. And I'm fine with it.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And — and, by the way, very importantly, they're now paying their way in a much more rapid fashion.

Yes.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Thank you. Francis.

Q Francis Elliott, The Times. Prime Minister, I wonder whether you agree with the President of the United States that immigration has damaged the cultural fabric of Europe. And, President, perhaps you could elaborate on that remark. What do you mean by that?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I think it's been very bad for Europe. I think Europe is a place I know very well, and I think that what has happened is very tough. It's a very tough situation. I mean, you see the same terror attacks that I do. We see them a lot. We just left some incredible young men — men and women — at Sandhurst. And they were showing us cells and they were showing us things that, frankly, 20 years ago nobody even thought about. Probably at a lot more recently than that — nobody even thought about.

I just think it's changing the culture. I think it's a very negative thing for Europe. I think it's very negative. I think having Germany — and I have a great relationship with Angela Merkel. Great relationship with Germany. But I think that's very much hurt Germany. I think it's very much hurt other parts of Europe.

And I know it's politically not necessarily correct to say that. But I'll say it and I'll say it loud. And I think they better watch themselves because you are changing culture. You are changing a lot of things. You're changing security. You're changing — look at what's happening. I mean, you take a look. I mean, look at what's happening to different countries that never had difficulty, never had problems.

It's a very sad situation. It's very unfortunate. But I do not think it's good for Europe and I don't think it's good for our country. We're, as you know, far superior to anything that's happened before, but we have very bad immigration laws and we're — I mean, we're doing incredibly well considering the fact that we virtually don't have immigration laws. We have laws that are so bad, I don't even call them "laws." I call them — it's just like, you just walk across the border. You walk across the border, you put one foot on the land and now you're tied up in a lawsuit for five years. It's the craziest thing anyone has ever seen.

So I would just make that recommendation to Europe. I've made it very loud and clear. I made it yesterday — 29 countries total. And that's the way I feel.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: The UK has a proud history of welcoming people who are fleeing persecution to our country. We have a proud history of welcoming people who want to come to our country to contribute to our economy and contribute to our society. And over the years, overall immigration has been good for the UK. It's brought people with different backgrounds, different outlooks here to the UK, and has — and we've seen them contributing to our society and to our economy.

Of course, what is important is that we have control of our borders. What is important is that we have a set of rules that enables us to determine who comes into our country. And of course, that is what, as a government, we have been doing for a number of years and will be able to continue to do in the future.

Mr. President.

Q Thank you very much. Mr. President, you have spent the week taking on NATO Allies, criticizing Prime Minister May on her own soil —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: (Inaudible.)

Q — and I wonder if — are you giving Russian President Vladimir Putin the upper hand heading into your talks, given that you are challenging these alliances that he seeks to break up and destroy?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: See, that's such dishonest reporting because — of course, it happens to be NBC, which is possibly worse than CNN. Possibly. Possibly.

Q (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Possibly. Let me explain something. We have left NATO with more money, with more unity, with more spirit than NATO probably has ever had. We have a strong and powerful NATO. When I became President, we didn't. We had people that weren't paying their bills; we had people that were way down. We had people that weren't following their commitments.

In addition to that, we've become an oil exporter, which would not have happened under the past regime or a new regime, if it weren't us. We have built up our military — \$700 billion. And then, next year, as you know, \$716 billion.

When you look at what we've done in terms of Russia, I guarantee whoever it is in Russia, they're saying, "Oh, gee, do we wish that Trump was not the victor in that election." We have been far tougher on Russia than anybody — anybody — and probably even — look, I'm not going to go down 100 years, but certainly we have been extremely tough on Russia, including the fact that, when the Prime Minister called, when they had a horrible thing happen right here — very close by — she asked would I do something. And maybe I'd let you tell the number, and it was far greater than anybody else, including the Prime Minister. We expelled how many people?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Sixty.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yeah, 60. And Germany did three, as an example. So Germany — big country, powerful country — they did three. The fake news doesn't want to talk about it. So it really is — we have been very strong on Russia.

