

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

The President's News Conference in New Delhi, India

February 25, 2020

The President. Thank you very much. Please. So we had a couple of really great days in India. Prime Minister Modi is a terrific man. He's a terrific leader. And we have a lot of things going in terms of product being purchased by India.

We just had a meeting. A lot of the press was there. I thought it was a great meeting with some of the biggest businessmen in the world. They come from India. They're agreeing to invest billions and billions of dollars. You heard it for yourself. They're going to be investing billions of dollars in our country, so that was the purpose of the trip also.

We're all set for \$3 billion worth of helicopters—the Apaches and various other types—in addition to other equipment; they're buying that. And they're buying a lot. They're going to be buying a lot, and they're also going to be buying a lot of our energy—all forms of our energy—because they need energy, and we have more than anybody. We're number one in the world now in energy. So that's going to be very exciting.

But I thought it was a great 2 days. It was a fantastic 2 days. I'm going to be not at all controversial, because I don't want to blow the 2 days, plus 2 days of travel, on one answer—one little answer. *[Laughter]* Little answer, like John [John Roberts, Fox News] will ask me one little simple question, and you'll blow it out, and that will be the end of the trip. They won't even talk about the trip. So I'll be very, very conservative of my answers, if you don't mind. *[Laughter]*

But we did—we had a great—we had a great time. We had a—great meetings. And we're going for a state dinner, and then after that, we get back onto the plane, and we go back home. It's going to be about 19 hours. But we look forward to it. Get in tomorrow.

But this was a—this is a tremendous country. It's 1.4 billion, probably, at least. The most people. And it's a tremendous market, and they really like us, and I think they like us more now than they've ever liked us, frankly. We have a terrific—a really great relationship between the Prime Minister and myself. So we're going to be doing a lot of things.

I think it was really, really worth it. You may ask about the coronavirus, which is very well under control in our country. We have very few people with it, and the people that have it are—in all cases, I have not heard anything other. Maybe there's something new, because for 2 days, I haven't been seeing too much of that news, of very much news, because it's been very all-encompassing. We have—we've accomplished a lot here. We had a lot of meetings, as you know.

But the people are getting better. They're all getting better. We brought in some Americans from a ship, because it was really the right thing to do, and they're in quarantine. And we think they'll be in very good shape very, very soon.

We discussed a lot of different elements. We actually discussed the coronavirus. And at this moment, India doesn't have much of a problem, they feel. We certainly—it wasn't expressed that they did, which is great. And I think that whole situation will start working out. A lot of talent, a lot of brainpower is being put behind it. Two and a half billion dollars we're putting in.

I see that Chuck Schumer criticized it. He thought it should be more. And if I gave more, he'd say it should be less. *[Laughter]* It's automatic, you know, with these characters. They're not—they're just not good for our country. If I gave more, he'd say, "It should be less." But that's what they do. In the meantime, that's all they can do. They're not getting anything done. We have so many things we could get done.

We could so easily do prescription drugs. You know, last year was the first year in 51 years where prescription drug prices went down. But we could drive them down really well if we had the Democrat votes. We need some additional votes. We would really drive them down, as you know.

So what—with that, I think what we'll do is take some questions, and we'll go to a nice state dinner, and then we go home.

Yes, John, go ahead.

U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia M. Sotomayor

Q. Mr. President, you just addressed coronavirus, so I will put that aside for the moment. You tweeted about Justice Sotomayor——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——yesterday, saying that she and Justice Ginsburg should recuse themselves from future cases dealing with the administration. What is the basis for your opinion on that?

The President. Well, it's very obvious. I mean, I always thought that—frankly, that Justice Ginsburg should do it, because she went wild during the campaign when I was running. I don't know who she was for. Perhaps she was for Hillary Clinton, if you can believe it. But she said some things that were obviously very inappropriate. She later, sort of, apologized. I wouldn't say it was an apology, but she sort of apologized.

And then, Justice Sotomayor said what she said yesterday; you know very well what she said yesterday. It was a big story. And I just don't know how they cannot recuse themselves for anything having to do with Trump or Trump-related. The right thing to do is that.

Now, a Supreme Court Justice is a different standard, but at the same time, I think it's a higher standard, in a certain sense. So they'll have to decide what to do. But her statement was so inappropriate when you're a Justice of the Supreme Court. And it's almost what she's trying to do is take the people that do feel a different way and get them to vote the way that she would like them to vote. I just thought it was so inappropriate. Such a terrible statement for a Supreme Court Justice to——

Q. What was inappropriate about the statement? I'm not an attorney, so I can't really look into it——

The President. Well, you know what the statement was, John.

Q. Well, she seemed to criticize the White House for running to the Supreme Court at the drop of a hat to seek a stay.

The President. No, I don't think that was it. But I think what she did say is, she's trying to shame—the way I look at it: She's trying to shame people with perhaps a different view into voting her way. And that's so inappropriate.

So let's see what happens. We have things—whether or not they recuse themselves both. I mean, look, Justice Ginsburg, during my campaign—you know, I protested at the time. She apologized in a very minor form. And what Justice Sotomayor said yesterday was, really, highly inappropriate, and everybody agrees to that. Virtually everybody. I've seen—I've seen papers on it. People cannot believe that she said it.

Yes, please. Go ahead.

