

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

The President's News Conference

August 10, 2020

The President. Thank you very much. I thought I'd start by talking about some mail-in voting that just was revealed—just the news. Half a million incorrect absentee ballot applications were sent all across the State of Virginia, including to many dead people. This was an unprecedented mailing flub that's heightened concerns about the integrity of expanding mail-in voting and mail-in voting efforts. It's a disaster: all over Virginia, half a million votes. So that's something you have to think about.

We don't want to have a rigged election, I know that. And you have to be very careful when you mention, as you constantly do, Russia or you mention China or you mention Iran or others that attack our election system. And when you have this mail-in voting, it's a—it's very susceptible. It's something that can be easily attacked by foreign countries and by, frankly, Democrats and by Republicans. And I think that it's something you have to start thinking about very seriously.

Our system is not equipped for it. The Post Office is not equipped for it. And people should vote, like they did in World War I and World War II. And your numbers will be—in 90 days or less, your numbers will be very good, I think—much better—on the coronavirus or the China virus. But it's something you have to look about—look at and say, "This is just crazy."

This just came out: half a million incorrect ballot applications sent all over the State of Virginia to many people that weren't living. They had some sent to pets, dogs. This is what we're going to get into, and it's going to be a disaster. And it's going to be thought of very poorly, and it's going to hurt our country.

After our news conference Saturday night and the pro-growth announcement—we're pro-jobs, pro-health safety—Executive orders—the stock market went up 358 points today. So we—we issued those Executive orders, and the stock market went up 358 points today. It's quite a reaction.

The Dow Jones and the S&P 500 are now up 50 percent since March—50 percent. Think: If you had money in there, if you put your money in in March, you have 50 percent. The NASDAQ index continues to set new records. It's been up over 14 times; new record in NASDAQ.

And the S&P 500 and the Dow—Dow Jones are going to be—I mean, the way they're going, it looks like they're just about going to be topping records, hopefully, soon.

Secret Service agent. Sir, we're just going to have to step out in the hall—[inaudible].

The President. Excuse me?

Secret Service agent. We will step out outside.

Q. What's going on, Mr. President?

The President. Oh. Excuse me.

[*At this point, the President was escorted out of the room. Then, the President returned, and the press briefing resumed.*]

The President. So thank you very much. Sorry for that. The—there was a shooting outside of the White House, and it seems to be very well under control. I'd like to thank the Secret Service for doing their always quick and very effective work. But there was an actual shooting, and

somebody has been taken to the hospital. I don't know the condition of the person. It seems that the person was shot by Secret Service. So we'll see what happens.

And yes, did you have something? Go ahead.

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. Mr. President, do you have any details about the shooting? Were they targeting anyone in and around the White House?

The President. No, we—there are no details. We just found out just now. It was outside of the White House, this area right over here. And they'll have details for you in a little while.

Somebody is taken to the hospital. It seems that the shooting was done by law enforcement at that person, at the suspect. It was the suspect who was shot.

Q. Mr. President—

The President. And this just took place. A couple of people outside—I noticed a man named John Roberts [Fox News], who you know very well—

Q. Yes.

The President. —he reported that he heard shots. He was outside, and he heard two shots.

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. Mr. President, was this a threat toward you, sir?

The President. We don't know yet. We don't know. They're going to find that out.

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. Do you know if the individual said anything, sir—

The President. We don't know that, yet. No.

Q. —or mentioned your name, anything like that?

The President. We don't know that yet.

Q. And you can confirm it was the Secret Service that did shoot the suspect?

The President. It seems to be. Yes.

Q. It seems to be.

The President. It seems to be.

The President's Location During His Absence From the Briefing Room

Q. Where were you taken, Mr. President? Were you taken to the bunker?

The President. No, we were taken just out over to the Oval Office.

Shooting Outside of the White House/U.S. Secret Service

Q. What did Secret Service tell you when you were outside of the room?

The President. Just told me, when he came up—you pretty much saw it like I did—he said, "Sir, could you please come with me?" So you were surprised. I was surprised, also. I think it's probably pretty unusual. But very, very professional people. They do a fantastic job, as you know.

So it seems to me—it seems to be, from what I was said, there was a shooting. It was law enforcement shot someone—seems to be the suspect—and the suspect is now on the way to the hospital. I can't tell you the condition of the suspect.

Q. Was the suspect armed? Was the suspect armed?

The President. There was nobody else injured. There was no other law enforcement injured. And I just want to—and we'll get on to the press conference, but I do want to thank Secret Service. They are fantastic, the job they do.

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. Mr. President, was the suspect armed? Do you know? Was he armed?

The President. From what I understand, the answer is yes.

Q. He was armed, Mr. President?

The President. That's what I understand. I don't know. You'll have to ask them that.

Q. [Inaudible]—man or a woman?

Q. With what type of weapon?

The President. I don't know that, no.

Q. Was it a male or a female suspect?

The President. I don't know. You'll have to get that—they'll have a detailed—maybe a briefing for you outside later.

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. Did they say anything against you, personally, Mr. President?

The President. I don't know. I didn't ask that question. It might not have had anything to do with me. It might have been something else. But it was on the outside of the premises. The wall, the—as you know, the fencing, especially the new fencing that they put up, is very powerful. But it was on the outside of the White House.

Okay? And they'll have a full report—Secret Service, in a little while, will have a full report.

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. Are you rattled by this at all, Mr. President?

The President. I don't know; do I seem rattled? It's unfortunate that this is a world—but the world has always been a dangerous place. It's not something that's unique. The world has been—you look back over the centuries, the world has been a dangerous place, a very dangerous place. And it will continue, I guess, for a period of time.

U.S. Secret Service

Q. Does this make you think differently about your personal safety inside the White House?

The President. No, I feel very safe with the Secret Service. They're fantastic people. They're the best of the best, and they're highly trained. I don't know if anybody got to walk outside, but there were a lot of terrific-looking people ready to go if something was necessary, people at the highest level of law enforcement. There's nobody like these people.