Now, with all that being said, if I had a relationship with Putin — I don't know him. I met him twice, maybe three times — two and a half times. Most of you were there when we did. We met him at the G20. And if we could develop a relationship, which is good for

Russia, good for us, good for everybody — that would be great. If I had a relationship with China — you know, we're in a big trade situation with China, as an example, where we're behind every year, for many years — \$500 billion. It's just not going to happen anymore.

So if we got along with countries, that's a good thing. If we get along with China, Russia — that's a good thing, not a bad thing.

Q And I take your point, (inaudible) these headlines about the fighting. I take your point about what happened at the end of NATO —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No, no. No, the headline he sees isn't the headline — yes, there was fighting because I said, "You got to put up — you got to put up more money. We have to be stronger. We have to be unified." The headline he sees isn't what's happened during the morning. The headline he sees is what happened in the afternoon, where we came together as one, where they're putting up billions of dollars more.

I'll give you an example — and you know this is a confirmed number — \$34 billion more was raised since I became President, in NATO. That means that the other 28 countries have put in \$34 billion more into NATO. Do you think Putin is happy about that? I don't think so. But we have a lot of false reporting in this country. I don't think you have that in your country. Do you, Prime Minister?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: (Laughs.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Okay, go ahead. Ask the Prime Minister.

Q I'd like to ask you a question as well. President Trump told The Sun, "I think the deal she is striking on Brexit is not what the people voted for." Is he wrong? Are you offering up a Brexit-light? And I wonder if we could get your reaction to him saying that Boris Johnson would be a great Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Well, first of all, on the deal that we have put on the table, the agreement that we have put on the table — as I said earlier in response to Laura's first question, this does deliver on the vote of the British people. The British people voted to leave the European Union. And I heard the turn of phrase that the President used earlier, but let me be very clear about this: We will be leaving the European Union, and we are leaving on the 29th of March, 2019.

As we leave the European Union, we will be delivering on what people voted for: an end to free movement; an end to sending vast amounts of money to the European Union every year; an end to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice here in the United Kingdom; coming out of the Common Fisheries Policy; coming out of the Common Agricultural Policy; and ensuring, by coming out of the Customs Union, that we can have an independent trade policy that enables us to negotiate trade deals with the United States and with other countries around the rest of the world. That's what the British people voted for and that's what we will be delivering.

We will deliver it in a way that protects jobs and livelihoods, and meets our commitment to the border in between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

And, Robert —

Q (Inaudible) on Boris Johnson? Comments about Boris Johnson?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Well, Boris — the President —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I'll respond. They said — unrelated — not related — we have the tape. You can ask Sarah; get it from Sarah. We taped the entire interview. They asked about Boris Johnson. I said, yeah — how would he be as a Prime Minister? I said, he'll be a great Prime Minister. He's been very nice to me. He's been saying very good things about me as President. I think he thinks I'm doing a great job. I am doing a great job, that I can tell you — just in case you haven't noticed. But Boris Johnson, I think would be a great Prime Minister.

I also said that this incredible woman, right here, is doing a fantastic job, a great job. And I mean that. And I must say that I have gotten to know Theresa May much better over the last two days than I've known her over the last year and half. I mean, we spent more time in the last two days. Yesterday, I had breakfast, lunch, and dinner with her. Then I said, "What are we doing tomorrow?" Which is today. "Oh, you're having breakfast and lunch with Theresa May." And I'm going to see you later on again.

But I've actually gotten to know her better than ever, and I think she's a terrific woman. I think she's doing a terrific job. And that Brexit is a very tough situation. That's a tough deal, between the borders and the entries into the countries, and all of the things. So she's going to do the best.

The only think I ask is that she work it out so that we can have very even trade, because we do not have a fair deal with the European Union, right now, on trade. They treat the United States horribly. And that's going to change. And if it doesn't change, they're going to have to pay a very big price, and they know what that price is. So they're coming over on July 25th to see me, and hopefully we can work something out. But they have barriers that are beyond belief — barriers where they won't take our farm products, they won't take many of our things, including our cars. They charge us tariffs on cars far greater than we charge them. As you know — you know all these things.

