

**REMARKS**

Remarks by Vice President Pence in Press Gaggle | Jacksonville, Florida

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THE VICE PRESIDENT: Thank you all for coming. It's great to be in Jacksonville.

It's an exciting time in the American economy: 5.8 million new jobs created, all as a result of the hard work of the American people, but also the policies that we've been advancing in Washington, D.C. — cutting taxes on working families, on businesses; rolling back regulation; unleashing American energy.

But the President and I believe that central to our success is to continue to have the kind of trade that is free, and fair, and puts American jobs and American workers first.

And I wanted to come here to Jacksonville, as I travel all around the country, to make it clear that we have an opportunity with the USMCA to do just that — to pass the kind of trade deal that will put agriculture here in Florida first, manufacturing here in Florida first. And it really corrects the — many of the profound flaws that were a part of NAFTA from the very beginning.

We all remember NAFTA, adopted in the mid-1990s, the impact it had particularly on manufacturing. And, as I said here today, the USMCA remedies all of that. It levels the playing field. And we really do believe that now that we've reached an agreement on how we deal with

steel and aluminum and the retaliatory tariffs with Canada and Mexico, that now we have an opportunity to move on to the USMCA.

As I said today, the President has done his job. He's negotiated a deal that puts American jobs and American workers first. But now it's time for Congress to do their job and pass the USMCA this summer.

So, I'm pleased to be here in Jacksonville. I'm going to be out at the Naval Air Station in just a little while, before we leave, thanking all the extraordinary men and women at that base.

But thank you all for being here today.

Q Mr. Vice President — Venezuela. What are we going to do? Obviously Rubio and Scott want action there. It seems like we've stalled out with Guaidó. Are we going to actually take action or are we just going to let the status quo maintain like we did through the Chávez era?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, what's happening in Venezuela is a tragedy driven by the dictatorship and socialism of Nicolás Maduro. Nicolás Maduro has no legitimate claim to power. And Nicolás Maduro must go.

This President has led a coalition of more than 50 nations around the world that have recognized Interim President Juan Guaidó, who is the constitutionally recognized President of Venezuela. We've continued to bring economic and diplomatic pressure to bear — not just on Venezuela, but also on their patrons in Cuba. And we will continue to do that.

President Trump has made it clear: All options are on the table. We're simply —

Q Military invasion?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: All options are on the table. The United States is not going to stand idly by while Venezuela continues to collapse into tyranny and deprivation.

Three million people have fled Venezuela because of the results of the socialism and dictatorship and oppression of Nicolás Maduro. And it is in our interests — failed states know no boundaries. So it's in our interests in this hemisphere to come together around a restoration of liberty, the rule of

the law, and democracy in Venezuela. And the American people, people around the world, people of Venezuela can be confident President Trump and our administration —

Q Do we have a timeframe for a regime change?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: — are going to stand firm until we see freedom restored in Venezuela.

Q Is there a timeframe?

Q We've been hearing a lot about abortion this past weekend. Again, what would you want the people here in Florida to do? What are your thoughts on what's been happening? It's been in the headlines all around.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm pro-life. I don't apologize for it. I couldn't be more proud to be a part of a pro-life administration. As the President said, he's strongly pro-life. We've advanced policies to protect the interest of taxpayers — the Mexico City Policy. We've been appointing conservative judges to our courts at every level. And my hope is that someday we will see the sanctity of life restored to the center of American law.

But ultimately, with *Roe v. Wade*, it would be an issue that has to come before the Supreme Court. But what the American people can be confident of is this President, his Vice President, and this administration will continue to stand for the sanctity of life.

Q You know, we talked about all of the pros regarding the USMCA.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q But folks here in Jacksonville will wonder: Are there any cons? Because we saw what happened with NAFTA. This is now a 25-year-old deal that you guys are now trying to work to correct. So are there any cons to this new deal?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, honestly, I think it is such a dramatic improvement on NAFTA that this really is a win, frankly, for all three of the countries in North America. You know, early on in this debate, we made it clear that we were looking for a win, win, win for our neighbors because, frankly, the American people — American manufacturing, in particular — really lost under NAFTA.

I mean, as recently as the fall of 2016, in my own home state of Indiana, we saw a company announce that they were closing up a factory that had been there for 75 years and moving south of the border. All of those incentives for American companies to shutter their factories and move them south of the border are gone. We've really leveled the playing field.

And we regard to American agriculture, we've also made the kinds of improvements, particularly when it comes to dairy, that will really put American jobs and American agriculture first.

So I really do believe this is a great win. We are hopeful for a strong bipartisan vote in the Congress. It's one of the reasons I've been traveling all over the country. We're calling on Speaker Pelosi and the Democrats in the Congress to step forward to support the USMCA.

And when it makes it to the President's desk, we're very confident that our neighbors in Mexico and in Canada will adopt it as well. And we'll have a whole new framework for prosperity here in North America that I believe is going to benefit the people of this country for generations.

House Speaker Pelosi said she wants to see a reopening of negotiations, add some provisions. Is there any way to get her to allow this to come to a House floor vote without reopening negotiations? And what would be the concerns you would raise?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, the USMCA has already been negotiated. The deal has been done. But our team was on Capitol Hill last week meeting with Speaker Pelosi and leaders in both political parties. And there's what called "enabling legislation," where we can adopt certain additional provisions that will guide the implementation of the USMCA. And we're very open to that.

There's issues that are — have particular regional significance. Even some issues here in Florida that we're working with local leaders — we're working with national leaders to make sure that we address those.

But, I have to tell you, the USMCA is a win for American jobs, a win for American workers. And we see the tremendous momentum in this economy. We really do believe that this new trade deal here in North America is going to set the stage for tremendous growth in our economy.

Q What will this trade deal — what implications will it have with our relationship with China? I know, especially among the panelists, that was a focal point of the conversation that they had.

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Well, the priority today is to get the USMCA done. The agreement has been reached between all three of the countries. As I said earlier, the President had worked very closely with the Prime Minister of Canada and the leadership in Mexico to address issues and concerns we had about American steel. As of today, those are resolved. And so, Canada and Mexico have removed what are called “retaliatory tariffs” that they had imposed, especially on American agriculture.

So we think we’ve cleared the way, now, for Congress to take this up and bring USMCA to a vote. And we’re going to continue to drive for it.

With regard to China, those discussions are ongoing. And I really do believe that the American people are grateful for the President’s strong leadership with China. I mean, China today represents half of our international trade deficit.

But it goes well beyond that. I mean, for far too long, China has been violating international norms, with regard to protecting intellectual property, forcing technology transfers, limiting ownership of American businesses doing business there. China needs to step up and begin to work on the international rules of order that have been established in trade for generations. And we’re going to continue to drive for the kind of changes that’ll affect that because that’s what will put America on an equal footing with China and set the stage for a productive relationship going forward.

But, look, those discussions are ongoing. You can be confident the President and our entire team are going to continue in those discussions going forward. The President has got some international travel just around the corner. But we’re going to continue to stand for the kind of trade deals that put American jobs and American workers first.

And we see that with tax cuts and tax reform, with rolling back federal regulation, with unleashing American energy. That, combined with free and fair deals — whether it be here in North America; whether it be with China; whether it be with Japan, where the President will travel later this week; or with the European Union, we think all of that, in combination, is the key for a boundless American future.

So thank you all very much.

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