

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2019

Remarks on Signing of an Executive Order Combating Anti-Semitism at a Hanukkah Reception

December 11, 2019

The President. Well, thank you very much. Thank you, everybody. And a friend of mine, Tim Scott, from South Carolina—a Senator—where are you, Tim? You're—there he is. And I said: "You know what, Tim? You have a big vote coming up. I think you want to go back to the Senate." [Laughter] So I will tell you, without, Tim, this wouldn't have happened. Tim Scott, thank you very much. We love you. Go back to the Senate and vote. [Laughter] Thanks, Tim.

Melania and I are delighted to welcome so many friends and families to this incredible house, the White House, to celebrate this, really, sacred season and a very special time. To everyone here today: Happy Hanukkah.

We're delighted to be joined by Vice President Mike Pence and his incredible wife Karen. And if you'd both come up. Mike? Wherever you may be. Come on up, Karen. Please, come up.

Also, as you know, Ivanka and Jared have worked very, very hard in this whole endeavor and many other endeavors, I will tell you. They're doing an incredible job, and I'm very proud that the Jewish faith is a cherished part of our family. Very proud of it.

I'd like to recognize Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Secretary Betsy DeVos, Deputy Attorney General Jeff Rosen—hi, Jeff—as well as Senators Tim Scott, who just left, and he's a fantastic guy, and James Lankford. Where's James? Where is James? James come up here, will you please, James? Did he have to go for the vote too? All right, tell him we mentioned his name. A lot of these people are voting on some very important things right now. I'm saying: "You know what? Get out and vote," right?

And we have Representatives Doug Collins, Josh Gottheimer, David Kustoff, Elaine Luria, Max Rose, and Lee Zeldin, all here. Where are they? Are you—raise your hands. Are you here? Come on up, if you want, fellas. Even the Democrat can come up. What the hell. [Laughter] Come on up. Come on up. What a job they're doing. Come on up. Nice to see you all. Hi. Good. Hi, Doug. That's great. Hi, Lee. Good job, Lee. Wow. What a lawyer. I'd hire you anytime, Lee. [Laughter]

I also want to bring a friend of mine up. He's a tremendous success in so many other businesses, but they only know him because he signs Tom Brady's check every week. [Laughter] And he's a really—he's a champ, he's a winner. His wife Myra passed away a longer time ago than we think, Bob. That was a big, tough time for you and for me too and for Melania. I just want to tell you, you've been a special friend of Israel. Nobody closer to Israel than Bob Kraft.

So, Bob, please come up. Please come up.

And, as usual, his team is mired in first place. Have you ever been in second place? Not too often. You know what I'd like you to do, Bob, while you're here—because we could all learn from Bob; he's a champ, he's a winner—if you could say a few words about Israel. Please.

Kraft Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Robert K. Kraft. Well, thank you. Well, thank you, Mr. President. I'm honored to be here at this time, at this event, because this is really a bipartisan issue. And I know previous administrations had tried to do something in this area. And we know that college campuses are a place where you bridge-build and you include people and have education and not be something that is exclusive and drives people away and generates hatred.

So I'm so proud that, at this time, we're doing something that is so bipartisan. And my wife of blessed memory would be smiling now, because she loved America first, and Israel, and wanted to build bridges between the two places and have *tikkun olam*. And I think this, more than anything, is going to help do that. So thank you very much.

The President. Thank you, Bob. Thank you. Thank you very much, Bob.

I also want to extend my appreciation to Israel's Ambassador, a man who's become a friend of mine, and terrific guy: Ron Dermer. Where's Ron? Thank you, Ron, very much.

As we gather this afternoon, our thoughts turn to the grieving families in New Jersey. Yesterday two wicked murderers opened fire at a kosher supermarket and killed four innocent souls, including a brave police officer who faced down the shooter and very bravely faced the shooter down.

With one heart, America weeps for the lives lost. With one voice, we vow to crush the monstrous evil of anti-Semitism whenever and wherever it appears. And we're working very hard on that. And I can tell you that we have a lot of people in government working very, very hard on that, and we appreciate their work. It's not easy.

Joining us on stage for this event are two great Jewish-American patriots: Army veteran Oscar Stewart and Border Patrol Agent Jonathan Morales. As many of you remember, both of these heroes were at the Chabad of Poway Synagogue when a killer opened fire.