So they just wanted me to step aside for a little while, just to make sure that everything was cleared outside, because it was right in this area.

The President's Decision To Return to the Briefing Room

Q. Why did you come back, Mr. President? Why did you decide, after that—because obviously, it created a lot of commotion—what made you decide to come back and continue to the briefing?

The President. Well, I didn't even think about not coming back. I said, "Am I able to go back?" And they said, "You'd have to wait a little while." I waited a little while, as you know, in the Oval Office area. And I said, "Can I get back now?" And they said, "Yes."

And they have a lot of fortification outside, just in case. But it was one person. Okay?

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. Mr. President, when you said the shooting—you said the shooting was outside. How far away from the White House?

The President. Well, they're going to be giving you a full briefing in a little while.

Q. Was it pretty far from the White House? Or was it right in front of that?

The President. I can only tell you, they're going to going to give you a briefing. It was outside of the premises, near the fence, but outside of the premises.

Q. But it was near the fence, so pretty close to here.

The President. Yes, pretty close.

So I was telling you that the Dow Jones and the S&P 500——

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. ——are now 50 percent above the March level. NASDAQ is setting new records. It's already broken the record, despite the situation of having the China virus.

We have new jobs are rising, and unemployment is falling faster than nearly anyone thought. And over the past 3 months, we've created over 9 million jobs, and that's a record—a 3-month record. If you add it up, it's a 3-month record, by far. And we've beaten expectations by 12 million. We're 12 million above expectations, which is pretty remarkable.

Today we had great reports on new job openings. And there's clearly a housing boom, which has been incredible numbers in both housing, and an automobile boom. We've rarely seen anything like it, and it's going on right now in America.

Inventories are at rock bottom. Used car sales are at record levels. And we will have rebuilt—we're doing a rebuilding like nobody has ever seen. It's a big plus for manufacturing and construction. So construction is getting close to record territory. Manufacturing is doing very well. The car companies are doing great.

Very happy for Michigan, the State of Michigan. We have a lot of car companies moving in. A lot of plants are being built and expanded in Michigan and Ohio. There is no reason why the economy can't grow at a 20-percent pace in the third quarter; that would be a record.

And interestingly, it will be a number that's going to be announced before November 3. It gets announced probably around November 1, which is very interesting. But it's going to grow at a very substantial pace, based on all of the numbers we're looking at, and probably a lot more substantial than we originally thought.

We're creating new incentives for work and jobs, and we're also providing much-needed assistance to those who are still suffering from the effects of the pandemic contraction. And the contraction is now—while we have the pandemic, we have a lot of great things happening, in

terms of the vaccines and therapeutics, as you know. And I think we'll be making tremendous progress over the next period of a few months.

And certainly, before the end of the year, I think we'll have a vaccine before the end of the year, very substantially, and we may have a therapeutic resolvment very quickly. And frankly, that's the one I'd rather have faster because you'd go in, you'd give a transfusion or a shot to people that are very ill, and they'd be able to come out of the hospital the next day or a few days later.

If the States participate in our cost-sharing unemployment plan—we are going to be doing something very, very interesting with all of the things that we announced on Saturday. I don't have to repeat what they are; you know very well. And we've had some tremendous success already if you look at what's happening with the stock market, and people are very thrilled at what we're doing.

We'd like to get the Democrats to focus on other than what they're focusing on, which is a bailout of poorly running States. We have many great-running States, States that are setting records. And let's see what happens with respect to that.

But the—we're looking at also considering a capital gains tax cut, which would create a lot more jobs. So we're looking very seriously at a capital gains tax cut and also at an income tax cut for middle-income families. We're looking at expanding the tax cuts that we've already done, but specifically for middle-income families, and you'll be hearing about that in the upcoming few weeks, and I think it'll be very exciting.

So a capital gains tax is going to be—a lot of people put to work, and it would be a cut in the capital gains tax and also a cut in the middle-income income tax.

So I now want to just discuss a little, quick brief, and then we'll take a few more questions, but we took some. Who would have known we were going to take questions before we started, right? *[Laughter]* Is that right, Jennifer *[Jennifer Jacobs, Bloomberg News]*? But that's the way it happens sometimes.

We want to discuss, if we might, the China virus. And the world continues its fight against this horrible plague. Countries in every continent are seeing increases in cases. We have a rapid increase only in cases where—it's very interesting: Because we're so far ahead of testing, we have more cases. If we had much smaller testing, we'd have fewer, but we feel that having testing is a very important thing.

It's a great record to have. In many ways, we've tested, I guess, close to 65 million people right now, and nobody is even close to that number. No other country is close. India would be second, at 11 million, and they have 1.5 billion people. So we have the number-one testing anywhere in the world, by far. And we also have, I think, the highest quality test. We have a lot of different ones, but we have the highest quality, including the short-term and the lab test. The lab tests take a little bit longer.

And Dr. Birx was telling me, a little while ago, that we're down to 2 days and 2½ days on getting your result on the lab test; the other ones, you get them in 5 minutes to 15 minutes. So that's exciting.

But countries in every continent are seeing increases in cases. In recent days, cases have rapidly increased in Japan and Australia, unfortunately, and they're now experiencing higher peaks than they did in March.

To the south of the border—of our border—cases have continued to surge in Mexico, Central America, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, and throughout Latin America. It's really the hotspot. It's posing a major challenge for this continent.

Latin America is now the region with the most number of confirmed cases, by far, despite a relative scarcity of testing. So when you think of that, that means it's pretty much on fire. They're having a hard time, and we're helping them. We're sending them tremendous numbers of ventilators, which we're making by the thousands every month. And we're helping Latin America very much.

