

Remarks by President Trump and President Macron of France in Joint Press Conference

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Remarks

Foreign Policy

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East Room

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PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you very much. Thank you. Melania and I are truly honored to welcome French President Macron and Mrs. Macron to the White House. Thank you very much. It's a great honor.

We're thrilled that the first official state visit of my presidency is not only with a great friend, but with a leader of America's oldest ally, the Republic of France. Today, in our nation's capital, the Stars and Stripes proudly fly alongside the Tricolor flag, a symbol of the world, and to the world, of unity, fraternity, and friendship that forever links our nations together.

Forty years after the end of our War of Independence, the great General Lafayette traveled to George Washington's home at Mount Vernon to visit the grave of the father of our country. President Macron, we're deeply moved that nearly two centuries later, the President of the Republic of France made that same tribute last night. That was a beautiful evening. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MACRON: Thank you.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you very much. This past summer, Melania and I had an incredible visit with you and Brigitte in Paris to celebrate Bastille Day. We were awed by the beauty of your country and the grateful hospitality of your incredible people. They are incredible people.

Together, we commemorated the 100th anniversary of America's entry into the First World War. We remembered the French and American patriots who shed their blood together in defense of civilization. Their noble sacrifice will echo through time forever, an immortal tribute to our people and to our freedom.

During the horror of the First World War, more than one million people were killed or injured from chemical warfare. In the aftermath of that horror, civilized nations came together to ban chemical weapons.

Two weeks ago, following Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad's barbaric use of chemical weapons against his own people, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom joined together to strike at the heart of the Syrian chemical weapons program. These actions were designed to establish a strong deterrent against the use of these heinous weapons.

President Macron, I thank you for your leadership in this effort. And it was a well-executed effort at that. And I thank you and the members of the French military for their courage and their great skill.

The United States and France are also cooperating to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are grateful for France's key partnership in our campaign of maximum pressure on the North Korean regime.

As you know, I will soon be meeting with Kim Jong-un as we seek a future of peace, harmony and security for the whole Korean Peninsula and, in fact, for the whole world.

However, in pursuit of peace, we will not repeat the mistakes of past administrations. The campaign of maximum pressure will continue.

France and the United States also agree that Iran cannot be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon, and that regime must end its support for terrorism all over. No matter where you go in the Middle East, you see the fingerprints of Iran behind problems.

I also want to thank President Macron for France's vital contribution to our very successful campaign against ISIS. As we drive these ISIS killers from Syria, it is essential that the responsible nations of the Middle East step up their own contributions to prevent Iran from profiting off the success of our anti-ISIS effort. Very rich countries are in the Middle East. They have to make major contributions. They have not been doing it as they should. A major topic that we discussed a little while ago: They have to step up tremendously — not a little bit, but tremendously — their financial effort.

Mr. President, on behalf of the American people, I again express our solidarity in the wake of the terrorist attack in Southern France last month. I share the confidence you conveyed at the memorial service for the heroic Colonel Beltrame that, in time, we will achieve the ultimate triumph of right and of justice.

In the fight against terrorism, we both know that we must be strong from within to defend ourselves from threats outside. We will do what we must to protect our countries. You are our oldest ally and you are truly one of our great allies, and we appreciate it. We will always be there for you.

Both the United States and France are dealing with a challenge that has gone on for a long, long time. It's uncontrolled migration. In the United States, we are taking strong action to regain control over our borders and over our sovereignty. It's gone on for too long. And we've slowed it down very substantially, but we're going to stop illegal immigration. I know that you face similar challenges in France. And, Mr. President, I admire the leadership you have shown in addressing them in a very honest and direct fashion, and not always popular.

Both of our elections owe much of the success to the desire of everyday citizens to be heard, to be listened to, and to have control over their own nations and their own futures. Let us demonstrate through our partnership that the voice of the people will always reign. At all times, it will reign.

During our meetings today, we also discussed the robust economic relationship between our countries. The United States is setting records in business, and we will continue. And I know that France will be setting records under your leadership very soon. We look forward to exploring increased opportunities for bilateral trade and investment based on the principle of fairness and, importantly, reciprocity.

Mr. President, thank you again for accepting our invitation to the White House. It's been such an honor. The foundation of our friendship draws from the deepest wells of civilization and is sustained by our people's love of their history, culture, and liberty.