2020 Democratic Presidential Candidate Senator Bernard Sanders/Russia's Reported Interference in the 2020 Presidential Election

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. The intelligence community believes that Russia is trying to meddle in the 2020 election. Do you agree with their assessment? And what is your message to Vladimir Putin about potentially interfering regardless of the candidate they support?

The President. Well, you know, what I'm reading—and again, I'm over here for the last number of days—but they went to see Bernie, and they told Bernie about something having to do with they want Bernie to win. They did not tell me. Intelligence never told me. And we have a couple of people here that would know very well. They never told me anything about that. And it was sort of a strange thing that they went to Bernie.

And now I find out, if I believe what I read in some of your documents, in some of your papers, that it's a highly—it was highly exaggerated. And frankly, I think it's disgraceful. And I think it was leaks from the Intelligence Committee, the House version. And I think that they leaked it. I think probably Schiff leaked it, but some people within that. Schiff leaked it, in my opinion. And he shouldn't be leaking things like that. That's a terrible thing to do.

But basically, they would like to see—Bernie is probably winning, and it looks like he's winning. And he's got a head of steam, and they maybe don't want him, for obvious reasons. So they don't want him, so they put out a thing that Russia is backing him. This is what they do. I've gone through it for a long time. I get it. I get the game better than anybody. And that's the way it is.

A terrible thing to say. And they didn't say it about me. I will say this: Somebody leaked it in intelligence, but nobody ever told me that. We have Ambassador O'Brien in the audience someplace, and he can tell you that this was never discussed with us.

So I think it's terrible. They ought to stop the leaking from the Intelligence Committee. And if they don't stop it, I can't imagine that people are not going to go after them and find out what's happening.

Yes, please.

Q. But do you believe——

Reconciliation Efforts in Afghanistan/Withdrawal of U.S. Troops From Afghanistan

The President. Go ahead, ma'am.

Q. Mr. President, this is—[inaudible]—from India TV News, India TV News.

The President. Yes.

Q. And you're trying to get—[inaudible]—in Afghanistan. So the way the deal is being worked out, what would be India's role and Pakistan's role in the region?

The President. Well, I think India would like to see it happen. I spoke with Prime Minister Modi today, and I think they would very much like to see them—see it happen.

And we're pretty close. We'll see what's going on. We've got 2 days now under our belt without violence or, I guess, a minimum of violence. And we'll see what happens. But people want to see it.

And it's very interesting, that one is. Everybody is happy about it. Even people that are normally against me, like 99.9 percent of the time—[laughter]—because we've been there for 19 years, and everybody would like to see it happen. I was actually surprised. I thought the Schumers of the world would say whatever the opposite is, you know, because that's all they can do. Cryin' Chuck.

But people are really—they're really happy to see that we're trying very hard. You know, we're bringing it down to 86—8,600. And from there, we'll make a decision as to what the final outcome would be.

But there's been tremendous praise for the fact that we're doing something. You know, other administrations have tried to do something. In particular, the previous administration, for a long time, they were never able to get anything done. And we're really serving not as a military force as we are a police force. And we're not a police force. They have to police their own country. We're not a police force. It's like law enforcement. And that's the way it is.

So we'd like to, after 19—I can tell you, after 19 years, we'd like to bring our young people back home. Bring them—that's where they want to be. And we'll always have intelligence there; we'll have other things there. But we'd like to bring them—for the most part, we'd like to bring them back home. We want to watch the area. The area is a hotbed of problems.

And when we bring them home, we'll let them know that if something happens, we will hit them so hard. And we could win that easily if I wanted to kill millions of people. I don't want to kill millions of people—innocent people. We could win that very easily. We don't have to act as a police force. We could act as a military force to win, not a military force to just take care of things in that very, very difficult part of the world. It's a very difficult part. It's a very dangerous part of the world.

So let's see what happens. So far, so good. So far. But I'm very impressed with the kind of kudos we're getting.

Yes, please.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) Terrorist Organization/U.S. Counterterrorism Efforts/Burden-Sharing in the Middle East

Q. Mr. President, *namaste*. I'm Saurabh Shukla. I'm editor in chief of NewsMobile. If you remember, I interviewed you during your last campaign in New Jersey.

The President. Good. Good.

Q. And I asked you this question earlier, at that time, about a Trump doctrine on fighting out Islamic fundamentalism, which you spoke about and you discussed with Prime Minister Modi. And you spoke about a Modi-Trump doctrine. So what is your roadmap to fight out Islamic radical terrorism?

The President. Well, I don't think anybody has done more than I have, if you look. Because I came in, and if you check your maps and look at Iraq and Syria, it was all over. In fact, they had it painted a certain color. I won't tell you what color, because it doesn't matter. Somebody will say it was a Republican color, so I don't want to get people confused. But it was; it happened to be red. [Laughter] And it was basically trying to show where ISIS was in those areas. And it was out of control.

And I gave the orders, and we have a hundred percent of the caliphate. We have tens of thousands of people in prisons now. They're being guarded by the Kurds and others. Europe should take a lot of them back. So far, they haven't agreed to do that. They should do that because we did them a big favor. We captured them. But I did that.

We killed al-Baghdadi a few months ago. And Soleimani was—is gone. He's no longer putting roadside bombs all over the place. Somebody else may be, but he was the father—the king—of the roadside bomb.