And by the way, Robert Jeffress, I see you right here. And what a tremendous faith leader you are and a tremendous man you are. Pastor, thank you for being here so much, also. We appreciate it. We have so many people and so many great faith leaders here, and I want to thank you all for being here. It's fantastic. This is a great, great day. We appreciate it very much, Robert. Thank you very much.

They raced towards the gunfire and saved countless American lives. Oscar and Jonathan, thank you both for responding to the worst evil with the best of American valor.

This afternoon we celebrate the miracle of Hanukkah. More than 2,000 years ago, a ruthless tyrant persecuted the Jewish people and desecrated the Temple of Jerusalem. But a group of Jewish patriots defeated a powerful army, rededicated the temple, and won back their right to worship God in freedom.

Recently, I received a remarkable letter from a 12-year-old boy named Austin Polonsky, from San Francisco, California. In the letter, Austin summed up the meaning of Hanukkah. He said: "On Hanukkah . . . it is a tradition to light the menorah and place it by the window. We do this to exemplify how we are not afraid to show who we are or what we believe in."

In Austin's letter, we [he]* asked if he could celebrate Hanukkah with my family at the White House. And this year, we are thrilled to let you know that Austin is with us today. Where is Austin? Where is Austin? Come on up here, Austin. Come on up here, Austin. Good-looking guy. Good. Come on, Austin. Don't be shy. It's only Bob Kraft. *[Laughter]*

You want to say a few words? Huh?

San Francisco, CA, resident Austin Polonsky. Uh, sure.

The President. Do you want to say—come on, Austin. Come on, Austin. Let's get with it, Austin.

* White House correction.

Mr. Polonsky. Thank you for having me at the White House today. It was very unexpected. My mom pulled me out of school when the White House called, and I was in the middle of lunch. *[Laughter]* Probably one of the first times I was ever speechless. *[Laughter]* Yes. Thank you for having me here.

The President. Go ahead. You can—*[laughter.]* That's a good—good job, Austin. Come here. Thank you, Austin. Great job. Thank you.

He didn't know he was going to do that. You did a good job, huh?—*[laughter]*—considering we got you by surprise a little bit, right? Thank you. Stay with the First Lady. *[Laughter]*

Do you know Bob Kraft and everybody onstage, right?

Mr. Kraft. That's a Trump yarmulke.

The President. Is that a Trump yarmulke? Oh, it's a Trump yarmulke. Wow, I like that. *[Laughter]* Can I have that, Austin? I want that.

Across our country, Jewish Americans strengthen, sustain, and inspire our Nation. As President, I will always celebrate and honor the Jewish people, and I will always stand with our treasured friend and ally, the State of Israel, that I can tell you.

So, 2 years ago, I recognized the true capital of Israel, and we opened the American Embassy in Jerusalem. And we got it built. They were thinking anywhere for \$1 billion to \$2 billion. I did it for \$350,000. You know that. We got a building that was in beautiful shape, in the best location—best location there is. And we got it done. We got it done. We had it opened in 4 months, and it's right now opened.

And, I don't know, maybe someday they'll build a more expensive version of it, but it can't get much better. Right, Robert? I think—and Ron can tell you, it can't get much better than what we have. We have the best location. They were going out. They wanted me to sign an order for anywhere from \$1 billion to \$2 billion, and they were going to look for a piece of land, but they said land in Jerusalem is very rare and very expensive. *[Laughter]* I said, "Do you think we have a piece?"

And David Friedman, our great Ambassador, did a fantastic job. You did a fantastic job. I said, "David, they want to spend \$2 billion." I said: "Go check it out. Let me see. Call me back." And he said, "Sir, I think we can do it for about \$250,000, maybe \$300,000." So we'll save \$1 billion. And we have a better location than any location we could have gotten, Ron, right?

And it's been open now for a long time. So it was great. And we used all Jerusalem stone. Friends of mine like Jerusalem stone. Over here, it costs a fortune. Over there, it wasn't so expensive. *[Laughter]*

I've also recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. That was another big one. And I said to Bob, "So"—Bob Kraft—I said: "So what was bigger, Bob? What we did for Israel in terms of Jerusalem and moving the Embassy to Jerusalem, becoming the capital of Israel? Or the Golan Heights, which you've been looking to do?" For 52 years, they've been having meetings on the Golan Heights. Nothing happened until I came along.