For two centuries, the alliance between France and the United States has been the cornerstone of freedom. Now, the strength of this mighty alliance is in our hands. Linked together by fate and destiny, I am confident that our future has never, ever looked brighter.

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT MACRON: Thank you, Donald.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Please.

PRESIDENT MACRON: (As interpreted.) Thank you. Mr. President, dear Donald, thank you to you and to the First Lady for your warm welcome. Please allow me to tell you how pleased we are, together with my wife Brigitte and the whole of the French delegation — how pleased we are to be your guests for three days.

After this wonderful visit and the honor you made — you made it by attending Bastille Day in Paris. In both speeches earlier today, we referred to the deep and ancient bonds between our two countries. These go back to the founding revolution of your country, and have been true through both our histories. These bonds are based upon our deep attachment to freedom and peace. Each time they have been threatened, we stood by one another.

And we celebrated last night, before this, by going to Mount Vernon, given that nobody else could illustrate as well as George Washington the strength of the commitment and the bond between our two countries.

Mr. President, please allow me to go back to a number of issues, which are fundamental for not only our relationship, but beyond. The first topic is Iran. You said once again, in front of the press, what your position was during the campaign and as well as the President of the United States. It's not a mystery we did not have the same starting positions or stances, and neither you nor I have a habit of changing our stances or going with the wind.

That being said, I can say that we've had very a frank discussion on that, just the two of us. You consider that the Iranian deal, the JCPOA — the one negotiated in 2015 with Iran — is a bad deal. For a number of months, I've been saying that this was not a sufficient deal, but that it enabled us, at least until 2025, to have some control over their nuclear activities.

We therefore wish, from now on, to work on a new deal with Iran. What we need — and I believe that on that, our discussions allowed us to shed light on our convergence of views — is that we need to cover four topics.

The first one is to block any nuclear activity of Iran until 2025. This was feasible thanks to the JCPOA. The second is to make sure that, in the long run, there is no nuclear Iranian activity. The third fundamental topic is to be able to put an end to the ballistic activities of Iran in the region. And the fourth one is to generate the conditions for a solution — a political solution to contain Iran in the region — in Yemen, in Syria, in Iraq, and in Lebanon.

On these topics, I did not change. I constantly said that we needed to find the framework so that, together, and with the powers of the region, and with the Iranian leaders, manage to find a deal. I therefore would like us to commit to that effect in the weeks and months to come.

This is the only way to bring about stability. France is not naïve when it comes to Iran. We have also a lot of respect for the Iranian people, which, through their history — its history — has always shown its strength.

But we do not want to repeat the mistakes of the past. Each time we tried to unilaterally replace the sovereignty of the people, we brought about some more terror. But for our allies, we want sustainable stability. And I believe that the discussions we've had together make it possible to open the way, to pave the way for a new agreement, an agreement on which we will work. And beyond our European partners, we would like to involve the regional powers, and of course, Russia and Turkey.

It is also within this framework, as a matter of finding it together — together, in the long run, we can find a solution to the Syrian situation. In Syria, we are together engaged within the international coalition against Daesh and the terrorists. And we will continue to act until end, within this framework, until victory.

That being said, in the long run, we need to win peace and make sure that Syria does not fall into hegemony in the region. So that effect, the approach — which is agreed — means that we can work, and work on all of the situation — the whole of the situation — in the region, and with these efforts, to contain Iran in the region.

We will continue to work to that effect within the U.N. Security Council to make sure that humanitarian law, the prohibition of chemical weapons are fully complied with. And we will continue to shoulder our responsibilities to that effect. But we will also work with our partners in building a sustainable, political solution, an inclusive one that will prevent any hegemony, and once again will prevent feeding terrorism in the future.

We also talked about the climate. And here, also, we know where we stand. France will continue to work on major pieces, including the global compact for the environment. But I think I can say that our economic — our businesses, our researchers can continue to work on — can create solutions in the field. And we are both attached to that.

Now, on trade, like you mentioned it, and I hear what you said when you call upon fair and equitable trade. When we look at international trade, today we have some common challenges. There are some over-capacities in a number of sectors which are well known, and we shall work together to make sure that this does not destabilize our markets or bring about some unfair competition.