All of those young people that you see with missing legs and—missing legs and arms. I've seen every combination. The legs are gone. You go over to Walter Reed—I have to say, the doctors at Walter Reed are incredible, what they're able to do. Incredible.

But that's what his thing was. He thought that was a beautiful weapon: roadside bombs. It's a coward's bomb. And all of these young people that have been so badly hurt. And we did a big favor.

In addition to that, as you know, Hamza bin Laden is now gone. And he was looking to do damage. And he's gone. And Al Qaida, last week, you saw what happened there.

So nobody has done more than what I've done. And—but at the same time, Russia should do it. Iran should do it. Iraq should do it. Syria should do it. You know, we're in a different part of the world. We're doing it. Everybody says, "You're the only ones that can do it." Well, at some point, these other countries—I mean, Iran should do it. Iran hates ISIS. And they should do it.

And we've done a great job. We've taken our soldiers essentially out of Syria, except for little hotspots that we figured, you know, we'll do, that develop. But we've taken the oil. And the soldiers that we have there are the ones guarding the oil. We have the oil. So that's all we have there.

And now we have—and if you look, we are down to a small force in Iraq. And we're down to a small force, very shortly—but right now, even, we have a small force in Afghanistan. And so we're moving out and moving around. But the only soldiers we have in terms of Syria, the predominant number of soldiers, are the ones guarding the oil.

Q. What about terror groups in Pakistan, sir? That's a big concern in this region. And you know there are a lot of terror groups——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——who pose dangers to the United States and democracies like India as well.

The President. Yes. No, I agree. But you also have other countries that can do this. You know, the United States is 8,000 miles away. And they're all saying, "Could you do it?" Yes, we could do it. We've been doing it for a long time. But I've been doing it much better than anyone else has done it. I mean what we've done in the last couple of years has been incredible.

We have 100 percent of the caliphate. Remember, we had 99 percent. I'd say, "Good, we're leaving." And I was hit with—people couldn't believe it. They said, "Do 100." So we did 100. I did 100 with some great generals that knew exactly what they were doing. They were unbelievable.

We took a hundred percent of the caliphate. And we have thousands of prisoners right now locked up—and these are ISIS fighters—and killed thousands, not that I want to do that. I don't want to do that, but that's what we had to do. And when I came in, ISIS was all over the place. It was totally out of control.

Please. Thank you.

Religious Freedom in India/Civil Unrest and Violence in New Delhi

Q. While you've been here in the country, in the capital, the northeast part of Delhi, there have been violent clashes. Police have been killed, some demonstrators. Nine deaths so far, we hear, and about a hundred-plus injured. What did Prime Minister Modi say to you about this amended citizenship law? And how concerned are you about this kind of religious violence in India?

The President. So we did talk about religious freedom. And I will say that the Prime Minister was incredible on what he told me. He wants people to have religious freedom, and very strongly. And he said that in India they have worked very hard to have great and open religious freedom. And if you look back and look at what's going on, relative to other places especially, but they have really worked hard on religious freedom.

I asked that question in front of a very large group of people today. And he talked about it; we talked about it for a long time. And I really believe that's what he wants.

As far as the individual attack, I heard about it, but I didn't discuss that with him. That's up to India.

Yes, go ahead. Please.

Sexual Assault Conviction of Weinstein Company Cochairman Harvey Weinstein

Q. Hi, sir, Emily Goodin with the DailyMail.com. I was wondering, do you think justice was served in the Harvey Weinstein case?

The President. So I was never a fan of Harvey Weinstein, as you know. In fact, he said he was going to work hard to defeat me in the election. How did that work out, by the way? I'm trying to figure that out.

He was a person I didn't like, never liked. I don't know too much about the case because, as you know, I've been over here. Between traveling and being at meetings almost every hour of the day, every minute of the day, I haven't been able to really see too much of it.

But I was just not a fan of his. I knew him a little bit, not very well. I knew him because he was in New York. Not a person that I like.

I will say, the people that liked him were the Democrats. Michelle Obama loved him. Loved him. Hillary Clinton loved him. And he gave tremendous money to the Democrats.

And I guess my question is: Will the Democrats be asking for that money back? Because he gave a lot of money to the Democrats. And you know, it's too bad, but that's the way it worked out.

Yes, Peter [Peter Alexander, NBC News].

Sexual Assault Conviction of Weinstein Company Cochairman Harvey Weinstein

Q. I just want to follow up on that very quickly, if I can, Mr. President. Then, I have a question that I wanted to ask you.

But just on the Harvey Weinstein situation: This is being viewed as a milestone for the "Me Too" movement. What message can you, as President, deliver to women in America who are still afraid to come forward and share their stories of sexual harassment and assault?

The President. Well, again, I don't know the actual results. I haven't seen too much because I've been in India, as you know.

Q. Aside from this case, just—[inaudible].

The President. But I think—I think that from the standpoint of women, I think it was a great thing. It was a—it was a great victory and sends a very strong message—a very, very strong message, Peter.

Yes. Please.

Coronavirus Prevention Efforts in the U.S./Ebola Containment Efforts

Q. Can I follow up with my question? I just wanted to follow up on hers quickly. Can I—on coronavirus, specifically, Mr. President: In 2014, when the Ebola situation was very concerning to so many Americans, you tweeted, "Ebola patient will be brought to the U.S. in a few days—now I know for sure that our leaders are incompetent." In all caps, you wrote, "KEEP THEM OUT OF HERE!"