It's hard for them to come into the country because we have big sections of wall up now. The new wall is being built, which people don't talk about. They used to talk about nothing but the wall. Now that it's being built, they're not talking about it so much. But it's helped us, because we're up to almost—we're getting close to 280 miles in the most important areas. So that's helping us a lot, in terms of not having people come into the country who are infected with the coronavirus.

This global trend underscores the persistence of the virus, including in nations that apply the strictest and most punishing lockdowns. You have nations that are really tough on the lockdowns, and they're getting hit very hard. That's why my administration is pursuing a science-based approach that protects the most vulnerable, preserves hospital capacity, and focuses on the delivery and development of treatments and, ultimately, the vaccine.

I feel strongly that we will have a vaccine by the end of the year, and it will be put in service maybe even as we get it, because we're all set, militarily. We're using our military to distribute the vaccine. And logistically, there's nobody like this group of people. I meet with them a lot, and they're ready to go. As soon as they have it, they'll be going.

But more importantly, the therapeutics—as I said, I think therapeutics could be great, initially speaking. I think that would be—if I had my choice. But you're going to have them both. You're going to have them both. You're going to have them both very soon too.

At the same time, we urge all Americans to apply commonsense mitigation. You all know what that mitigation is; everybody knows it by heart now.

Nearly half of all of the deaths from the China virus in the United States have occurred in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. That's why we have delivered funding, equipment, and rapid testing to our Nation's nursing homes to protect those at high risk. We're very focused on nursing homes and senior citizens' areas. Anywhere that we have senior citizens, we're very, very focused.

We've delivered over 1,800 rapid point-of-care testing devices—those are very quick—and shipped over 700,000 tests to nursing homes. Nursing homes are being protected like never before.

The United States faces a unique range of challenges that requires our constant vigilance. America is the largest at-risk population of any developed country, by far: 1.5 million residents of nursing homes, about five times that of the United Kingdom and other European countries.

Our country also has a higher prevalence of underlying conditions that this virus targets. Yet we have fewer deaths per capita than the United Kingdom and most other peer nations in Western Europe. So that's an important—we have fewer deaths per capita than the United Kingdom and most other nations in Western Europe and heading for even stronger numbers.

But one person is too much, as far as I'm concerned. It should have never been allowed to happen. It should have never been allowed to escape China.

Nationwide, we continue to see encouraging signs. In the last 7 days, nationwide cases declined by 14 percent, hospitalizations decreased by 7 percent, fatalities decreased by 9 percent.

Arizona and Florida are improving rapidly, with fewer patients coming to emergency rooms, by far, as well as decreasing cases, decreasing fatalities, and expected—and expanded hospital capacity. So we have an expanded hospital capacity—it's pretty dramatic when you look at it, meaning we have more room, should we need it. So a lot of tremendous work has been done.

In Texas, likewise, the number of patients going to emergency rooms has dropped from July by more than two thirds. That's a lot. Nevertheless, we continue to monitor Texas very closely—terrific Governor, terrific people working on that whole situation in Texas—especially at its test positivity rate, which rose over 20 percent this weekend.

Overall, cases in Texas are coming down and have stabilized in the border counties—that's, again, where you have the wall and you're next to—in some cases, the wall. And, in some cases, you'll have it very shortly; you'll have it all built within a number of months. But those areas were hit very hard, and they're likely cases from Mexico that come in, back and forth, from the border. They come in legally.

As doctors have found more effective ways to treat patients, the fatality rate continues to improve. Texas has one-sixth the fatality rate of New York and New Jersey that they had in April. And the—if you look at New York and New Jersey, they worked very, very hard, but very heavy density. And they had a lot of different kinds of difficulty.

The fatality rates in Florida and Arizona are between 25 and 33 percent of the peak rates of New York and New Jersey. Again, different climate, a different grouping, a different density—tremendously different density.

In California, the situation is starting to stabilize and improve throughout the major metropolitan areas. Statewide, hospitalizations continue to decline very substantially, with about 20-percent fewer in-patients now than on July 21. California is starting to really show signs of correcting.

We're monitoring regions with increasing cases, including Boston, Chicago, and the Midwest. And we're monitoring them very, very strongly and very, very hard. I do want to say that I think, at the end of a fairly short period of time, you're going to be in very, very good shape all over our country.

Every loss of life is tragic, and all nations must work together to defeat this horrible virus. My administration is going to continue to save as many lives as possible. We are working around the clock—everybody. I mean, it's incredible how hard they're working. And people from other countries—we're working with them also, and they're working very hard. This is something that's now attacked 188 different countries.

There are wide range of factors that determine how the virus impacts a nation such as age, underlining [underlying]* conditions. Underlying conditions is a very big one. If you're sick in any way, if you're—if—especially, they say, heart and diabetes. That's not a good thing to have if you're going to have this, if you're going to catch it. So we're trying to protect especially those people that have problems with their heart or diabetes and levels of preexisting immunity resulting from past exposure to other viruses, which happens.

We must stop politicizing the virus and instead be united in our condemnation of how this virus came to America, how this virus came to the world. And we're going to figure it out, and we're going to find out, and we're very angry about it.

* White House correction.

On the therapeutics and vaccine updates: Three vaccine candidates are currently in phase three clinical trials—something that would have been impossible under the previous administration or any other administration—and several others are showing considerable promise.

We have great companies, very well-known companies. I think everyone in this room would know these companies, but they're the biggest and the best in the world. And we're working with other foreign companies and countries that have—have been really working very closely with us.

We're trading—we're not looking to do anything but come up with the answer. And we really don't—we don't care; we want to come up with the answer. If it's one of ours or one of theirs, it's okay. We have to come up with the answer, and we're very close to getting it. Some people think we have it. We may have it.

We have the best scientists in the world racing to develop a safe vaccine that will end this pandemic, save millions of lives—and that's millions of lives all over the world—and end the harm inflicted by this virus to our society and to all other nations. Last week, the NIH began a clinical trial of remdesivir paired with another approved antiviral drug—an anti-inflammatory drug. You know that remdesivir has been very successful, and now they're experimenting with others, including antivirals and anti-inflammatories, and they're having some very interesting success. We've secured enough remdesivir to treat over 650,000 patients.