But I believe we can say that we are both attached to make sure that, between allies, there's compliance with international trade law. At least France is attached to that. We have preferences. There are situations we can probably improve. But I believe that both you and I are also attached — want to make sure that our businesses, our companies, can operate in a long, sustainable, and stable framework.

Mr. President, I meant to mention these few points, which you commented as well. And allow me to say once again that the discussions we've had today — the ones we will have tomorrow — are fed not only by the strength of our historical bonds but also by a sincere friendship, which I believe we share.

So thank you once again, Mr. President, Madam, for this extremely warm welcome, for these three days spent with you. And thank you, as well, for being there to meet the challenges which are important for the United States of America, for France, and for Europe, and important for all peoples. Thank you.

(In English.) Thank you. Thank you. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: I like him a lot. (Laughter.)

First of all, I want to thank — I want to thank our Vice President and Karen for being here. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Now, we had a wonderful conference today, and I think especially the one-on-one in the Oval office — we covered a lot of territory having to do with trade, having to do with Iran, and various other subjects. So I think a lot of good things are going to come out of our

meeting, and I appreciate you being here.

I will take a couple of questions. How about Jeff Mason from Reuters? Jeff. Hi, Jeff.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Hi there. After your discussions today with President Macron, what is your thinking about a timeline for bringing U.S. troops out of Syria?

And on one other topic, you mentioned today that you thought the leader of North Korea has behaved openly and honorably. This is someone who many people have accused of starving his people, killing family members. What did you mean when you called him that?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, we will start with your second part of the question. And I hope that we will be able to deal in a very open and honorable fashion with North Korea. I started a process, and when I did, everybody thought I was doing it absolutely wrong. But in the meantime, for 25 years, people have been dealing and nothing happened. And a lot is happening right now. I can tell you that, Jeff. A lot is happening. And I think it's going to be very positive. And I hope it's going to be very positive for North Korea and for South Korea, and Japan, and the rest of the world.

But I am starting at a level that, frankly, I shouldn't have had to start. This should have been worked out a long time ago. This should have been worked out many years ago. We were discussing that we shouldn't be having this situation happen to the United States and the world. This should have been resolved by other Presidents and by other leaders of other countries a long time ago.

With that being said, I think we're doing very well. Meetings are being set up. And I want to see denuclearization of North Korea. A lot of concessions have already been made. We have made no concessions, despite some of the media saying that I've made concessions. I don't — I haven't even discussed a concession other than the fact that meeting is a great thing. And I'm sure that a lot of other people would have liked to have had the position we're having.

I will say this: We put the strongest sanctions on a country that we ever have put on any country, by far. China, President Xi, has been very strong in helping us to solve this problem — in his case, at the border. He's allowing very little to get through.

I think he's doing that for a number of reasons. We have a very good relationship, and also it's very important in terms of trade, because I do play the trade card. If you look at what's happening with trade in China, it hasn't been fair for many, many years to the United States, and we're going to solve that problem. In fact, we're having Secretary Mnuchin and a couple of other folks heading over to — Bob Lighthizer — heading over to China, at the request of China. They came here, as you know, last week. And we're having very substantive discussions on trade.

But I think it all plays to the border and the fact that they have been extremely strong on the border and very little has gotten through, much to the surprise of a lot of people. And I believe the trade will work out, but I also think that China has never treated us with

more respect than they have over the last short period of time that I'm President. I have a very excellent, as you know, relationship with President Xi. And I think that relationship is very important as to what's happening with North Korea.

So the end result is, we'll see. Maybe good things will happen and maybe we're all wasting a lot of time. But hopefully it will be good for everybody concerned.

As far as Syria is concerned, I would love to get out. I'd love to bring our incredible warriors back home. They've done a great job. We've essentially just absolutely obliterated ISIS in Iraq and in Syria. And we've done a big favor to neighboring countries, frankly, but we've also done a favor for our country.

With that being said, Emmanuel and myself have discussed the fact that we don't want to give Iran open season to the Mediterranean, especially since we really control it. To a large extent, we really have controlled it and we've set control on it. So we'll see what happens.

But we're going to be coming home relatively soon. We finished, at least, almost our work with respect to ISIS in Syria, ISIS in Iraq, and we have done a job that nobody has been able to do.