More than 20 Americans have now been brought back to the United States with coronavirus. By your own measure, does that mean that your Government has been incompetent?

The President. No. No.

Q. Are you pleased with the response?

The President. There's a big difference, in case you don't know, between Ebola and coronavirus. A big, big difference. It's like day and night. And I felt that we should bring them back. They're Americans. We should bring them back.

With Ebola, it was—it's very explosive. It's very terrible. We're making tremendous strides on Ebola with the things that we're doing, as you know. People are living—

Q. Isn't some of the money that you're requesting—

The President. If you'll let me—

Q. Sorry, please.

The President. —let me answer the question.

But there's a tremendous—there's a vast difference than in bringing—especially in around '14. Was that '14 or '12? And at that time, nobody had ever even heard of Ebola or ever conceived of something where you basically—people would disintegrate. And we're still working on Ebola. We're doing—

Q. To be clear, all those with vaccines survived, though, right?

The President. —we're doing the vaccine. Excuse.

Q. Sorry.

The President. Yes. We're doing a vaccine. We're doing a lot of things having to do with Ebola. We're not forgetting about Ebola. That's a horrible thing.

But we have that now very much under control, other than certain parts of the Congo where they're having war, and we can't get in. So we're still working on that.

But as far as the—as far as what we're doing with the new virus, I think that—I think that we're doing a great job. I felt that—and the decision was made in Japan—let these Americans come back, and we'll see where they are. But they were immediately put into quarantine. There's no problem with it whatsoever. They were all in quarantine.

And, as you know, we approved—I approved \$2½ billion for just that purpose and also for working on getting a vaccine.

Q. For clarity, those with Ebola, when they were brought here, were quarantined, and all of—

The President. Yes.

Q. —the Americans also survived. Right?

The President. I know, but the level of death with Ebola—you know, at the time, it was a virtual hundred percent—[inaudible].

Q. But none of the Americans who came here?

The President. You don't—there's a very good chance you're not going to die. It's just the—it's very much the opposite. You're talking about 1 or 2 percent, whereas in the other case, it was a virtual hundred percent.

Now they have it; they have studied it. They know very much. In fact, we're very close to a vaccine.

Yes, please, go ahead. Go ahead, Peter.

Oh, all right. We'll—we'll—you'll get——

Q. Hi, I'm Swathi Chandrashekar from TV5 Network.

The President. Good. Thank you.

U.S. Visa Policy/India-U.S. Relations

Q. So how do you define, differentiate, and deal with—deal with the law of yours for Indians in India and Indians' law for H-1B visa in America? So how do you differentiate this?

The President. Yes, we're talking about the H-1Bs, and we are—look, the relationship we have—this is not from me, this is from almost everybody that saw it: They say in the history of India, which has a long history and a brilliant history in so many different ways, there's never been a reception given to somebody like was given—and I would like to say for the United States of America. But nobody else that came here got the kind of reception we got.

We have been—we gave—it was 125,000, I think, seats they had yesterday. They were full. You had thousands and thousands of people outside. Prime Minister Modi was telling me thousands of people outside.

That's not uncommon for me, to be honest with you. But when I look at 125,000 seats—and that was an incredible scene yesterday. In addition, all of those people lined up from the airport to the event, it was an incredible thing. Nobody has ever seen anything like it.

The Ambassador just told me that he's been in India for a long time. He's never seen—in fact, both Ambassadors, our Ambassador and the Ambassador from India, said, in 40 years, he's never seen anything like it, what took place yesterday and, you know, earlier than that. But yesterday—they've never seen anything like it.

So it was a great compliment. It was a great compliment to our country. I'm the leader of the country, but it was a great compliment to our country. But Prime Minister Modi said today they've never, ever had any event like that. In fact, they said usually when somebody comes in, they have to look for people to fill up the areas. They said we had—there was something very special.

Look, it's a massive country in terms of its population. And people just wanted to see. They wanted to pay their respect to the United States, and so I appreciate it. I was a recipient, in a sense, but I was just—I was just really representing the country.

Yes, Peter [Peter Baker, New York Times]. Go ahead.

Q. Thank you. Sorry. Thank you, Mr. President. Appreciate it.

The President. Go ahead.

Intelligence Community Whistleblowers/Transcripts of the President's Telephone Conversations With President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, your newly installed Personnel Director has begun talking with agencies about finding people in the Government that are not loyal to you and perhaps moving them on. How large a list do you imagine this will be? Is this a big problem in your mind? What—how do you—could you describe for us the scale of the problem as you see it?

The President. Yes. Yes, I don't think it's a big problem. I don't think it's very many people. I think we had a whistleblower who was a fake. Because if you look at the whistleblower, as an example—if you look at his report, and then you compare that to the transcripts, it bore no relationship. So that was a very sad situation and a lot of time—a lot of time wasted.

Although, as you will admit—in fact, you wrote very nicely, and I appreciate it—the poll numbers have gone up very much. But that's not appropriate to have—to benefit by something like that.

Then, there was supposed to be a second whistleblower. As soon as I released the transcripts, the second whistleblower was gone. Nobody ever—what happened to the second whistleblower? I'll ask you, where is he? Remember the second was—he or she—the second whistleblower was going to happen. It was just a matter of moments. And then I released the real call—the transcripts, which are now 100-percent accurate, even according to Lieutenant Colonel Vindman.