On Saturday, I took executive action in a signing to save American jobs and support American workers. I signed directives to give a payroll tax holiday, with the understanding that after the election—on the assumption that it would be victorious for an administration that's done a great job—we will be ending that tax. We'll be terminating that tax.

On the other hand, the other group wants to raise taxes, and they may want to leave it where you pay it. But the payroll tax is a big deal for people. It's a tremendous saving for people. And we're going to be doing it, and we intend to terminate it at the end of the appropriate period of time. It's for those making less than \$100,000, through end of 2020, to provide an extra \$400 per week.

Also, in unemployment benefits and to extend the freeze on home evictions—we want to extend the freeze so people aren't evicted. It's not their fault that the virus came from China. It's China's fault.

And to suspend payments on student loans through the end of the year and then beyond. And again, you know, they're paying interest on loans, and they're not allowed to go to their college. So we're going to suspend payments on student loans, through the end of the year. And then, another extension most likely, because it's not fair to the students to have to pay when the colleges aren't doing the job of getting open. And I think, probably, many of them could be open.

So I want to thank you all. I'm sorry for the disturbance before. Things happen. And if you'd like, we could take a few questions.

Yes.

Executive Action on Coronavirus Relief/The President's Team of Advisers

Q. I have a question. Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate it. Kayleigh said earlier today that you've been working around the clock so there's no delay to get these enhancement unemployment payments to Americans.

The President. Yes.

Q. Can you give me your timetable? Are we talking next week, 2 weeks, a month?

The President. Steve, what do you think?

Secretary of the Treasury Steven T. Mnuchin. Within the next week or two, we think the States will be able to execute.

Q. So, Mr. Secretary, you're saying when?

Secretary Mnuchin. I think, within the next week or two, most of the States will be able to execute.

Q. Got it. And most of the States——

The President. Wait, by the way, the gentlemen—you know everybody. You know Russell. You know—but this is Scott Atlas. Do you know that? Right?

Q. Yes.

The President. Scott is a very famous man—[laughter]—who's also very highly respected—Stanford. And he's working with us and will be working with us on the coronavirus. And he has many great ideas. And he thinks what we've done is really good, and now we'll take it to a new level. And so it's great to have Scott working along with us. And we appreciate it very much, Scott. Thank you very much, Scott. Thank you very much.

White House COVID-19 Pandemic Adviser Scott W. Atlas. Thank you very much.

The President. Really terrific.

Q. And to follow up——

The President. We've had some great discussions.

Unemployment Insurance Benefits/Cost-Sharing With States

Q. To follow up on that, Mr. President, if you don't mind. You mentioned the States; have all the Governors signed on to this?

The President. We just had a meeting with the Governors, and they were very anxious to get money for the people in their States. And if they—depending on the State, we have the right to do what we want to do. We can terminate the 25 percent, or we don't have to do that. So we'll see what it is; it depends on the individual State.

But a lot of money will be going to a lot of people very quickly. And I've instructed the Secretary of the Treasury to move as quickly as he can.

Right?

Secretary Mnuchin. Yes.

The President. So we'll get it done.

Yes, please.

Shooting Outside of the White House

Q. I have a question about coronavirus, but I wanted to just ask you to be clear on the incident outside. There's a fairly significant perimeter around the White House. So does it concern you at all that someone who is armed was able to get so close that you needed to be removed from the briefing room?

The President. Well, I don't know if he was close or not—he or she. I don't know if it was a he or a she. But I have such confidence in these people; they're so good. And I don't think the person breached anything. It was on the outside grounds. So I don't believe anything was breached. I asked that question. So they were relatively far away.

School Reopening Efforts/Coronavirus Transmission Among Children/National Economy

Q. And on coronavirus: 97,000 children tested positive for coronavirus in the last 2 weeks in July, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Does that give you any pause about schools reopening for——

The President. No.

Q. ——in-person learning?

The President. No, because they may have, as you would call it, "a case." It may be a case, but it's also a case where there's a tiny—it's a tiny fraction of death—a tiny fraction—and they get better very quickly.

Yes, they have—they may have it for a short period of time, but the—as you know, the seriousness of it, in terms of what it leads to, is extraordinarily small, very, very much less than 1 percent.

Q. So do you still believe that——

The President. Jonathan [Jonathan Lemire, Associated Press], go ahead.

Q. ——that children are essentially immune to the virus?

The President. Yes, I think that, for the most part, they do very well. I mean, they don't get very sick. They don't catch it easily. They don't get very sick. And, according to the people that I've spoken to, they don't transport it or transfer it to other people or certainly not very easily.

So yes, I think schools have to open. We want to get our economy going. We have incredible numbers despite this. If we could get this going—I think it's a very important thing for the economy to get the schools going.

Jonathan, go ahead.

2020 Democratic Presidential Candidate Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr./2020 Presidential Election/Polling Statistics

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. In Ohio, a few days ago, you said, quote, Joe Biden has "hurt God"; "he's against God." The Vice President has said that he's a man of deep Catholic faith, and he has credited it for helping him endure some immense personal tragedy. So, sir, what did you mean by that, when you said that Joe Biden has "hurt God" or is "against God"?

The President. Well, if you look at the manifesto that that they've come up with, and if you look at their stance on religion and things having to do, very importantly, with aspects of religion and faith: I don't think a man of deep religion would be agreeing to the Bernie Sanders plan. You take a look at what they have in, and you just—you can't put that into the realm of a religious group of people, I will say that.

And I think it's one of the reasons why, if you look at polls, which—I'm not a big believer in polls. I wouldn't—if I was, I guess I wouldn't be standing here right now.

And by the way, our poll numbers are going up very rapidly, as you know, and Joe's are going down very rapidly. He'll have to come out of the basement, it looks like, pretty soon, because that—you know, it's one of those things.

