

White House press briefing [via Newsmax's *Newsline*]

08/19/25

1:18:58 p.m.

2 minutes and 10 seconds

KAROLINE LEAVITT: However, one thing that has absolutely not changed is the media's negative and downright false coverage of President Trump and his foreign policy accomplishments. From the beginning of this entire process, much of the left-wing media has been actively rooting against the President of the United States in the pursuit of peace. Initially, the media ridiculously claimed that President Trump was somehow beholden to Russia for even agreeing to have a face-to-face discussion with President Putin inside of the United States. The media said President Trump was making a grave mistake by legitimizing Putin. They were aghast that President Trump would treat another world leader like a world leader. The media relentlessly attacked President Trump and claimed he suffered a 'major defeat' for not immediately emerging with a final agreement, even though he said heading into that meeting, this was a meeting to listen and to understand how to move the ball forward. All weekend, following those historic U.S.-Russia bilateral talks, we listened to clueless pundits on television trying but failing to claim that the president had failed. The so-called experts in the foreign policy establishment whose record is nothing but endless wars, trillions of wasted taxpayer dollars, and dead Americans have the nerve to try and lecture President Trump, who has solved seven global conflicts in seven months, about peace. It was this is the same president, by the way, who brokered the Abraham Accords in his first term, on top of more than half a dozen other peace deals this year alone. As I just said, we also saw yesterday the president of Ukraine and all of the other major leaders of Europe fly across the Atlantic Ocean to meet President Trump at the White House because of the progress that was made, and that, if you ask, the media, failed meeting, but it was not it was highly productive and it was successful. This is why Americans trust in the mass media is at a lowest point in more than five decades. Diplomacy is a delicate process, and instead of reporting the facts about what is happening here at this White House and what is happening between this President and other leaders around the world, many outlets in this room continue to try to actively undermine the President and sabotage the efforts towards peace. That is why I felt the need to set the record straight.

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1:22:17 p.m.

3 minutes and 19 seconds

LEAVITT: And despite fake narratives from the media again, a significant number of the arrests have been in high crime areas of D.C. In fact, nearly half of all of the non illegal alien related arrests have occurred in wards seven and eight, the two wards that have the highest number of violent crime, as well as homicides and assaults with dangerous weapons last year. So, while Democrats continue to coddle violent criminals, President Trump and this administration are focused on putting them behind bars and unapologetically standing up for the safety of law abiding American citizens, and the White House will continue to provide all of you with the results of this operation in the days ahead. So, with that, I will take your questions. today here in

our new media seat today, we have Jack Posobiec, who joined us in Anchorage, Alaska last week. Jack, thanks for being here. Why don't you kick us off?

JACK POSOBIEC: So, a couple of questions regarding the status of these peace talks. Obviously, we saw the President and President Putin there in Anchorage. We saw the world leaders here yesterday with this summit. We've heard phrases like "coalition of the willing." We've also heard "Article V-like guarantees." When it comes to the security guarantees, what is the current status of that? I know the President earlier today mentioned boots on the ground with the U.K., France, Germany possibly, but unequivocally said no U.S. troops on the ground. But U.S. coordination, can you elaborate on that? And what would the redlines be?

LEAVITT: Sure. Well, you got to the heart of what I was going to say to all of you today on security guarantees, which is the President has definitively stated, U.S. boots will not be on the ground in Ukraine, but we can certainly help in the coordination and perhaps provide other means of security guarantees to our European allies. The President understands security guarantees are crucially important to ensure a lasting peace, and he has directed his national security team to coordinate with our friends in also to continue to cooperate and discuss these matters with Russia as well.

POSOBIEC: Karoline, now, have the Russians responded at all? I know we spoke with President Putin last night. What has there been their response? Because we've heard some reports from the Kremlin and others saying they're unequivocally against NATO troops on the ground.

LEAVITT: Well, look, the President continues to have these conversations with both leaders. Those conversations took place in Anchorage, Alaska, again yesterday with the Europeans and President Zelensky and he has directed his team to come up with a framework for these security guarantees that can be acceptable to help ensure a lasting peace and end this war.

POSOBIEC: And then just last question real quick on this regarding some of the funding. We're hearing questions about another round of weapons sales or possibly a round of U.S. purchases of Ukrainian drones. Will that money be funded by the U.S. taxpayers, or are we finally going to see an end to the U.S. taxpayer funded, seemingly endless mandate for these foreign wars?

LEAVITT: Well, the President is very sensitive to the needs of the American taxpayer And immediately upon entering office back in January, he made it very clear that we're not going to continue writing blank checks to fund a war very far away, which is why he came up with the very creative solution to have NATO purchase American weaponry, because it is the best in the world and then to backfill the needs of the Ukrainian army and the Ukrainian people and their military. So, that's the solution the President has come up with. We'll continue to see that forward. As for any additional sales, I'll have to defer you to the Department of Defense.

POSOBIEC: Thanks so much.

LEAVITT: Thanks, Jack.

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1:29:58 p.m.

3 minutes and 29 seconds

LIBBEY DEAN: I wanted to ask you about the National Guard troops. How is the White House coordinating with how they're being placed in D.C. — what areas? And then also, how long should people here in the District anticipate the National Guard to be on the ground patrolling the streets?