So no, we want to have people that are good for the country, are loyal to our country, because that was a disgraceful situation.

Please. Go ahead.

India-Pakistan Relations/Kashmir/Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. Mr. President, I am Akhilesh Suman. I am from Rajya Sabha Television. It's a parliamentary channel of India—upper house, like your Senate.

The President. Good.

Q. You know, India's concern is its neighborhood. And even Prime Minister Modi tell that you are very good friends. What is your strategy about terrorism that is coming out from Pakistan to India? Because we have been suffering from this type of terrorism for last 20 years or so.

The President. Right.

Q. What is your strategy? What are you going to do?

The President. We talked a lot about Pakistan. I have a very good relationship with Prime Minister Khan—very good. We talked about it today at length, actually, and—Prime Minister Modi. And it's no question it's a problem, but it's a problem they have—they're working on it.

India is—you know, it's a brave nation too. There's no pullback from India. And we just hope—and I said I'll help. I'll do whatever I have to do, if I can do that, because my relationship with both gentlemen is so good.

But there has been difficulty in Pakistan, and we're seeing what we can do about it. Anything I can do to mediate, anything I can do to help, I would do.

They're working on Kashmir. Kashmir has been a thorn in a lot of people's sides for a long time. And there are two sides to every story, but they've been working on that very hard.

We discussed it at great length: terrorism. And I think we have some very good ideas. He's very, very strongly against terrorism. I'll tell you, Prime Minister Modi is a very—he's a very religious man, as you know, he's a very calm man, but he's actually a very, very strong person. Very tough, actually, when—I've seen him in action. And he's got that foremost on his mind, terrorism. He'll take care of it.

Please.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Go ahead. You. You. Right here. That's fine. Right there.

Okay.

India-U.S. Trade/China-U.S. Trade/Global Coronavirus Outbreak/Domestic Containment Efforts

Q. Mr. President, thank you. The back benchers have been waiting for far too long. I'm Richa from Business Line, and we would like to take you to your today's meetings.

Before coming to India, you said trade deal will be later, but of course, sometime soon. In the morning you spoke about energy security and energy deal. And we are—you are already the fifth supplier to our country. You said other sources also. We would like you to elaborate on that. When we are talking energy security and energy deal, what are we looking at?

The President. Yes.

Q. And is nuclear happening?

The President. So we talked about many things—many, many things. We talked about Iran. We talked about Iraq. We talked about—you know, we were together for 2 days. I'm going to be with Prime Minister Modi tonight for a state dinner at 7 o'clock. It starts at 7, I believe.

And we talked about exactly all of the things that you're talking about. We also talked about tariffs, because as you know, India is probably the highest tariff nation in the world, meaning charging tariffs to outsiders. And I said, we have to stop that. We have to stop it, at least as it pertains to the United States. And I think we're understanding each other.

With China, we worked a deal, and we worked it because of the tariffs. And I was able to leave the tariffs on. That will take care of phase two. We still have 25 percent on \$250 billion.

But in the meantime, we're working with China very much on the virus. We feel that's something. And I have to tell—I spoke to President Xi the other day. He is so committed to solving that problem. He is—he is working very hard. He is very capable. The country is very capable. And it snuck up on him, but I think he's going to do well.

Now you see it's going to South Korea, it's going to Italy, and it's going to other places. But I spoke to all of them. They're all working very, very hard on it.

The United States, because of an early decision I made—I made a decision. I believe it was the first time it's ever been done: We closed the country to certain areas, as you know. And I was criticized for that decision. Now they're saying it was a good decision.

I think it was a good decision, because we have very few people. And you can add to it a few people that we took in because they're Americans. I mean, what are we going to do? And they were almost in between countries, where people weren't going to take them, and they're Americans. But they're fully quarantined. They call it "fully quarantined." So you know, we did the right thing. If you were out there, if you were an American and you refused to have any help from your country—these were wonderful people. It wasn't their fault.

So—but we're down to—we're really down to probably 10. Most of the people are outside of danger right now. But we've had a very strict line on the people that were taken—the areas from which we take. And I did it very early. It's never done before, and I did it early. So I think it was a good decision as it turned out.

Yes, please.

2020 Presidential Election/New Media/Former Acting Director of National Intelligence Joseph Maguire

Q. I just wanted to follow up on my colleague's question about Russian interference. Can you pledge to the American people that you will not accept any foreign assistance in the upcoming election?

And on this idea of a purge in your administration, there was recently the departure of your Acting DNI, Joseph Maguire. You replaced him with your Ambassador to Germany, Rick Grenell. Some of your critics have pointed out that Ambassador Grenell has no intelligence experience. How can you justify to the American people having an Acting DNI with no intelligence experience?

The President. Okay, first of all, I want no help from any country. And I haven't been given help from any country.

And if you see what CNN, your wonderful network, said—[laughter]—I guess they apologized, in a way, for—didn't they apologize for the fact that they said certain things that weren't true? Tell me, what was their apology yesterday? What did they say?