And last year, Theresa, we lost \$151 billion with the European Union. So we can't have that. We're not going to have that any longer, okay? Thank you.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: RobertQ Robert Peston, ITV. Mr. President, how would you characterize your relationship with the United Kingdom? More special than with other countries? And, by the way, on farm products, I think on the Prime Minister's deal, you wouldn't be allowed to export many of your farm products to the UK. Would that be a problem for you?

Prime Minister, the President said yesterday that he gave you advice about how to negotiate Brexit; that you didn't take that advice. I wondered what that advice was and whether you have any regrets about not taking it.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Robert, lots of people give me advice about how to negotiate with the European Union. My job is actually getting out there and doing it, and that's exactly what I've done. And as you know, as we've been going through these negotiations, there have been one or two skeptical voices, perhaps from some of you, right before me today, about whether we would achieve what we would achieve in December. We got that joint report and that joint agreement on citizens' rights and those other issues. We got the implementation period in March.

Now we've put forward a proposal; that the two proposals the European Commission had been put forward on not acceptable to the UK. We have said no to those. And that's why we have put our own proposal on the table for the future, which, as I've said in answer to other questions, delivers on the Brexit deal but also ensures that we can have smooth trade with the European Union in the future.

And in terms of the United States and trade with the United States, there will be questions on some of the trade issues about the standards we have here for certain products and how we want to deal with those in the trade deal. That will be a matter for the negotiations.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: So I would say I give our relationship, in terms of grade, the highest level of special. So we start off with special. I would give our relationship with the UK — and now, especially after these two days with your Prime Minister, I would say the highest level of special. Am I allowed to go higher than that? I'm not sure. (Laughter.) But it's the highest level of special. They are very special people. It's a very special country. And as I said, I have a relationship because my mother was born in Scotland. So, very important.

As far as the advice, I did give her a suggestion. I wouldn't say advice. And I think she found it maybe too brutal, and that's — because I could see that. But I don't know if you remember what I said. But I did give her a certain amount of — I gave her a suggestion, not advice. I wouldn't want to give her advice. I'd give her a suggestion. I could fully understand why she thought it was a little bit tough. And maybe, someday, she'll do that. If they don't make the right deal, she might very well do what I suggested that she might want to do.

But it is not an easy thing. Look at the United States, how the European Union has taken advantage, systematically, of the United States, on trade. It's a disgrace. So it's not an easy negotiation.

Q Mr. President, since you attacked CNN, can I ask you a question —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: John Roberts, go ahead. Go ahead, John.

Q Can I ask you a question? (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No. No. John Roberts, go ahead. CNN is fake news. I don't take questions — I don't take questions from CNN. CNN is fake news. I don't take questions from CNN.

John Roberts of Fox. Let's go to a real network. John, let's go.

Q Well, we're a real network, too, sir.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you.

Q Some people have suggested the relations between the United States and Russia are at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: (Inaudible.)

Q And you have stated many, many times that you think it's important to have a better relationship with Russia. Is there any way for relations between the United States and Russia to improve —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yes.

Q — as long as Putin continues to occupy Crimea?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Yes, I think so. I think I'd have a very good relationship with President Putin if we spend time together. And I may be wrong. You know, other people have said; it didn't work out. But I'm different than other people.

I think that we're being hurt very badly by the, I would call it, the witch hunt; I would call it the "rigged witch hunt," after watching some of the little clips. I didn't get to watch too much, because I'm here — it's a different time zone, to put it mildly. But after watching the people, the man that was testifying yesterday, I call it the "rigged witch hunt."

I think that really hurts our country and it really hurts our relationship with Russia. I think that we would have a chance to have a very good relationship with Russia and a very good chance — a very good relationship with President Putin. I would hope so.

Q But what is your thinking about improving relations with Russia while they continue to illegally occupy another country?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, that was — yes, they do. And if you're talking about Crimea primarily, yeah. But again, President Obama failed very badly with Crimea. I don't think he would have done that if I were President. He took over Crimea, and he actually took it over during the Obama administration, I think you will admit.

Q But how do you get them out?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, we'll have to see what happens, you know? I'm not bad at doing things. If you look at what I've done compared to what other people have done 160 days in, there's nobody even close, I believe. So let's see what happens. But this was an Obama disaster. And I think if I were President then, he would not have taken over Crimea. During the Obama administration, he essentially took over Crimea. I don't think he would have done that with me as President, John.