But no, if you look at the manifesto—I call it the "manifesto." A lot of people are calling it a "manifesto." My opinion: It's further left than where Bernie was before. So normally, he'd be left, and you'd bring it somewhere a little bit toward the center. But some of the things that they have down there—and I'm not only talking in terms of religion; I'm not talking, even, in terms of

religion—but some of the things they have in the agreement made—and this was an agreement made by Bernie Sanders and Joe—it's a terrible thing. It would be a terrible thing for our country.

It will destroy our country. We will go into a depression. We will put on regulation. We will double and triple taxes. We will—it will be terrible for health care. Just terrible. You'll have 180 million people lose their healthcare. It will be a terrible, terrible thing for our country.

Okay. Yes, please, Jeff [Jeff Mason, Reuters].

Health Insurance Reforms/Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Q. Thank you, sir. I'd like to ask you a question about something you said in Bedminster as well. You said that you're planning to issue an Executive order to ensure that health insurance companies prevent—or cover people with preexisting——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——conditions. And you said that that had "never been done before." But that's not the case, because that is the law under the Affordable Care Act. So my question is: Why do you need to issue an Executive order for a law——

The President. Well, I said no——

Q. ——that is already existing?

The President. Yes. Yes, but, I didn't say—I said, as an Executive order. I—as you said, I said, as an Executive order, it hasn't been done before. We want to be able to assure people that preexisting condition is always taken care of.

As you know, we've done tremendous things having to do with the individual mandate. We got rid of the individual mandate from Obamacare, which really ended Obamacare, as it would be officially known, because the individual mandate was the biggest part. It was also the most unpopular part—where you pay for a terrible privilege of overpaying for insurance. You pay not to have to pay for your health care. And that was a disaster for people and a very unpopular—that was called the "individual mandate," and we terminated that and—officially terminated that. And that was something that we have been given thanks for by many, many people.

But the individual mandate will always be with us. The individual mandate termination will always be—they can't start it up. In fact, I don't even believe—you'll have to tell me—I don't believe it's been challenged when we ended it.

And preexisting conditions, the Republicans are 100 percent there. And I'll be issuing, at some point in the not-too-distant future, a very strong statement on that, probably in the form of an Executive order.

Q. But why do you need, sir, to do an Executive order if it's already a part of existing law?

The President. Just a double safety net and just to let people know that the Republicans are totally, strongly in favor of preexisting condition—taking care of people with preexisting conditions.

It's a signal to people. It's a second platform. We have—preexisting conditions will be taken care of 100 percent by Republicans and the Republican Party. I think it's a very—I actually think it's a very important statement.

Yes, please.

Port Warehouse Explosion in Beirut, Lebanon/Group of Seven (G-7) Nations Summit

Q. Mr. President, do you still intend to try to hold an in-person G-7 meeting in the United States at some point in August and September? And have you already sent out invitations to do so?

The President. No, we haven't sent out invitations. We're talking to them. As you know, I was on the phone with many of them yesterday with respect to Lebanon, which is truly one of the saddest, most catastrophic things I've ever seen. And they have no idea how many people have died. They're having revolution right now in that country. It's just a terrible thing. And—but I was—yesterday, 8 o'clock in the morning, we had a—our time—we had a big teleconference call. Some of those people were there.

I'm much more inclined to do it sometime after the election. We were going to do it in September. They'd like to do it. We could do it through teleconference, or we could do it through a meeting. But I sort of am now suggesting—I told my people yesterday, actually, "Why don't we do it sometime after the election when things are a little bit—you have a little bit more time to think about it," because that's very important.

Q. Have you decided to invite——

The President. The G-7 is very important.

Q. ——President Putin to that meeting?

The President. I don't know. But we have invited a number of people to the meeting. I certainly would invite him to the meeting; I think he's an important factor. But we will invite certain people that aren't in the G-7. Some people have already accepted.

But we're going to be doing it after the election. I think it's a better atmosphere to have a G-7. I think it's a lot—I think it's just a better, calmer atmosphere to have a G-7.

Yes, please.

Executive Action on Coronavirus Relief/Economic Stimulus Legislation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to ask Secretary Mnuchin, actually: Have you spoken to any Democrats since Friday? Have they reached out to you at all about restarting negotiations?

Secretary Mnuchin. I've spoken to several Democrats. I have not spoken to Schumer and Pelosi since then.

Q. Do you expect to—would you reach out at all to them to—[inaudible]?

Secretary Mnuchin. I said any time they want to meet and they're willing to negotiate and have a new proposal, we're more than happy to meet.

The President. They're hurting people very badly. This would have been so easy for them to do. And I saw that Senator Schumer said today, on a show—I don't know what show—but he said today on a show that we should meet; we should do something. But you know, where's he been for—how many weeks have you been negotiating, like 4?

Secretary Mnuchin. Yes, sir.

The President. And they should do something; it would have been so much easier than doing it the way we did it. But we did something that's very important. And frankly, it's been well received—very well received.

Go ahead, please.

2020 Republican Presidential Acceptance Speech Location

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You tweeted earlier today that you're considering Gettysburg as a——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——venue for your speech for the RNC nomination acceptance. What's your thinking behind that as a possible location?

The President. Well, I think it's—I've been to Gettysburg numerous times. It's a national park; it's a national historic site. It's incredible. You know, it's the history. It's incredible, actually, to me. It was a very important place, and is a very important place in our country.

So we're looking at that, and we're looking at the White House. The White House would be very much easier for Secret Service. You see what just went on here. They're all here. Just like you have your seats; they have their seats at the White House. So there wouldn't be any expense or any extraordinary expense. And the White House would be a lovely place to do it, also.

Least expensive place that you could do it would be at the White House. This is a Government expense and I—you know, look, I watch—also with Government, I watch to make sure that we do what's right.