Q. Mr. President, I think our record on delivering the truth is a lot better than yours sometimes, if you don't mind me saying. [Laughter]

The President. Your record is—let me tell you about your record. Your record is so bad you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Q. I'm not ashamed of anything, and our——

The President. You have probably the worst record——

Q. ——organization is not ashamed, sir.

The President. ——in the history of broadcasting. [Laughter]

As far as Maguire is concerned, he's a terrific guy, but you know, on March 11, his time ended anyway. So his time came up. So we would have had to—by statute, we would have had to change him anyway. So the time was—[inaudible].

Q. Will your new DNI have experience in the intelligence field?

The President. I think—yes. Yes. In fact, we're talking to five different people right now. I think all people that you know, all people that you respect. And I'll make a decision probably over the next week to 2 weeks. We have some very good people.

But Joe Maguire is a very excellent guy. He's a very good man. And his time was March 11. I believe it was March 11 where he would have had to leave.

But we are going——

Q. Was he forced out because he wasn't sufficiently loyal to you?

The President. No. Not at all. Not at all. He was pushed out because, frankly—he wasn't pushed out. He would have had to get out. On March 11, he would have had to leave.

But we're going to be making a decision on DNI very shortly.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. Yes, please. Go ahead. Please. Yes.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Well, that's not nice. Let her do it.

Q. Let's go——

The President. Yes. Let her do it.

Q. Let's go one by——

The President. I know, but you ripped the mike out of her hand. You can't do that.
[Laughter]

Q. So rude.

The President. Boy, that wasn't very nice. He's worse than you.

India-U.S. Trade/China-U.S. Trade

Q. President Trump, I hope you're having a good visit here in India. I'm Ruchi Bhatia from ET Now. We have heard from Prime Minister Modi, as well as you, on a long-impending trade deal. It's still not happened. Even today we heard both you and him talking about how, in future, there is going to be one. Have you been able to figure out the kind of differences that were there earlier——

The President. Yes. We know. We know problems.

Q. ——especially on data localization. That has been one of the sticking points.

The President. Yes. Sure. We know the problems. I know the problems. Previous administrations had no clue. They didn't know the problems. I know the problems. We're being charged large amounts of tariffs and——can't do that. You can't do that.

And so they understand that that's where I am. And if they want to deal with us, and——and they will, they're going to, just like China. Everybody said, "You'll never make a deal with China." I made a deal with China. It's a great deal. They're going to buy \$250 billion worth of product. And that's only a piece of the deal. It's a large piece. It's probably 40 to 50 percent, but it's a——it's an incredible deal.

In addition to that, we're taking in billions and billions of dollars' worth of tariffs that we can now use for phase two, because they want to get rid of the 25 percent. So we have the 25 percent; they want to get rid of it.

Well, with India——India is, I think, the highest——again, I said it before——but the highest tariff. When you deal with India, Harley Davidson has to pay tremendous tariffs when they send motorcycles in here. When India sends motorcycles into the U.S., there is virtually no tariff. For the most part, there is absolutely no tariff. So I just said that's unfair. And we're working it out. We're working it out.

Go ahead.

Q. [Inaudible]

Q. Good evening, President Trump.

The President. I think we'll win that one easily. We're working on that. Yes. We're working on that, John.

Q. Good evening, President.

The President. It's just not a fair situation when one company is paying a hundred percent, in the case of numerous companies, not just Harley. But where they're paying a tremendous—and actually, tariffs were raised not too long ago.

And we also did something. There was a form of rent control. It was—if you put it in a different sense, it was—it was given to India, and we terminated that. You know that. We terminated it.

India-U.S. Trade/U.S. Trade Deficits

Q. Do you think you'll get it done——

The President. No, we're talking. We have—we have great discussions.

Look, it's a—I can't lose this. I can't lose it. You know why? I'll never lose it. It's too easy—because I want reciprocal. It has to be reciprocal. And the money you're talking about is major. But the United States has to be treated fairly, and India understands that. The relationship is outstanding, but India understands that.

We've had a tremendous deficit for many, many years with India, with everybody. You know, with, frankly, so many different countries. We've had a massive, massive deficit. But a large deficit—\$30 billion with India. It's now down to \$24 billion because of what we've been doing. But still, that's too high. We shouldn't have a \$24 billion deficit. With other countries, we have more than that.

Japan, we're doing now—\$40 billion is coming in. A lot of—a lot of very good deals are being made, and they'll be kicking in toward the end of the year. I would say if the deal happens with India, it will be toward the end of the year. And if it doesn't happen, we'll do something else that will be very satisfactory. It will be very good.

Go ahead. Who else?

Kashmir/India-Pakistan Relations

Q. Yes. President, my question is that you said at the time of the article 370 abrogation that you would like to mediate in Kashmir, but India rejected it. What is your——

The President. No. I didn't—no, excuse me, I didn't say——

Q. ——what is your—my question—my question is something different.

The President. Wait, wait, wait. I didn't say that. I didn't say anything about that. I just said Kashmir, obviously, there's a big problem between Pakistan and India. And I think they're going to work out their problem. But I will say, they've been doing it for a long time. [*Inaudible*]—problem for a long time.

Q. Okay. My question is something different at the moment. What is your position at the moment on India's Citizen Amendment Act, at the moment?

Indian Parliament's Citizenship Amendment Bill

The President. I don't want to discuss that. I want to leave that to India, and hopefully, they're going to make the right decision for the people. That's really up to India.

