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**REMARKS**

Remarks by President Trump Before Marine One Departure

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South Lawn

9:32 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: So, we're going to Texas. We're going to the border. Just spoke with some of my friends in Arizona. We have tremendous support. The Republicans are extremely united. They all want to see something happen, but they're extremely united. And I don't think I've ever seen unity like this in the Republican Party.

The media — which I call the “opposition party,” a lot of the media — in coordination with the Democrats, they're not talking about the Democrats folding. For instance, this morning, a number of people came out and said, “You do need very strong border security, and that includes a wall or whatever it is.” A number of Democrats said that, but people don't like to report on it.

We have tremendous unity in the Republican Party. It's really a beautiful thing to see. I don't think there will be any breakaway because they know we need border security and we have to have it. And the only you're going to have border security — there's only way: You can have all the technology in the world. I'm a professional at technology. But if you don't have a steel barrier or a wall of some kind — strong, powerful — you're going to have human trafficking; you're going to have drugs pouring across the border; you're going to have MS-13 and the gangs coming in.

And we've done record apprehensions. We're doing a great job. But we need help. If we have the wall, we could have far fewer people working in terms of border security, and doing an even better

job. So if we had the wall, we could have a tremendous saving. I really believe the steel barrier, or wall, would pay for itself every three or four months, and maybe even better than that, in terms of overall. So that's it.

Just a couple of things, because I knew the fake news likes to say it. When — during the campaign, I would say, “Mexico is going to pay for it.” Obviously, I never said this and I never meant they're going to write out a check. I said, “They're going to pay for it.” They are. They are paying for it with the incredible deal we made, called the United States, Mexico, and Canada USMCA deal. It's a trade deal. It has to be approved by Congress. It probably will be, other than maybe they even hold that up because they want to have — you know, they want to do as much harm as they can, only because of the 2020 presidential election.

So, Mexico is paying for the wall indirectly. And when I said Mexico will pay for the wall, in front of thousands and thousands of people, obviously they're not going to write a check. But they are paying for the wall indirectly, many, many times over, by the really great trade deal we just made. Congress has to approve the deal.

Q Are you going to go to Davos, or are you going to cancel it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I intended to go and speak in front of the world financial community in Davos. That's still on. But if the shutdown continues — which is in a while from now — but if the shutdown continues, I won't go. I had planned to go. It's been very successful when I went. We have a great story to tell. We have the best job numbers we've ever had, in many ways. Certainly with African Americans, with Hispanic, with Asian Americans. And overall, we have the best job numbers in at least 50 years. We have a lot of great things happening. The economy is incredible. We're negotiating and having tremendous success with China. And I find China, frankly, in many ways, to be far more honorable than Cryin' Chuck and Nancy. I really do. I think that China is actually much easier to deal with than the opposition party.

Q Mr. President, given how the meeting went yesterday, are you now going to decide to declare a national emergency? Is that your only option left?

THE PRESIDENT: I have the absolute right to declare a national emergency. The lawyers have so advised me. I'm not prepared to do that yet. But if I have to, I will. I have no doubt about it; I will. I have the absolute right to declare. This was passed by Congress. So when you say, “Was it passed

by Congress?" It was. Other Presidents have used it. Some fairly often. I have the absolute right to declare a national emergency. I haven't done it yet. I may do it. If this doesn't work out, probably I will do it. I would almost say definitely.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: This is a national emergency.

Q If it's a true national emergency, why haven't you declared a national emergency already?

THE PRESIDENT: Because I would like to do the deal through Congress, and because it makes sense to do it through Congress. But the easy route for me would have been call a national emergency and do it.

And I will tell you, this is a tremendous crisis at the border. Look at President Obama's statements from the past. Numerous statements where he calls it a crisis. This is a crisis. You have human trafficking. You have drugs. You have criminals coming in. You have gangs, MS-13. We're taking them out by the thousand and bringing them back. This is a crisis. And they don't come in at the checkpoint, which they do also, but they go in between the checkpoints, where you don't have any barriers.

Q Mr. President —

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

Q So it's a national emergency. If this doesn't work out, you're (inaudible), but you will do it, or are you still thinking about it?

THE PRESIDENT: If we don't make a deal — I mean, I would say 100 percent, but I don't want to say 100 percent, because maybe something else comes up. But if we don't make a deal, I would say it would be very surprising to me that I would not declare a national emergency and just fund it through the various mechanisms.

And, by the way, there's more than one mechanism. There's various mechanisms. And the lawyers tell me 100 percent. It would be nice if we could make a deal. But dealing with these people is

ridiculous. I don't know if they know how to make a deal. It's — we need — and I'll tell you what: A lot of Democrats — I was looking at numbers — a lot of Democrats agree, Steve, we need national security. And the only way you have it — the only way you have it is you have to have a strong border. And the only way you have a strong border is you need a wall, or you need some kind of a steel — go ahead, Gardiner.

Q Mr. President, there were pictures this morning —

THE PRESIDENT: You need a — Steve, you need a steel barrier. And if you don't have a steel barrier, or a concrete wall, forget it.

Q There were pictures this morning showing a steel barrier wall being sawed straight through. What good is a steel wall if they can saw through it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's a wall that was designed by previous administrations. There's nothing that can't be penetrated, but you fix it. But it's a very difficult thing to do. But that's a wall, and they have other walls. We have many walls under consideration. Even concrete — there's acid that can go through concrete. But what you do is you fix it. And it very much limits. It's very, very hard. The wall that we're doing is very, very hard to penetrate.

