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Inter Miami coach Javier Mascherano said his team had hoped their recent visit to the White House would focus on soccer, after the event took a broader political turn during remarks by US President Donald Trump.

The Major League Soccer champions visited Washington to commemorate their 2025 MLS Cup victory, the first league title in club history. Inter Miami, featuring global stars like **Lionel Messi** and **Luis Suárez**, was invited as part of the long-standing American tradition of honoring championship teams at the White House.

"I thought we were going to talk about soccer," Mascherano said, according to the Miami Herald.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, Mascherano indicated that the team had been told the visit would be focused on sports. He explained that the appearance had been organized well in advance, taking advantage of the fact that the team was already scheduled to play in Washington.

"We followed a protocol that's a tradition: going to the White House because we were the championship team," he said. "It had been planned a long time ago for the week we were going to play here in Washington."

Mascherano added that the players only spent a brief moment with the president. "The contact with President Trump was what was seen on television, not much more than that," he noted.

During the ceremony, Trump praised Messi's impact on soccer and suggested the Argentine striker could rival Brazilian legend Pelé. The president also mentioned that his son Barron is a fan of the Inter Miami captain.

"He thinks you're a great person," Trump said. "He's a big fan of yours, as well as of a gentleman named Ronaldo. Cristiano is extraordinary. There are great champions, great, great athletes in that sport." Later, Trump presented Messi with a pink soccer ball signed by him.

However, the event briefly shifted away from soccer. According to the Associated Press, Trump used part of his speech to address broader issues, including the ongoing U.S.-Israeli military campaign against Iran, as well as comments on the stock market and the political situation in Venezuela.

The ceremony ultimately returned its focus to the season in which Inter Miami won the title and the club's rise since Messi joined the team in 2023, a move widely credited with boosting Major League Soccer's international profile.

Mascherano indicated that the visit to the White House had been scheduled approximately six to eight weeks prior, before tensions related to Iran escalated. "The visit to the White House was planned between a month and a half and two months ago," he stated.