Yes. Go ahead. Please. Please.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is—[*inaudible*]—an Indian journalist. And I have a very simple question.

The President. Go ahead.

The President's Visit to India/India-U.S. Relations

Q. Now, back home, when you reflect upon your tour of India, the first diplomatic visit to the country, how would you describe it? Cultural diplomacy? Trump diplomacy? Or do you have any other word for that?

The President. Well first of all, I'd describe it as incredible, because when I looked at the various things—like today, when we went—you probably saw where we were. And when you look at all of the things that we've seen today, when we look at yesterday, the Taj Mahal and other things. In addition to working in between and even during, where, you know, we worked very long and hard with representatives from India and most particularly with the Prime Minister.

I just think it's an incredible country. It's got unbelievable energy. You see that when you come in from the plane. When you see from—I think I can say, virtually, from the plane to whatever venue we were going to, it was wall-to-wall people. They've never seen anything like it.

Somebody said it was the greatest greeting ever given to any head of state from any country. Now, India has more people than any other country, a little bit more than China. A little bit—tiny bit.

Q. How would you describe it diplomatically? Is it Trump diplomacy? Cultural diplomacy?

The President. I think the diplomacy is a diplomacy of great friendship and respect. And I think it's going to all work out very well. I really do.

I admire your country tremendously. I respect your Prime Minister tremendously. And I think it's really a diplomacy of friendship, and I think it's going to work out very well. Okay? Okay?

Go ahead, please. Please. Go ahead. Right next to Steve [Steve A. Holland, Reuters].

Press Restrictions in China/Freedom of the Press

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. As you know, the Chinese Government recently ejected several Wall Street Journal reporters. What is your administration considering to do in retaliation to that move? Are you considering banning or restricting the access the Chinese journalists, for example, have in the United States?

The President. So I haven't really been given a full briefing on that. We're going to look at it. We will look at it. It's something that I don't like to see. I don't think it's fair, because we give very good access. Maybe some people would say we give too good. I don't think—I don't believe in that. I think we give very good access, so I don't think it's fair. But we'll have a decision made on that relatively soon. Okay? Thank you. Good question.

Please, go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead.

Venezuela

Q. Yes. You have a policy towards Venezuela.

The President. Yes.

Q. So will you allow Indian companies to continue to buy Venezuelan oil from third parties, especially when you have sanctions——

The President. Well, you'll be seeing something on that in the not-too-distant future. Yes.

Q. So there could be more stringent sanctions against Venezuela?

The President. There could be very serious sanctions.

Q. Against the Indian companies continuing to buy from Venezuela?

The President. What's happening in Venezuela is so, so sad. People are starving. Here's a case where a country was wealthy 15 years ago and very wealthy 20 years ago. Very, very wealthy. The wealthiest in all of Latin, South America. The wealthiest and—by far. Not even a contest.

And when you look today, they don't have water, they don't have basic food, they have no medicine. It's incredible what's happened in Venezuela. No, we're watching Venezuela very closely. We don't like it. We don't like it. Not at all. Okay?

Q. Are the sanctions going to be against the Venezuelan entities or the Indian companies who are continuing to buy the Venezuelan oil?

The President. You're going to see in a little while. You're asking a question right in the middle of us doing something. [Laughter]

Go ahead, please.

Religious Freedom in India/Restrictions on Foreign Travel to the U.S.

Q. Aleem Maqbool from BBC. There were some back home that were hoping you would raise concerns about some of these policies that Prime Minister Modi has introduced that discriminates against Muslims, and also about a rise in hate crimes here in India. But as someone who——

The President. Well, we did discuss that. And we discussed that and specifically Muslims. And we also discussed Christians. And we——

Q. But someone who——

The President. I had a—I had a very powerful answer from the Prime Minister. We talked about religious liberty for a long period of time, in front of a lot of people. And I had a very, very powerful answer.

And, as far as Muslims are concerned, as he told me, I guess they have 200 million Muslims in India. And a fairly short while ago, they had 14 million. And he said that they're working very closely with the Muslim community.

Q. But—so you, yourself, have been criticized for policies that have discriminated against Muslims, like the travel ban. There's also been a rise in hate crimes over the last couples of years in the U.S. So are——

The President. Yes. Yes.

Q. ——you in a position to talk to him about those subjects?

The President. Yes. I won the travel ban, as you probably know. A lot of people said I lost it. No, I won the travel ban, and we use the travel ban where we think there's—not based on religion, but where we think there's going to be trouble, where we're looking at certain countries. As you know, we added a few countries onto it.

But we won the travel ban, and we won it in the Supreme Court. So the travel ban is not a thing against Muslims, it's a thing against areas where we don't want people coming into our country that are going to cause problems, cause harm, cause death, hurt our people. And I feel very strongly about that.

Okay. Please go ahead.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Thank you.

India-U.S. Relations/India's Economic Potential/Educational Exchanges With U.S.

Q. I'm—[inaudible]—Shanghai Media Group, and I would like to know: Some people say that India could be to the U.S. in Asia during the 21st century what the U.K. was in Europe during the 20th century. How do you view it?

The President. Well, I think that India is going to be a tremendous player over the next, you know—it's now, right?—but over the next period of 50 years and 100 years. Look, you're talking about the largest population in the world. You're talking about a tremendous country in terms of its heritage, its potential wealth, frankly.