But with that being said, I do want to come home. But I want to come home also with having accomplished what we have to accomplish. So we are discussing Syria as part of an overall deal. When they made the Iran deal, what they should have done is included Syria. When I say "should have" — before giving them, Iran, \$150 billion and \$1.8 billion in cash — \$1.8 billion in cash. You think about this. Before giving this kind of tremendous money, okay — \$150 billion and \$1.8 billion in cash — in barrels, I hear, it was taken out, and in boxes it was taken out — cash — they should have made a deal that covered Yemen, that covered Syria, that covered other parts of the Middle East where Iraq is — where Iran is involved. They didn't do that.

So we want to come home. We'll be coming home. But we want to have a very, very strong — we want to leave a strong and lasting footprint, and that was a very big part of our discussion. Okay? Thank you.

Q And just to follow up, if I may, sir. On North Korea, you said you believe in complete denuclearization. What does that mean exactly?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: It means they get rid of their nukes. Very simple. They get rid of their nukes, and nobody else would say it. It would be very easy for me to make a simple deal and claim victory. I don't want to do that. I want them to get rid of their nukes.

Q And for President Macron, the President referred earlier, in your meetings in the Cabinet Room, to a potential deal between the two of you on Iran. Can you give us a sense of what that might be? And are you confident that you will have assurances from President Trump that the European Union will be excluded from tariffs on steel and aluminum?

PRESIDENT MACRON: Look, as for the second question, it is the President to answer. But I just want here, on the trade issue, to be very clear: When you look at the trade issue between our two countries, they are balanced. There is no unbalanced relationship.

Second, we are following and respecting the WTO rules because we are the one who contributed to the creation of the WTO, and we think it makes sense to respect the rule you decided to create. In general and in life, that's a good method.

And third, because I do believe that we have a very (inaudible) issue on trade, which is over-capacities in steel and aluminum, it doesn't come from Europe and not even from France. And it's good to work together when you are allies, and especially when you work so closely together on security issues like Iran and Syria.

So I'm confident about the future of this trade relationship, as I think it's part of a broader picture where our interests are totally aligned.

As for the Iranian situation, and I think I detailed in my introduction, for me, the key pillars of this new approach we want to adopt. And it's exactly what President Trump said. We have nuclear on the short run; we have nuclear on the long run. We have ballistic activity. We have regional presence of Iran. We want to fix the situation for these four pillars.

Syria is part of the fourth one. And what we have to work on, obviously, with Iran and the different parties in the region, the P5 and our allies, is to find a fair deal where we can fix the overall situation. This is the only way to preserve sovereignty in the region and to build peace on the very long run. Otherwise, we will have to come back in the region because of new terrorist groups for sure.

And I'm very happy about the discussion we had together, because we raised very new issues and very new solutions together, and especially the fact that the Syrian crisis and the Syrian situation should be part of this broader picture. And the fact that we are here and we are today in Syria, together as international coalition against ISIS, but tomorrow we will have to find a way to fix the situation from the political point of view, not automatically from a military point of view. Which means, to set up a series of agreements, part of this big deal, in order to be sure that Syria tomorrow will be a sovereign country with inclusiveness and free people in a situation to decide for the future. This is very important and that's our duty.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And I think we will have a great shot at doing a much bigger maybe deal, maybe not deal. We're going to find out, but we'll know fairly soon.

Mr. President?

PRESIDENT MACRON: (As interpreted.) A question from the French press.

Q (As interpreted.) A question from Agence France-Presse on behalf of the French press. As you have (inaudible), Mr. President, you were saying that there was no plan B; that the Iran deal was to be preserved. Now you're talking about a new deal with Iran.

Why did you change your mind? Did you join the strong approach suggested by President Trump? Is it because you could not convince him? And in addition, do you think the others who signed the agreement, the deal, will follow you?

PRESIDENT MACRON: (As interpreted.) When I said there was no plan B, I usually refer to the fact that there is no B planet. It was about climate rather than Iran.

Now, regarding Iran, I've always been coherent, and you can go back to what I said at the U.N. General Assembly in September. I always said that there was the JCPOA but we needed to add three pillars post-2025 — the ballistic issue and the regional influence. I do not know what President Trump will decide regarding the JCPOA, and it is his responsibility.

The JCPOA is the first pillar of this framework I just described. So I'm not saying that we're moving from one deal to another. I'm saying it is one aspect of the problem. I have never been as critical of the JCPOA as President Trump has because I believe that we can usefully add to it.