I said: "Bob Kraft, which is bigger? Which is more important to the Jewish people?" He said, "Neither." I said, "What does that mean?" He said, "What you did by terminating the Iran nuclear deal is bigger than both." I think that's true. I think that's true, Jeff. You know? Could be true. I said, "I sort of agree with that."

But today we're taking another historic action. In just a few moments, I'll sign an Executive order to combat anti-Semitism. This action makes clear that title VI of the Civil Rights Act—

which prohibits the Federal funding of universities and other institutions that engage in discrimination—applies to institutions that traffic in anti-Semitic hate.

So this is a very powerful document that we're signing today. And it's been a very big story over the last number of days, when they heard. As you know, they had almost universal support in Congress, and yet they didn't get it done. And this has gone on for years and years. They've almost had universal support, but there was always a roadblock.

But this year, there's no roadblock, because I'm doing it myself. It's much easier. And we have support from many in Congress. This is our message to universities: If you want to accept the tremendous amount of Federal dollars that you get every year, you must reject anti-Semitism. It's very simple.

My administration will never tolerate the suppression, persecution, or silencing of the Jewish people. We have also taken a firm stand against the so-called divestment and sanctions movement, or BDS. You know that very well.

And, I have to tell you, Jared Kushner and Ivanka, they've been talking to me about this for 3 years now, maybe longer than that. But I go back about 3 years where it's something that I could do about it, you know. In this position, we can do things about it. *[Laughter]* Before that, not quite as much. I'd be just like you: successful, doing nicely, but not for this. But they've been talking—from the beginning of the administration, they've been bringing this up. And we forcefully condemn this anti-Semitic campaign against the State of Israel and its citizens.

We are profoundly honored to be joined this afternoon by Rosalee Glass, a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust, the darkest chapter of human history. After the war, Rosalee came to America and started a drapery manufacturing business. Now she has written a book, starred in an award-winning film, and is going strong at the age of 102. Where is Rosalee? Where is—hi. You're looking good. Thank you, Rosalee. Thank you for being here. It's an honor. And you do; you really fill our hearts with open joy, Rosalee. So many people. And we know of your story.

In honor of Rosalee and the millions of Jews who suffered unthinkable persecution, we renew our pledge now and always: Never again. Never again.

Today we thank God for the Jewish people, whose love and loyalty, brilliance and bravery, resilience and resolve, spirit and strength bless America and the world.

Before I sign the Executive order, I'd like to ask Oscar to say a few words, and Jonathan will light the menorah. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

Oscar, please. Thank you, Oscar.

Rancho Bernardo, CA, resident Oscar Stewart. Thank you, Mr. President. So—oh, boy, this is a great moment.

So what I want to say is: In Scripture, it teaches us that when the Jewish armies went to fight and to conquer the land of Israel from the Canaanites, it says the generals would speak to their men and say, "Leave, if you're afraid." I always wondered why it says this—that if you're afraid, to leave—because God was fighting for them. So I came up with some of my own: It's because you had no faith in God.

Well, today I stand with a group of people who have tremendous faith in God. And we are all of different faiths, and we're all here with one thing in mind, and that is to end hate. And I am so proud to be standing here the day that this was signed. This is a momentous moment in my life.

And I want to thank the President and the First Lady for everything that they've done for Israel, and—but more important, for what they've done for America. America is a nation of many,

many people, and we need to remember whatever God you pray to, whatever religion you practice, we are all Americans, and we need to love each other, and that will conquer hate.

Once again, thank you very much, Mr. President. I'm deeply honored.

The President. Fantastic job. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

And by the way, I see Alan Dershowitz. Come on up here for a second, Alan. Wow.

And I'd like to ask my friends, the pastors, to come up here. You know, Robert—and I have to say this to the other pastors, some of whom have been very kind—all of them have been very kind: We've never had such evangelical Christian support.

Jeff, come on up. Jeff. Come on up here, Jeff. You're the one that's doing such a good job legally to make sure all of this happens. But Robert Jeffress—I didn't know him, but he—I watched him. And I'd watch him on different shows, and I'd say: "I like that guy. Man, he talks really great about me. And I like people that talk well about me." [*Laughter*]

And he was saying: "You know, he may not be the greatest Christian I've ever seen. He may not know the Bible quite as well as the rest of us. In fact, he may not know it very well at all." [*Laughter*] "But that guy is a real leader. And he's going to do a job." And I appreciated that statement. I don't know if I should have, but I did. [*Laughter*] And I think we have led, because I think we've made more progress toward faith leaders. We got rid of the Johnson Amendment, which was a disaster.