Q I have a question for the Prime Minister. But if I could follow up, you have taken on many things, you say, you're left with by the Obama administration that you say that you have fixed. This is something that you inherited from the Obama administration — the occupation of Crimea. How do you fix it?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, we're going to see what happens. I mean, it's a process. If I knew, I wouldn't tell you because that would put us at a disadvantage. But we'll see what happens. We'll see how it all mills out.

But I just want people to understand that Crimea was a — you know, it was another bad hand. I got handed North Korea. We're doing very well. You saw the letter yesterday. And we're doing very well.

Look, we haven't had nuclear testing, we haven't had missile launches, we haven't had rocket launches. Some sites were blown up. And we got back our hostages, our prisoners, even before I left. So a lot of good things are happening. There's some good feeling there. We'll see what happens. It's a process. It's probably a longer process than anybody would like, but I'm used to long processes too.

We haven't taken off the sanctions. The sanctions are biting. We haven't taken them off.

But when it comes to Crimea, that's something I took over, John. There's nothing much I have to say about it, other than we will look at that just like I'm looking at many other disasters that I've taken over. I've taken over a lot of bad hands. And I'm fixing them one-by-one. And I know how to fix them. Okay?

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Madam Prime Minister, President Trump says that he made suggestions to you on what to do about Brexit. Can we ask you if you would make a suggestion to him on how to handle his meeting with Putin?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Well, I think it's very simple. We've been talking about this, in fact, today — which is, what is important in meeting with President Putin, and I've welcomed the meeting with President Putin. But what is important is that the President goes into this as he is doing, from a position of strength and also from a position of unity in NATO. I think that is very important, obviously.

We've discussed the activity of Russia in many different ways, including that use of a nerve agent here on the streets of the United Kingdom and the impact that that has had.

I've welcomed, as I said earlier, the very strong response the United States gave to that. We had a response from around the world. But I think the important thing is — and particularly following the NATO Summit, the President is going into this meeting with President Putin from that position of strength and a position of unity around that NATO table.

Jason.

Q Thank you. Jason Groves from the Daily Mail. Prime Minister, in the comments yesterday, your own MPs sort of sided with Donald Trump, really, and said this deal that you signed here at Chequers is going to be bad for trade. Why can't you convince your own MPs that it's a good idea?

And, Mr. President, can I ask you — you've said Brexit is a tough situation. What would you do now? Would you be at the point where you would walk away from the talks to show them that you mean business?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Well first of all, on the issue of trade deals, as I've said earlier, what we're negotiating and when we come out of the negotiations, I want to see — and we will have — our ability to have independent trade policy, to set our own tariffs, to be that independent member of the WTO, to be able to negotiate trade deals around the world as we will be doing. And we're looking at, obviously, at the United States. We're looking at other areas as well, as we've said. We're looking at issues like the possibility of some trade deals around the Pacific — Pacific area, too.

We will negotiate those trade deals, but I also want to have a good trade arrangement with the European Union. This isn't an either/or. We don't just replace one with the other. Actually, the United Kingdom is looking for, and can negotiate, a situation where we can have a good trade relationship with the European Union, a great trade relationship, a good trade relationship, with the United States and around the rest of the world as well. And that is what will be good for jobs, good for people's livelihoods, good for prosperity here in the UK.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, if you remember, I was opening Turnberry the day before Brexit. And we had an unbelievably large number of reporters there because everybody was there, I guess because of Brexit. And they all showed up on the 9th hole overlooking the ocean, and I said, "What's going on?" And all they wanted to talk about was Brexit. And they asked for my opinion, and I think you will agree that I said I think Brexit will happen. And it did happen. And then we cut the ribbon.

And the reason I felt it was going to happen was because of immigration. Because I know — I think one of the reasons I got elected was because of immigration, and I felt that Brexit had the upper hand. And most people didn't agree with me. If you remember, Barack Obama said, well, that your country will have to get on the back of the line if that happened. Which I thought was a terrible thing to say, frankly.