LEAVITT: I don't have a timeline for you, Libbey, but we will keep you posted on that. I think the President, as you know, and this administration, he came to this Briefing Room with members of his cabinet to lay out the rationale and the reasoning for Federalizing the National Guard here in Washington, D.C., and for our work with the Metropolitan Police Department to make our district safer. We've seen violent crime has taken the lives of far too many residents here in our nation's capital, and the President wants to make it safe again. And, as for the coordination efforts, this interagency team is meeting and talking daily. In fact, there's a meeting taking place right now in the West Wing with members of the interagency task force to continue to discuss not just the National Guard deployment, but also how we can continue to remove public safety threats off of the streets of Washington, which, as the numbers I just showed you, prove they are doing every single night. I will just reiterate 465 total arrests and counting since the start of this operation, I believe 11 or 12 days ago. I'll have to check the calendar, but those are pretty remarkable results. If not for this task force and their high level of coordination and the leadership of this president, there would have been 465 more violent criminals on the streets of this capital that you all live in every day, so I think we should all be very grateful for that. [TO NELSON] Steven.

STEVEN NELSON: Thank you. Caroline. Three questions about the D.C. crackdown.

LEAVITT: Sure.

NELSON: First, I was wondering if you could clarify something President Trump said. He mentioned getting rid of the slums where criminals live. Was he talking about tents or permanent residential buildings? And then the mayor has expressed an interest in clarifying how much of a focus illegal immigration enforcement is as part of this crackdown. Can you say anything about that?

LEAVITT: Sure.

NELSON: Any preview on the beautification?

LEAVITT: Three questions. I'll try to answer all three of them pointedly for you. First, when it comes to what you said in the President said the slums of Washington, DC., he's referring to the most dangerous communities, neighborhoods and streets in the city where, unfortunately, violence has ravaged these communities and taken the lives of, again, far too many law-abiding

D.C. residents. We know on July 5 of this year, just more than a month ago, a three-year-old, beautiful young girl was shot and killed in her car with her family in one of these communities, which is why there has been a surge, despite what many of you have been falsely reporting. And I believe it was *The Washington Post* who put out a map claiming it to be fact-based when it was just based on, I don't know, accounts that they've heard on the street, not actual statistics and data. So, we went and reconfigured the numbers and, as I said, half, nearly half of all the non illegal alien related arrests have occurred in wards seven and eight in the District of Columbia, where we know — excuse me — there's the highest rate of crime. So we'll continue to do that. And what was your second question, Stephen?

NELSON: Illegal immigration and how much of a focus that is?

LEAVITT: Yeah. Look, I mean, the focus is to make D.C. safe and beautiful and to remove public safety threats and violent criminals from our streets. If federal law enforcement, with the help of the Metropolitan Police Department, come across illegal aliens, of course, we are going to abide by this administration's policy of law and order, and we are going to remove illegal criminals from our nation's capital. They will be detained and deported, just like they are in every other community across the country.

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1:34:51 p.m.

1 minute and 13 seconds

SHAWN MCCREESH: If the point is to get everybody on the same page, why wouldn't Trump just take the call from Putin while the other leaders were in the room? He said it would be disrespectful to do that. But why is that disrespectful?

LEAVITT: With all due respect, only a reporter from The New York Times would ask a question like that, Shawn. The President met with all of these European leaders at the White House, 48 hours after sitting down with President Putin on American soil. In fact, there was so much progress in the readout that was given to these European leaders immediately following his meeting with President Putin, that every single one of them got on a plane 48 hours later and flew to the United States of America. And if I could just read for all of you some of the statements from those European leaders yesterday, you had President Zelensky himself saying, it was a very good conversation. It was really good. We spoke about very sensitive points. The secretary general, Mark Ruda — it was the President only because of the President that this deadlock was broken. But with President Putin, by starting a dialog. So, these leaders who this war is in their backyard are very grateful that the President took that call and that he was there to provide them with a readout of Russia's thinking on this, something that was not done by the previous administration at all.

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1:37:20 p.m.

30 seconds

MARY MARGARET OLOHAN: Two questions if that's okay. So, on these meetings, I know you said that the trilateral will take place if necessary. Do you think that we might not need the trilateral and that Zelenskyy and Putin might come to this conclusion on their own? And then as a follow up, I know the President said on Fox News this morning that he's partially seeking peace in order to get to heaven. Was he joking, or is there a spiritual motivation behind his peace deals here?

LEAVITT: I think the President was serious. I think the President wants to get to heaven, as I hope we all do in this room as well.

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1:39:57 p.m.

1 minute and 6 seconds

JACQUI HEINRICH: Since the President often says that this war would not have started if he were in office —

LEAVITT: True.

HEINRICH: — and Putin confirmed that —

LEAVITT: It's true.

HEINRICH: How — how —

LEAVITT: Do you accept that as true? The European leaders do —

HEINRICH: — well —

LEAVITT: — and President Putin himself said that, by the way.

HEINRICH: He did say that. The question I have, though, is what is the President going to do to ensure that these security guarantees last beyond him into the time when he is no longer President? And does that have to involve Congress at all?

LEAVITT: Well, he understands the need for that which he spoke to yesterday and what's he going to do? It's why he's engaging in — in so many talks and so many conversations with both sides of this war with our European allies. It's why, on the way home from Anchorage, Alaska, very late at night, when I know many of you on the press plane were sleeping and many staff were sleeping, the President himself was still awake at 2:00 in the morning, talking to European leaders and NATO about how we can ensure a lasting peace and bring this conflict to an end. He has expended incredible amount of time, energy and effort into bringing this war to an end, and

he remains determined to do that.