But we're looking at Gettysburg, and we're looking at the White House. And we have other sites too, but I think these would be two really beautiful sites.

Jennifer, please.

Q. Could we get an update on——

Q. But if it were here or there, would you envision having an audience for that speech?

The President. You could. You have plenty of room at both locations.

I see John Roberts. John, you were outside. You said you heard shots fired before?

Shooting Outside the White House

Q. I heard two shots in rapid succession just after you took the podium.

The President. And they were shots pretty much?

Q. It certainly sounded like gunshots.

The President. And you definitely know the difference, I know that.

Q. I'm sorry?

The President. That's—you know the difference. I—you thought they were shots, John?

Q. It definitely sounded like gunfire.

The President. I saw your report inside when I went inside. It was a good report too. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Jennifer, please.

China-U.S. Relations/Coronavirus Outbreak in China/Global Coronavirus Pandemic

Q. Thank you, sir. Can you give us an update on China? Do you think that your administration will respond to the sanctions that China announced this morning on American officials?

The President. Well, we've already responded in many different ways. We're talking a lot about China. We shouldn't have been talking about China. We did a phase one deal, and it was a wonderful deal. And all of a sudden, it means very little in the overall import of things.

They should have never allowed what happened to the world, including us. But this was released into Europe, and it was released into the U.S., and it was released all throughout the world, but it wasn't released into China.

And we were doing numbers that will—you know, just were incredible. And we hope to be able to do them, perhaps, even next year. I think we're going have an incredible year next year. But that will never pay for the loss of life in our country and all over the world.

So we are—we view China differently than we did 8 months ago. Very much differently.

China-U.S. Trade/World Trade Organization/2020 Presidential Election/North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Russia/Germany/Federal Assistance to Farmers

Q. Can I ask Secretary Mnuchin a question?

The President. Yes, please.

Q. Is there still any consideration of delisting Chinese companies? Is that an ongoing discussion?

Secretary Mnuchin. Delisting?

Q. Delisting Chinese companies.

Secretary Mnuchin. Well, we never comment on specific things, but no, there's nothing in particular on——

Q. Could it still be on the table?

Secretary Mnuchin. There's no—again, nothing specifically at the moment on—are you talking about delisting——

Q. For the U.S. stock exchange.

Secretary Mnuchin. Oh, companies on the exchange?

Q. Yes.

Secretary Mnuchin. Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, so just to be clear, we did make the recommendation and the SEC will be putting out—yes, as of the end of next year, if they do not fully comply—and that's Chinese companies, any other companies—they all have to comply with the same exact accounting or they will be delisted on the exchanges.

I thought you meant sanctions.

The President. But also——

Secretary Mnuchin. I was confused when you said "delisting."

The President. And, Jennifer, we're also talking, on the WTO—the World Trade Organization—China is treated much differently than we are. This should have been handled many years ago when it first happened, but they are treated as a nation that's developing. They're treated as what they call a "developing nation," which gives them tremendous incentives and advantages over and above what the United States gets, and over and above what other countries get also. This is a developing nation? I don't think so. I don't think, for purposes of what we're talking about, it should be.

And we are putting in—and we've already put in a request that China should no longer be declared a developing nation and have advantages over the U.S. And I told them that a year ago, and I told them that 2 years ago. And we put it in very powerfully that they should not have advantages over other countries, frankly, and assure—they're not going to have any more advantages over—this should have been done by numerous Presidents a long time ago, because it gives them a tremendous boost over everybody else, and it's a very unfair situation.

No, we are upset with China because of what they did. China was not good. And China will be—if you look at what's going to happen, whether it's Iran will make a deal with us in a month after the election is over if we win the election. But their greatest dream in the world is that Joe Biden wins, because they will own this country. China will own this country. North Korea will own this country. They will own our country.

And they're all waiting to see the election. And if we make a—if we have a win in—on November 3, we will have a deal with, in my opinion, Iran within 1 month. And I don't know that we want to have a deal with China, to be honest with you. So I'm saying to myself, "Gee."

But China wants us to lose very badly. And you know who else is not happy with us winning? Russia. The phony people that tell the story, the fake news stories about Russia—it was just reported, the numbers, I raised \$400 billion extra in NATO. You know that. It went from \$130 [billion]* to \$400 billion—and that's a year—in order to strengthen up NATO. Nobody says that.

We became the biggest energy exporter. We are now—if you look at what we have, we're energy independent. So many different things. Our military is stronger than it ever was. We spent \$2.5 trillion on our military.

I exposed the terrible deal between Germany and Russia on the pipeline. Nobody even knew about the pipeline: Nord Stream 2. Nobody knew about it. Nobody talks about it. I said, "What's this all about?" So we protect Germany from Russia, and Germany pays Russia billions of dollars a year for energy, and it's a big portion of Germany's energy. If I was a person that was a German citizen, I would not be happy with that deal, because they're at a very big disadvantage.

So no, Russia would not be happy. And I can tell you that China would not be happy at all.

And we've taken in tens of billions of dollars. There's your head of the Treasury—Steve, right? We've taken in tens of billions of dollars from China. We never took 10 cents from China, never—not even 10 cents. And \$28 billion we gave to our farmers because they were targeted by China. They were actually targeted. And we gave \$28 billion, compliments of China, to our great farmers and ranchers because they were unfairly targeted by China in order to make a better deal with us. I said: "We're not going to do that. We're going to—instead of making a better deal, we're going to tariff you at very high numbers: 25 percent, 10 percent, and actually numbers that could go up a lot."

And we had a lot of money left over. After giving the \$28 billion to the farmers and ranchers and some others, frankly, we had many, many billions of dollars left over, and we're still receiving that money. Even though we made the deal, we're still receiving that money.

So if we win the election, we'll have deals with a lot of countries very fast. They're just waiting to see who wins, because they are hoping—they are hoping that Joe Biden wins. Sleepy Joe. And if he wins, you know what's going to happen? China will own us. Our markets will crash. The 401(k)s will go down to practically nothing. Stocks will go down to practically nothing.