But no matter the decision that President Trump will take, what I would like is to work, as from now, on a new deal with four pillars, including what is already covered by the JCPOA, that is ongoing nuclear — I mean, the current nuclear activities, the longer nuclear activities, the ballistic activities, and the regional influence

So this is constant. But over the past few weeks and in particular today, we've been able to go and to very much talk in details about this topic, including the situation in the region. And I believe that we've converged on a common reading on what is happening in Syria, in Yemen, in Iraq, in particular.

And on the fact that the nuclear issue is not the only one, that indeed there is a problem with the ballistic activity of Iran and their presence in a number of countries in the region. And that our willingness was indeed to set the conditions for the stability of the region.

Once we've built this convergence of you, the idea of moving on to a new deal that would include the solution for Syria, I believe, is a strong step forward thanks to the discussions we've had today.

So I very much would like us to work together with all of our partners. And the ministers of foreign affairs already gathered the small group, and they will be doing it again anytime soon. The purpose is to have some the allied powers — and we amongst them — and of course, also the regional powers, to work at the level of this small group. We also shall have some privileged discussions with Russia and Turkey on regional topics, including Syria. So as from now, we will work using that method in favor — work towards a deal.

I believe we can both combine our common views and our differences, because we are not in a vacuum. I always said we should not tear apart the JCPOA and have nothing else. I think this would be — that would not be the good solution. But once we are placing ourselves in a momentum, the purpose of which is to put together a broad agreement

covering the four topics I just mentioned, it's very different because, first of all, we take on board the concerns and the criticism of President Trump regarding this deal, which, like I said, once again, this deal was supported by a former American administration and previous American administration.

But we can work, and it is also about respecting the sovereignty of the states of the region. It's not about intervening no matter what. It is rather about building a stable framework that will contribute to stability and to peacebuilding. And I think this is what we've been agreeing upon today. It's not about tearing about an agreement and have nothing, but it's about building something new that will cover all of our concerns.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: And if I might add, the states and, as I alluded to — and countries that are in the area, some of which are immensely wealthy, would not be there except for the United States and, to a lesser extent, France. But they wouldn't be there except for the United States. They wouldn't last a week. We're protecting them. They have to now step up and pay for what's happening, because I don't think France or the United States should be liable for the tremendous cost.

The United States is embarrassingly into the Middle East. As of a few months ago, as you've heard me say before — and I don't take responsibility, but I would be very embarrassed if I had to — \$7 trillion. And when we want to build, Mr. President, our infrastructure, everybody says, "Oh, we want to be careful with our money." When we want to fix a highway or we want to build schools and lots of other things — tunnels, bridges — they say, "Oh, let's be careful with our money." And yet, we have spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East, and we've gotten nothing for it. Nothing. Less than nothing, as far as I'm concerned. That's over an 18-year period.

The countries that are there that you all know very well are immensely wealthy; they're going to have to pay for this. And I think the President and I agree very much on that. And they will pay for it. They will pay for it. We've spoken to them. They will pay for it. The United States will not continue to pay. And they will also put soldiers on the ground, which they're not doing. And we will, in fact, bring lots of people home. We will have a strong blockage to the Mediterranean, which to me is very important — because if we don't, you have Iran going right to the Mediterranean. Not going to have that.

But there is a chance — and nobody knows what I'm going to do on the 12th, although, Mr. President, you have a pretty good idea — but we'll see. But we'll see also, if I do what some people expect, whether or not it will be possible to do a new deal with solid foundations. Because this a deal with decayed foundations. It's a bad deal. It's a bad structure. It's falling down. Should have never, ever been made. I blame Congress. I blame a lot of people for it. But it should have never been made, and we're going to see what happens on the 12th.

But I will say, if Iran threatens us in any way, they will pay a price like few countries have ever paid. Okay?

Yes, John. Please. John Roberts of Fox.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. I have a question for President Macron as well. But if I could to you, sir, first. Your nominee to run the Veterans Affairs Administration, Dr. Ronny Jackson, has run into some serious political headwinds on Capitol Hill with some serious allegations being leveled at him. I'm wondering what you know of those allegations. And do you intend to stand behind him?