But I said I thought it was going to happen, and it did happen. And I also think that, as far as negotiating the deal, I probably would have done what my suggestion was to the Prime Minister, but my — but she can always do that. She can do that. At some point, she can do what I suggested to her.

Q And would you walk away?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No. Well, you can't walk away. Because if she walks away, that means she's — she's stuck. You can't walk away. But you can do other things. But she can do what my suggestion was. And my suggestion was, you know, respectfully submitted. She will — she will do very well. I think she's a very tough negotiator. I've been watching her over the last couple of days. She's a tough negotiator. She's a very, very smart and determined person.

I can tell you, there are a lot of people that are looking up now saying, gee, whiz — you know, she left a lot of people in her wake." She's a very smart, very tough, very capable person. And I would much rather have her as my friend than my enemy, that I can tell you.

Go ahead.

Q Jeff Mason from Reuters.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I like your hat.

Q Thank you, sir. (Laughter.) Mr. President as —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Good without it, too. Good head of hair. Good solid head of hair.

Q I don't have a good solid head of hair, but thank you.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: No, I know exactly what you have, Jeff.

Q (Laughs). Going into your meeting —

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Appeal to the rest of us. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Come on, Jeff. Take it off. Will you show, please?

Q Oh, boy. (Laughs.) Okay.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I like you better without the hat. Go ahead.

Q Here we go. (Laughter.) Going into your meeting with President Putin on Monday, sir, you mentioned both denuclearization and you mentioned Syria. Can you say exactly what your message will be to him on Syria? What would you like him to say, especially given Assad's gains in the country recently?

And also — and on denuclearization, can you spell out a little bit how you expect that to happen in terms of treaties and in terms of talks?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, it will be a slow process. Don't forget, we're not the only ones that have nukes. And it would be a slow process. But for the world, it would be us and it would be others would have to come along simultaneously, obviously.

But I think that when the meeting was arranged — and we both wanted the meeting — when the meeting was arranged, it was — from my standpoint, I didn't go in with high expectations, but you may come out with something very exceptional.

But the proliferation is a tremendous — I mean, to me, it's the biggest problem in the world: nuclear weapons. Biggest problem in the world.

I understand nuclear. Look up Dr. John Trump at MIT. He was my uncle. Many, many years a professor. I used to talk nuclear with him. And this is many years ago. It's the biggest problem, in my opinion, this world has. Nuclear weapons. So if we could do something to substantially reduce them — I mean, ideally, get rid of them. Maybe that's a dream. But certainly it's a subject that I'll be bringing up with him. And it's also a very expensive thing. But that's the least important. So if we can — if we can do something.

But I didn't go in — and I was telling the Prime Minister before — I didn't go in with high expectations. I mean, we have — we do have a political problem where, you know, in the United States we have this stupidity going on — pure stupidity — but it makes it very hard to do something with Russia. Anything you do, it's always going to be “Oh, Russia. He loves Russia.” I love the United States. But I love getting along with Russia and China, and other countries. And it will certainly be, Jeff, something that we bring up and talk about. I think, to me, it's such a big problem.

Syria, of course, I'm going to bring that up and I'm going to bring up Ukraine. And I'm going to bring up other subjects, also.

Q And can you spell out, in terms of Syria, what exactly you would like to hear from him and what you would like Russia to do?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We're just going to talk about — yeah, well, that was another one. I mean, the red line in the sand was a problem for us. I mean, I think you might be in a different —

Q Aside from what President Obama did, what you would you like President Putin to do now, under your watch?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to talk to him about that before I talk to you. And if something happens, that will be great. And if it doesn't happen — I'm not going in with high expectations, but we may come out with some very surprising things.

But relationship is very important. And having a relationship with Russia and other countries, as I said a number of times, is — and I've been saying, actually, for years — and I've been certainly saying it during my campaign. Having relationships with other countries is really a good thing.

I think that — I can't really overestimate how big the meeting was yesterday with NATO. We went with something that really was an unfair situation to something that's unified. I mean, they had spirit. Those people were getting up, and in the end, "Well, we are committing and we're" — you know, they can't go — it's not like they can go immediately back. They have to go through their parliaments and their congresses and their representatives, and whoever, whatever forum they have. But they have to go through an approval process.