* White House correction.

Remember, stocks, there's—these big companies, they're owned by millions of people that are carpenters and policemen and farmers and lots of other people. And they are the ones that benefit by having a good stock market, probably more than anybody else.

But the 401(k)s, the stocks, the economy will be in a shambles. They want to raise taxes. They want to triple taxes. They want to raise the corporate tax, but they want to raise all taxes. Ultimately, they can't pay for what they want to do anyway, and what they're going to do is destroy your health care and destroy so many other things.

We're going to have 180 million people that are so happy with their private health care; they're going to lose it under this crazy plan that these people are proposing.

So you will have a crash like you've never seen before. And I've been very good at predicting these things.

Yes, please, go ahead.

Potential Foreign Interference in the 2020 Presidential Election/Absentee Voting Policies/New York Democratic Primary Election

Q. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. You just mentioned President Putin and the possibility of inviting him here because he's important. Your own Director of National Intelligence has said that Russia is currently planning—or actually meddling in the election. Have you raised that directly with Putin ever?

The President. Well, they—they said China, Russia, Iran, and probably others. But because of the fake news, they seem to think Russia plays the best, so——

Q. That's according to the DNI, not me.

The President. So what they do—it's all right. Well, I'm just saying, the way the politicians—look, the other day, they said—the three countries—they said China and Russia and Iran. And some reporter got up and said, "Russia is meddling." I said: "Well, didn't it mention China and Iran? Why didn't you mention them too?"

Q. Because you were referring to Putin just now, sir.

The President. So I don't know. You know what I'm telling you? I'll tell you who's meddling in our elections: The Democrats are meddling by wanting and insisting on sending mail-in ballots that—where there's corruption all over the place.

If you check what happened in New York—a small—relatively small race with Carolyn Maloney. And they called her the winner the other day, because I was mentioning it at conferences and getting a lot of action on that statement.

So they called her; they declared her the winner. And they have no idea who won. And the person, her opponent, is very angry. But they had mail-in voting. And they had hundreds and, I think, even thousands of ballots that are missing, that were fraudulent.

Take a look at the Carolyn Maloney race. Take a look at Paterson, New Jersey. Take a look now at this one in Virginia, where they mailed out 500,000 applications, and they're going to people that aren't supposed to be getting an application.

Yes, please. Go ahead.

Restrictions on Foreign Travel to the U.S./Coronavirus Containment Efforts

Q. Thank you, sir. Secretary Pompeo is heading to Europe again——

The President. Right——

Q. —next week. Do you have any updates on when the travel restrictions to the EU are going to be lifted? It seems strange we're offering exemptions for professional athletes, but not to K-1 visa holders, the so-called, you know, "fiancé"——

The President. Well, we're trying to do the best we can. You have big sporting events, and that's good for our economy; that's good for us. And they do talk about certain exemptions, and they make sure everyone is perfectly tested and everyone comes in at a hundred percent.

But you know, we do make certain accommodations, because you do have star athletes, and that means a good thing for the country. That's economic development, et cetera. But we are working very closely with Europe and with other countries to see what's the best timing.

Don't forget, I was the one that turned Europe off because they really—they lead the way. They led it much more so than we did. We were months following them. And—in terms of, they got hit earlier than we did. Quite a bit earlier than we did.

So I put the restrictions on Europe. I put the restrictions on China, which was a great thing to do, in retrospect. We're getting—I mean, that's—that was a very important day. Dr. Fauci said that was one of the most important days. And a lot of people didn't want me to do it, but we first put a ban on anybody from China coming in, and then we put a ban on Europe coming in.

But we're working very closely with Europe to see when that will all come off.

Yes, please.

Coronavirus Mortality Rates/Federal Coronavirus Response

Q. [Inaudible]—if 160,000 people had died on President Obama's watch, do you think you would have called for his resignation?

The President. No, I wouldn't have done that. I think it's been amazing what we've been able to do. If we didn't close up our country, we would have had 1½ or 2 million people already dead. We've called it right; now we don't have to close it. We understand the disease.

Nobody understood it because nobody has ever seen anything like this. The closest thing is, in 1917, they say, right? The great pandemic certainly was a terrible thing, where they lost, anywhere from 50 to 100 million people. Probably ended the Second World War; all the soldiers were sick. That was a terrible situation. And this is highly contagious. This one is highly, highly contagious.

No, if I would have listened to a lot of people, we would have kept it open. And by the way, we keep it open now, all the way. We keep it open. But we would have kept it open, and you could be up to a million and a half or 2 million people right now—1½ to 2 million people.

Our people have done a fantastic job, our consultants and our doctors. You know, and with disagreements and with a lot of things happening. What we've done with ventilators has been amazing. What we've done with medical equipment has been incredible. We've supplied the Governors. Nobody, not one person in this country that needed a ventilator didn't get it. And you know, at the beginning, there was a big shortage of ventilators. Nobody had stockpiles or anything comparable to what you had to have.

So we would have lost—if you think about it, you had mentioned 160,000 people. Multiply that times 10 right now. I think it would have been unsustainable and unacceptable. But that's what would have happened had we kept it open.

So no, I think we're a very large country. We are—one person—and I say it all the time; a lot of people like to leave that out—one person is too many. It should have never happened.

But they've done a—really, an extraordinary job. They'll never be given the credit—and I'm not talking about me. The people that have worked on this so hard will never be given the credit, but they've done an extraordinary job with a very large, diverse country. Really, an extraordinary job.

And a lot of the Governors who, as you know, they sort of do the micro in their States, and they go up, and I think I can tell you that a lot of the Governors have done an extraordinary job too.

Yes, please go ahead.

Brazil-U.S. Relations/The President's Use of Tariffs

Q. Mr. President, thank you. Did you ask the U.S. Ambassador in Brazil to focus his efforts in eliminating ethanol tariffs in Brazil?