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I haven't heard of the particular allegations, but I will tell you he's one of the finest people that I have met, and I think speaking for Melania, also. He's been the doctor for President Obama, I believe for President Bush, for me. I've gotten to know him pretty well. He's a great doctor.

And it was a suggestion. Now, I know there's an experience problem because of lack of experience. But there's an experience problem — the Veterans Administration is very important to me. We've done a great job with it, as you know, with the Accountability Act and many other things. Now we're working on choice. It's going to happen. We're going to take great care of our veterans. That's a very, very important thing, and we've done a great job.

But I told Admiral Jackson just a little while ago, I said, "What do you need this for?" This is a vicious group of people that malign — and they do. And I've lived through it; we all lived through it. You people are getting record ratings because of it, so congratulations. But I said, "What do you need it for?" He's an admiral. He's a great leader. And they questioned him about every little thing.

As you know, with the success of what will hopefully soon be Secretary of State Pompeo, everybody was very surprised. I heard 10 minutes before the vote yesterday on committee that, "He will not be approved at committee" — which would be the first time in many, many decades that something like that would have happened with regard to a Secretary of State — except I spoke to Rand Paul, and Rand Paul has really never let me down. Rand Paul is a good man. And I knew things that nobody else knew. And Rand Paul said, "I'm going to change my vote," and he voted, and everybody was surprised. And he actually got an 11-9 vote, because as you know, Johnny Isakson's vote counts if it isn't the deciding vote. So it was actually a 11-9 with, I believe, an — there was one vote — what would you call that, John?

Q A present vote.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Not present.

Q No. No. Present.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Oh, it's called "present." Okay. So it was 11-9 and that was a terrific thing. But they failed to stop him. So now they say, "Who's next? Who's next?" And this person, Admiral Jackson — Dr. Jackson — is a wonderful man. I said to him, "What do you need it for?" And as far as experience is concerned, the Veterans Administration — which is approximately 13 million people — is so big, you could run the biggest hospital system in the world and it's small time compared to the Veterans Administration. So nobody has the experience.

What he is is a leader and a good man. But I told him — I said, “You know what, Doc? You’re too fine a person.” His son is a top student at Annapolis. He’s a high-quality person. I said, “What do you need it for?” So he’ll be making — it’s totally his decision — but he’ll be making a decision.

But they failed with Mike Pompeo, and that was a big, big hit because they thought they could stop him and embarrass. The Democrats have become obstructionists. That’s all they’re good at. They’re not good at anything else. They have bad ideas. They have bad politics. The one thing they do is obstruct. And that’s why I’m waiting for — you would never believe this — I’m waiting for very good people like the Ambassador to Germany. Hasn’t been approved yet. It’s been in there for 11 or 12 months.

We have Angela Merkel coming to the United States on Friday. We still don’t have our ambassador approved. And at this rate — and many of the papers checked it out yesterday, and they actually said I was right — but it would be nine years before these people are approved. We have hundreds of people in waiting to be approved, and the Democrats are taking 30 hours per person. They’re taking the maximum time. They are obstructions. That’s very bad for our country.

I said to Dr. Jackson, “What do you need it for?” So we’ll see what happens. I don’t want to put a man through who’s not a political person. I don’t want to put a man through a process like this. It’s too ugly and too disgusting. So we’ll see what happens. He’ll make a decision.

Q So are you saying, Mr. President, that you will stand behind him —

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Oh, I would definitely stand behind him. He’s a fine man. I’ll always stand behind him. I’d let it be his choice.

But he is a man who has just been an extraordinary person. His family, extraordinary success. Great doctor. Great everything. And he has to listen to the abuse that he has to — I wouldn’t if I were him. Actually, in many ways, I’d love to be him. But the fact is, I wouldn’t do it. I wouldn’t do it. What does he need it for? To be abused by a bunch of politicians that aren’t thinking nicely about our country? I really don’t think, personally, he should do it. But it’s totally his — I would stand behind him — totally his decision.

Q And Monsieur le Président, if I could direct a question to you as well. You said that you and President Trump came to some agreement on the way forward in Syria. U.S. troops are really at the heart of any solution. How long, President Macron, do you believe U.S. troops need to stay in Syria? Through the defeat of ISIS? Or do they need to stay through a stabilization period until an alternative to the Assad government is stood up?