Q Mr. President, you walked out on the Democrats. Are you going to bring them back? How can you get a deal if you're not talking?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the news incorrectly reported. Because I said, well, if we go back and everything is peachy-dory, and you say, "We'll talk over 30 days," at the end of 30 days, are you going to give us great border security, which includes a wall or a steel barrier. She said no. I didn't pound on tables. I didn't raise my voice. That was a lie. What you should do is give them Pinocchios. Because if you ask Mike Pence and you ask Kevin McCarthy — you ask anybody in the room — they will say — because I know if I do that, you're going to report it. But you guys report it anyway because you're fake news.

But let me just tell you something. I very calmly said, "If you're not going to give us strong borders, bye-bye." And I left. I didn't rant. I didn't rave, like you reported. I mean, some of the newspapers — and then Schumer always has his standard lie: "He had a temper tantrum." I don't have temper tantrums. I really don't. But it plays to his narrative. But it's a lie.

I very calmly walked out of the room. I didn't smash the table. I should have, but I didn't smash the table. And that's the story.

So with all of that —

Q But —

THE PRESIDENT: Wait. All of that narrative is a lie.

Q How can you get a deal if you're not talking to them? You walked out.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we'll see.

Q Are you going to bring them back?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me tell you, I think there's far more pressure on them, because the people of our country want security. We want to be a secure country. We don't want drugs pouring in. Most of our drugs come in through the southern border. And they don't come in through the portals; they come in between the portals where you have no barrier.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Say it?

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know who has more human pain? The parents of people who had children killed by an illegal immigrant that should have never been in the country. You know who has more human pain? The husband that lost a wife, or the wife that lost the husband to an illegal immigrant that came in five or six times, that shouldn't be here. That's the human pain. And the people that will be paid, but maybe a little bit later, those people, many of them are on my side. They want to see border security.

Q What's your message to those workers?

THE PRESIDENT: And, by the way, NBC may be — NBC may be the most dishonest reporters of all time.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I have no idea what they're doing.

Go ahead. Next question.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: I can't hear you.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: We have plenty of funds that. If there's a national emergency, there's a lot of funds.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: If we declare a national emergency, we have a tremendous amount of funds — tremendous — if we want to do that, if we want to go that route. Again, there is no reason why we can't come to a deal. But you have another side that doesn't care about border security. The Democrats — which I've been saying all along — they don't give a damn about crime. They don't care about crime. They don't care about gang members coming in and stabbing people, and cutting people up. They don't care about crime.

And if they're not going to care about crime, then I agree they shouldn't do anything at the border. But I care about crime and I care about drugs. We're spending a fortune on trying to stop drugs, and they pour in through the border. But I see it more now than ever before. The Democrats don't care about the border and they don't care about crime.

Q (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Say it? Say it?

Q This emergency on the border, this crisis, when did it begin?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, it began a long time. Ask President Obama. Obama used to call it a crisis at the border, too. I think he said it in 2014.

Look, look. You can all play cute. And I say 80 percent of you are possibly in coordination with the opposition party. I mean, the whole thing is ridiculous. All you have to do is look at the border. Rent a helicopter — except you don't want to know the truth — and watch.

And, by the way, here's the story: There is another major caravan forming right now in Honduras. And so far — we're trying to break it up. But so far, it's bigger than anything we've seen. And a drone isn't going to stop it. And a sensor isn't going to stop it. But you know what's going to stop it in its tracks? A nice, powerful wall.

Q Does the buck stop with you over this shutdown?

THE PRESIDENT: The buck stops with everybody. They could solve this problem in literally 15 minutes. We could be back. We could have border security. They could stop this problem in 15 minutes if they wanted to. I really believe now that they don't want to. I really believe that. I really believe that they don't care about crime. I really believe this. The Democrats don't care about crime.

They've been taken over by a group of young people who, frankly, in some cases — I've been watching — I actually think they're crazy. But they've been taken over by a group that is so far left. I really don't think they care about crime. And, you know, sadly, they're viewing this as the beginning of the 2020 presidential race, and that's okay with me. But they have been taken over by a group of people that don't care about gangs. They don't care about human trafficking and drugs. They don't care about anything. I'll tell you what — they have gone crazy.

Q How much longer is this shutdown going to last?

THE PRESIDENT: We have to get a win or I'll have to go national security. One or the other. Either we're going to win — either we're going to win or make a compromise. I'm okay to making a compromise. Compromise is in my vocabulary very strongly.

So we're either going to have a win, make a compromise — because I think a compromise is a win for everybody. Or I will declare a national emergency.

Q What about if the courts (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Very, very —

Q What about the courts, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: This is a thing that the lawyers tell me is 100 percent. You just have to read the language. Just read the language.

Q Mr. President, the Special Counsel's final report, do you want that to be made public?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll have to see. There's been no collusion whatsoever. We'll have to see.

Q So, on that, Mr. President, did you know — did you know that Paul Manafort was sharing polling data from your campaign with the Russians?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I didn't know anything about it. Nothing about it.

Q Mr. President, do you have any reaction to news of Jeff Bezos's divorce and his affair?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I wish him luck.

Q That's it?

THE PRESIDENT: I wish him luck. It's going to be a beauty.

END 9:47 A.M. EST