So I'd like to ask if—Robert, if you could say a couple of words, and if I could also ask Alan Dershowitz to say, and then we're going to sign a very important document. Okay? Robert, please. Thank you.

First Baptist Church Dallas Senior Pastor Robert J. Jeffress, Jr. It is true, I believe President Trump is the most profaith President in history, when you look at what he has done for people of all faiths.

And, Mr. President, you know, Jewish and Christian believers alike believe what God said to Abraham in Genesis 12: that God would bless those who bless Israel and He would curse those who curse Israel.

And I want to thank you, Mr. President, for being the kind of President who has the courage to stand up and be, when it comes to Israel, on the right side of history. But most importantly, you're on the right side of God. And that's why you are not going to fail, and we're going to stand behind you 100 percent. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Jared.

Harvard University Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law Emeritus Alan M. Dershowitz. Great. For 65 of my 81 years I have spent at universities all over the country and all over the world, there is no more important event in those 65 years to turn universities away from being bastions of hatred and discrimination than this Executive order being signed today. It is a game changer. It will go down in history as one of the most important events in the 2,000-year battle against anti-Semitism.

Thank you, Mr. President. You did a great, great job. The people who helped you do this did a great, great job. And you will be remembered by history for all time for having signed this very important order. Thank you.

The President. Okay, should we do it?

Audience members. Yeah!

[*At this point, the President signed the Executive order.*]

White House Senior Adviser Jared C. Kushner. I just want to thank President Trump for all of his leadership on behalf of America. What we've seen the President accomplish over the last 3 years have been extraordinary. When President Trump decided to run, there were a lot of people who weren't sure what somebody who had never done anything in politics before would do. And I would say that all of our expectations have been greatly exceeded.

The plans that the team has put in place under the President's leadership have produced economic miracles for this country. And I am confident that the best is to come. But what I believe is even more important is the President's commitment to keeping all Americans safe, to keeping America free, to keeping America respectful of people of all faiths and religions. And the work that the President has done to ensure that is something that will have an impact for generations to come.

So I just want to thank you for your amazing leadership and for all that you do to protect so many people.

The President. Thank you very much.

Senior Adviser Kushner. Thank you.

The President. And we'll light the menorah. Will you do that?

Senior Adviser Kushner. I think Jonathan is going to do that.

The President. How about that? We'll light the menorah. Please.

Senior Adviser Kushner. Jonathan. I think you're going to light——

The President. Go ahead, Jonathan.

[*U.S. Customs and Border Protection El Centro Sector, CA, Patrol Agent Jonathan Morales lit the menorah.*]

The President. So, everyone, thank you very much. Again, happy Hanukkah. This has been a great day. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:26 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Adviser to the President Ivanka M. Trump; Mr. Kraft, in his capacity as owner, and Thomas E.P. Brady, Jr., quarterback, National Football League's New England Patriots; David N. Anderson and Francine Graham, suspects in the shooting at a cemetery and kosher grocery store in Jersey City, NJ, on December 10; Jersey City Police Department Detective Joseph Seals and Jersey City residents Leah Mindel Ferenz, Douglas M. Rodríguez, and Moshe Deutsch, who were killed in the shooting; John T. Earnest, suspected gunman in the shooting at Chabad of Poway in Poway, California, on April 27; and Los Angeles, CA, resident Rosalee Glass.

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Names: Anderson, David N.; Brady, Thomas E.P., Jr.; Collins, Douglas C.; Dermer, Ron; Dershowitz, Alan M.; Deutsch, Moshe; DeVos, Elisabeth Prince; Ernest, John T.; Ferenz, Leah Mindel; Friedman, David M.; Glass, Rosalee; Gottheimer, Joshua S.; Graham, Francine; Jeffress, Robert J., Jr.; Kraft, Robert K.; Kushner, Jared C.; Kustoff, David F.; Lankford, James; Luria, Elaine G.; Mnuchin, Steven T.; Morales, Jonathan; Pence, Karen; Pence, Michael R.; Polonsky, Austin; Rodríguez, Douglas M.; Rose, Max N.; Rosen, Jeffrey A.; Scott, Timothy E.; Seals, Joseph; Steward, Oscar; Stewart, Oscar; Trump, Ivanka M.; Trump, Melania; Zeldin, Lee M.

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