PRESIDENT MACRON: First of all, let me say how proud and honored we are to be part of the international coalition today, alongside with the United States troops, in order to fight against ISIS.

We decided to increase our contribution, and we are totally involved in this war against ISIS. And for sure, the very first goal of this intervention and the international coalition on the ground is to finish this work with ISIS and definitely to finish with our enemies. And our enemies are ISIS and the other terrorist group.

Beyond this military presence, and beyond our troops on the ground, we will have to build, as I said, peace — i.e. a new inclusive framework — in order to be sure that certain people will have the opportunity to live in peace — all the different ethnics, all the different religious, all the different groups — and to be sure that there is no hegemony in the region. That's the diplomatic work that we've already started but we have to finish. This is something different.

So I would — if you'll allow me, I would separate these two issues. We have — we are involved on the ground against ISIS. We will finish this war. And it's not to open a new war, or to start a new war. But at the same time, we have to open a new war together — that's what we decided to do — in order to build in the overall region a new framework, and especially in Syria.

We will assess, during the coming weeks and month, what we have to do — because when you're probably much more at the end of a war, you have to adapt to the enemy and the reality on the ground. So we are not here to say, "This day we will leave the floor." That's impossible because it will depend on reality on the ground.

But for sure, what we want to do now is to finish this war with our troops. And we want to fix, on the long run, the situation to have peace in this region. That's our duty. And it's not just with our troops. It's with our diplomats, our teams, our common work, and obviously with all the allies in the region and people involved.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: We've pretty much finished with ISIS, and we're going to be making some big decisions in a very short period of time. But we're working very closely together with France and with the President. Okay? Thank you very much.

Q (As interpreted.) Mr. President, BFM Television. President Macron, for a year now, you've enjoyed a very friendly relationship with President Trump. Quite unusual, compared to the previous Presidents. At the same time, we can see that you do not agree on a number of topics. There are more and more of them. We've seen that openly in the Oval Office earlier on Iran. It seems like the initial deal with Iran will not be able to be saved. So what about this relationship? Can it have some concrete impact on France? Can it be beneficial to France and to Europe? You talked about reciprocal interests. Is that really the case today?

PRESIDENT MACRON: (As interpreted.) Yes, definitely. I believe the reason why we enjoy this relationship is because of the relationship between our two countries. Indeed, we have a different background, but it is maybe because we both are not politicians — or typical politicians. And none of us easily change one's mind. And I think that if you listen to this press conference and watched us, you will have the answer to your question.

Regarding Iran, we have a disagreement regarding the JCPOA, but I think we are overcoming it by deciding to work towards a deal — an overall deal that will enable us to deal with the nuclear issue but also treat it together with another three issues, which were not being dealt with so far.

So should the decision — I mean, we've spent more than an hour, just the two of us — and had the conclusions been that the United States of America would walk away from the JCPOA and France would not move, then our friendship would be wasted. But it is about making sure that we're each taking into account the position and the interests of our reciprocal countries.

It is unprecedented. We've never before taken a joint position, a joint stance on Syria the way we did, and on Iran, in favor of a deal that will enable us to cover the four pillars. There is intense work between ourselves and our teams; otherwise we would not be in a position to do as much.

In the past, sometimes France argued that it was time to take action against chemical weapons, and it was — France was not followed by its allies, including the United States at the time. It is not what happened this time. We decided together what was possible and what was not. What was legitimate within an international framework, as two members of the Security Council, and we conducted an unprecedented military intervention at an unprecedented level of cooperation.

And please allow me to pay tribute to our troops, to our armies, and to that of the United Kingdom because we've led a unique operation, a proportionate one, and we were able to do so thanks to this relation that we entered.

So on Syria, Iran, the credibility of the international community against the use of chemical weapons — you've seen it. You have the evidence that showed that the relationship between our two countries and our friendship enable us to achieve some concrete results. And this is an improvement compared where we stood a couple of weeks ago.

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, I think that we have very much in common, I must say. I think many things that we — certainly, most things we agreed with, we can change and we can be flexible. You know, in life you have to be flexible. And as leaders of countries, you have to show flexibility. And I think we actually get along on many of the subjects we discussed today.

And I will say, France is a great country. And I believe France will be taken to new heights under this President. He's going to be an outstanding President. One of your great Presidents. And it's an honor to call you my friend. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

1:36 P.M. EDT