The President. You have to—you can't—yes.

Q. Did you ask the Ambassador in Brazil to focus his efforts to lower, to eliminate ethanol tariffs in Brazil?

The President. We haven't really discussed that too much, but at some point, we probably will be. And we don't want people tariffing us. And if they tariff us—although, I must tell you, I have a very good relationship with President Bolsonaro. He's great. He's—and I hear he's doing well. He's recovered from having COVID. "Having COVID-19," as they say. And that's great. And send him my regards.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. I think that, as far as Brazil is concerned, if they do tariffs, we have to have an equalization of tariffs. And we are going to be presenting something having to do with tariffs and fairness in tariffs, because we have many countries, for many years, that have been charging us tariffs to do business, and we don't charge them. And it's called "reciprocity." It's called "reciprocal tariffs." And you may be seeing something on that very soon.

Did you have one, OAN?

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election

Q. [Inaudible]—Brazil on coronavirus, Mr. President.

The President. OAN, please.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, thank you for coming back to finish the briefing—

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Q. —after the scuffle. So I have an opinion question for you.

The President. Okay.

Q. Joe Biden is set to announce his running mate. At any time now, we expect him to announce her.

Many of your supporters feel that the reason that Obama's former NSA, Susan Rice, is at the top of Biden's list is that she can best cover up a lot of the Obamagate surveillance crimes that have taken place during your campaign.

What are your thoughts? What is your opinion? Do you subscribe to that line of thought? And how do you feel about it?

The President. Well, look, the Obama campaign spied on our campaign. And they've been caught, all right? And now let's see what happens to them. But they have been caught. They've been caught red-handed. It's probably treason. It's a horrible thing they did. It probably never happened before; at least, nobody got caught doing it.

But they used the intelligence agencies of our country to spy on my campaign, and they have been caught. And there are a lot of people involved. I don't want to say how much she's involved. Frankly, if he chooses her, that's fine. But that's a potential liability. We'll see.

But President Obama knew about it. Joe Biden knew about it. Comey—[laughter]—knew about it. Brennan, Clapper, the whole group, they all knew about it. Lisa Page and her lover Strzok, they all knew about it.

And we have it documented. We have it in texts. We have it in all sorts of forms. They knew about it. It was a terrible thing. It should have never happened and should never be allowed to happen again to a President. This should never happen again.

This was a setup like we've never seen. I think it's the political crime of the century, and they've been caught. So let's see what happens to them all.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:48 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Deborah L. Birx; Gov. Gregory W. Abbott of Texas; Director of the Office of Management and Budget Russell T. Vought; Sen. Bernard Sanders; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; New York Democratic congressional candidate Suraj Patel; National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony S. Fauci; former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) James B. Comey, Jr.; former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John O. Brennan; former Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper, Jr.; Lisa Page, former legal counsel to former FBI Deputy Director Andrew G. McCabe; and former FBI agent Peter P. Strzok II, in his former capacity as lead investigator of former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's use of a private e-mail server and the investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 Presidential election. He also referred to Executive Order 13945. Reporters referred to White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany; and U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Todd C. Chapman. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 11.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : News conferences :: August 10.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Atlas, Scott W.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Birx, Deborah L.; Bolsonaro, Jair M.; Brennan, John O.; Clapper, James R., Jr.; Comey, James B., Jr.; Fauci, Anthony S.; Maloney, Carolyn B.; Mnuchin, Steven T.; Obama, Barack; Page, Lisa; Patel, Suraj; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rice, Susan E.; Sanders, Bernard; Schumer, Charles E.; Strzok, Peter P., II; Vought, Russell T.

Subjects: Agriculture : Domestic production, strengthening efforts; Agriculture : Farm subsidies; Argentina : Coronavirus outbreak; Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; Australia : Coronavirus outbreak; Brazil : Coronavirus outbreak; Brazil : President; Brazil : Relations with U.S.; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Improvement; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Strengthening efforts; China : Coronavirus outbreak; China : Economic growth and development; China : Trade agreement with U.S.; Colombia : Coronavirus outbreak; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Commerce, international : Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Communications : News media :: Accuracy and fairness; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Congress :

Senate :: Minority leader; Coronavirus pandemic, international cooperation efforts; Defense and national security : Border security; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; District of Columbia : Shooting outside of White House; District of Columbia : Shooting outside White House; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Strengthening efforts; Education : Postsecondary education :: Federal student loans, interest freeze; Education : Schools, efforts to reopen; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Elections : Absentee ballot policies; Elections : Election system security, strengthening efforts; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment insurance; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Energy : Domestic production, promotion efforts; Germany : Energy cooperation with Russia; Health and Human Services, Department of : National Institutes of Health; Health and medical care : Experimental drugs and therapies; Health and medical care : Health care workers, service and dedication; Health and medical care : Health insurance, protection of coverage; Health and medical care : Individual insurance mandate, tax penalty; Health and medical care : Medical equipment and supplies; Health and medical care : Nursing homes and senior care facilities; Health and medical care : Research and development; Homeland Security, Department of : Secret Service, U.S.; Housing : Housing market :: Improvement; Housing and Urban Development, Department of : Evictions, moratorium; Immigration and naturalization : Foreign nationals and refugees, U.S. admission policy; Immigration and naturalization : Visa policy, U.S.; Iran : International diplomatic efforts; Japan : Coronavirus outbreak; Law enforcement and crime : Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; Management and Budget, Office of; Mexico : Border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Mexico : Coronavirus outbreak; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Peru : Coronavirus outbreak; Postal Service, U.S.; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; Russia : Energy cooperation with Germany; Russia : President; Taxation : Capital gains tax; Taxation : Payroll tax cut; Treasury, Department of the : Secretary; United Kingdom : Coronavirus outbreak; White House Office : Coronavirus Response Coordinator; White House Office : COVID-19 Pandemic Adviser; World Trade Organization.

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