Right now they have—they have incredible potential. Economically, they have great potential. Their schooling system is getting better all the time. They're doing a fantastic job with—in certain sectors with respect to education. We see it. In the United States, we see it. We have a lot of Indian students coming to our schools. They're great students, and they've done fantastically well at our schools.

But we have, you know, thousands and thousands of people coming from India, coming to our colleges or particular schools, but our colleges in particular.

No, India has got a phenomenal future. I mean, you—you can rarely think of a place that has a better future than India and highly respected, especially with leadership like Prime Minister, right? Modi.

Q. Sir, sir——

Q. Over here. Over here.

The President. Yes. Go ahead. Pick one. Go ahead.

U.S. Economy/Domestic Steel Production

Q. Sir—[inaudible]—from CNBC TV18 India. American companies have been investing in India for a long, long time. Are you satisfied with the Indian investment rating, especially on issues like multibrand retail and e-commerce on which companies from U.S. have a lot of interest in?

The President. So I'm very satisfied because they're investing tremendous amounts of money. I met Mr. Patel a little while ago. He's the largest steel person in the world by far. I don't think there's even a contest. And he's going to be building a billion-dollar plant in Alabama.

We had the press—I left them in there. Always a risky thing to do. But if you—if you see the—let's say we ask—you know, answered 15 questions, and they were talking about how much better it is to work in the United States now, in terms of their investment. They have done a fantastic job.

These are some of the biggest entrepreneurs in the world. I'm not even sure if the media really understood who they were. I knew many of them, certainly heard of all of them. The job they've done is incredible. But Mr. Patel, who's the biggest steel—I think biggest steel company, certainly the biggest steel individual. But I think he's the biggest steel company by a lot. He's investing billions of dollars in the United States, and he's only doing it because of what I've done to bring back the steel industry.

The steel industry was dead. Absolutely dead in the United States. And now it's a vibrant industry. It's incredible, and we need it. Again, we need it for defense. It's not just like certain industries that you don't need. We need it for defense.

But he was glowing. And one of the reasons he's spending a billion dollars in Alabama, and more money in other places in the United States, is because we brought it back. So we're very proud of that.

So I think what we'll do is we're going to see some of you on the plane on the way back. It's been an honor to be here. It's an incredible place with incredible leadership and an unbelievable future.

And I just want to thank you all. And I'll see you back in the States. And I think some of you are on the plane, and we can talk a little bit on the plane too. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:25 p.m. in the ballroom at the ITC Maurya New Delhi hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Charles E. Schumer; National Security Adviser Robert C. O'Brien; former First Lady Michelle Obama; U.S. Ambassador to India Kenneth I. Juster; India's Ambassador to the U.S. Navtej Singh Sarna; former National Security Council Director for European Affairs Alexander S. Vindman; and Lakshmi Mittal, chairman and chief executive officer, ArcelorMittal. Reporters referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Director of White House Presidential Personnel Office John McEntee; and Josh Chin, Beijing deputy bureau chief, and Chao Deng and Philip Wen, reporters, Wall Street Journal, who were ordered to leave China by government authorities on February 19.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : News conferences :: February 25.

Locations: New Delhi, India

Names: Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Ginsburg, Ruth Bader; Juster, Kenneth I.; Khan, Imran; Maguire, Joseph; Mittal, Lakshmi; Modi, Narendra; Obama, Michelle; O'Brien, Robert C.; Sanders, Bernard; Sarna, Navtej Singh; Schiff, Adam B.; Schumer, Charles E.; Sotomayor, Sonia M.; Vindman, Alexander S.; Weinstein, Harvey; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Afghanistan : Reconciliation efforts; Afghanistan : U.S. military forces :: Deployment; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Casualties; Business and industry : Business leaders, meeting with President; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Domestic steel and aluminum production, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Foreign investment in U.S., promotion efforts; China : Coronavirus outbreak; China : Expulsion of foreign journalists; China : President; China : Trade agreement with U.S.; Civil rights : Freedom of press; Civil rights : Freedom of religion; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness ; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews"; Congress : House of Representatives :: Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; Congress : Senate :: Minority leader; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; Education : Foreign exchange programs; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Preventive care and public health programs; Health and medical care : Research and development; Immigration and naturalization : Foreign nationals and refugees, U.S. admission policy; Immigration and naturalization : Visa policy, U.S.; India : Ambassador to U.S.; India : Counterterrorism efforts; India : Economic growth and development; India : Educational exchanges with U.S.; India : Investment and business ventures in U.S.; India : New Delhi :: Civil unrest and violence; India : President Trump's visit; India : Prime Minister; India : Relations with Pakistan; India : Relations with U.S.; India : Trade with

U.S.; India : U.S. Ambassador; India : U.S. visa policy; Intelligence, Office of the Director of National; Iraq : Security cooperation with U.S.; Japan : Trade agreement with U.S.; Judiciary : Judicial review; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Associate Justice; Law enforcement and crime : Sexual assault; Pakistan : Prime Minister; Pakistan : Relations with India; Pakistan : Relations with U.S.; Syria : Oil supply and refining; Terrorism : Al Qaida terrorist organization; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat; Terrorism : Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Ukraine : Relations with U.S.; Venezuela : International diplomatic efforts; Venezuela : Poverty and economic instability; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: National Security Adviser.

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