But I'll tell you what: Every single person in that room was gung-ho to get it done, get the money. And even before that, as you know, \$34 billion. And I think that the Secretary General — Stoltenberg is doing a terrific job, by the way — he said yesterday that because of President Trump, we've taken in \$34 billion more for NATO. And I think the number is actually much higher than that. But \$34 billion more, at least. And again, that's nothing that my opponent would have done. My opponent would have — it would have just kept going down. You know, it was going down. You see what was happening over the years. The numbers were going down. Now the number is way up and now it's going way up higher. And that was — and he will tell you that that was because of me.

Q Prime Minister May, the President, during his time in Brussels expressed concern about a pipeline between Russia and Germany. Do you share those concerns?

And to follow up on some of the questioning from my colleagues in the British press and on the American side, did you feel undermined by President Trump's comments in The Sun about your Brexit plan and about Boris Johnson?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: No, look, I'm very clear that our Brexit plan will deliver on what the British people voted for. And we've had an excellent discussion here, as I've said about — and as President Trump has said, about the possibility and the intent that we both have to have an ambitious trade deal going forward. And I think that's exactly where we'll be going. And that's very important for both of our countries, actually. We stand — we have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the United States in so many different ways over the years as a result of our special relationship. And we will show that even further through the trade arrangements that we will put in place in the future.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I have — just to finish off. Jeff, just to finish off, I have to say, I said to that paper, The Sun — and they seem like two very nice people — but I said that Theresa May is a — one of them is nice. (Laughter.)

PRIME MINISTER MAY: There's one sitting here.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Oh, good. Where is that person? Where? Did I say nice things about Theresa May, please?

Q Oh, of course you did, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Oh, good? Okay. If you reported them, that's good. Okay. Where? On the Internet? (Laughter.) I said very good things. Thank you very much for saying that. No, I said very good things about her. I didn't they put it in, but that's all

right. They didn't put it in the headline. I wish they put that in the headline. That's one of those things.

And she's a total professional, because when I saw her this morning I said, "I want apologize, because I said such good things about you." She said, "Don't worry, it's only the press." I thought that was very — I thought that was very professional. (Laughter.) I might add though — I might add —

PRIME MINISTER MAY: (Inaudible.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: That's called being — don't worry, I've been — they've been doing it to me and I do it to them. I do say, though, the pipeline — you asked about the pipeline — to me, it is a tragedy. I think it's a horrific thing that's being done, where you're feeding billions and billions of dollars — from Germany primarily, and other countries, but primarily from Germany — into the coffers of Russia when we're trying to do something so that we have peace in the world.

I think it's a horrible thing that Germany is doing. I think it's a horrible mistake. And as much as I like Angela, I was very open in saying it. I think it's a horrible thing that you have a pipeline coming from Russia, and I believe that Germany is going to be getting 50, 60, or even, I've heard, numbers of 70 percent of their energy coming in from Russia. And how can you be working for peace and working from strength when somebody has that kind of power over your country?

I don't think it's good. You're not working from strength; you've given up all of your strength. I think it's very bad for Germany, very bad for the German people. And I don't think it's very good for NATO, if you want to know the truth. So, okay?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: We've just — we said we would take four questions each, and we've taken four questions each. Just on the pipeline issue — on the Nord Stream — we've been talking to the Germans about this; we've been talking to other countries within the European Union about this. And while we continue to sit around the EU table, this will be something that will be discussed at the European Union table. And obviously, we'll make our views known there.

Mr. President, thank you.

Q Can you share your views with us, though? Can you share your views with us — your position on the (inaudible)?

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Look, the — we have been discussing this with Germany. The President has made clear his concerns about what is happening. Angela Merkel made her position clear. Within the European Union, there are discussions to be held on this issue of Nord Stream 2, and we're talking to other countries within the European Union.

And I think the President said earlier, in response to a question about a future meeting he was going to have, that he'd tell you what was happening after that meeting. And you will see what comes out from the European Union. And while we are a member of the EU —

because we still are, until the 29th of March, 2019, and then we're leaving. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you very much. Thank you.

PRIME MINISTER MAY: Thank you.

END

2:43 P.M. BST