

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks at a Document Signing Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters
January 23, 2025

The President. Hello, everybody.

Q. Hello, sir.

The President. You all set? Okay. Very good.

I'm going to sign some Executive orders. They were very important in just about every case. And we'll go through the first one, please.

White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf. Sure. Do you want to——

Chair of the President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology David O. Sacks. Yes. Mr. President, this is an Executive order on crypto. We're going to be——

Staff Secretary Scharf. That's AI. Sorry.

Chair Sacks. Oh, sorry. We're doing AI first. Sorry.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, AI.

Chair Sacks. Sir, this is an Executive order on AI. We're forming—we're—basically announcing the administration's policy to make America the world capital in artificial intelligence and to dominate and to lead the world in AI.

The President. Do you want to say your name—your full name and serial number?

Chair Sacks. Yes, David Sacks, AI and Crypto Czar.

The President. David is one of the greatest in the world at AI—most respected, probably, there is.

[*At this point, the President signed an Executive order titled, "Removing Barriers to American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence."*]

So that should take us to the forefront, right?

Chair Sacks. Absolutely. We've got to win.

The President. Okay.

Thank you.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

The President. And this, David, is?

Staff Secretary Scharf. Crypto.

Chair Sacks. Yes, this is the crypto EO. We're going to be forming an internal working group to make crypto—to make America the world capital on crypto under your leadership.

The President. Which is really going up, right?

Chair Sacks. Absolutely.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Strengthening American Leadership in Digital Financial Technology."*]

The President. All right, David. That's for you.

[*The President gave the signing pen to Chair Sacks.*]

Thanks.

Chair Sacks. Thank you, sir.

The President. You find them exciting? They might not be exciting, but we're going to make a lot of money for the country. Okay?

Chair Sacks. Thank you, sir.

The President. And so is David. You have to check him out. There is nobody like this guy. They said: "How did you get David Sacks? How did you do that?" And he's doing it for the country more than anything else. So we appreciate it, David. Thank you very much.

Chair Sacks. Thank you, sir.

Staff Secretary Scharf. This is an Executive order establishing a Presidential Commission—an advisory Commission on science and technology.

The President. Good.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology."*]

Do you want to explain that a little bit?

Staff Secretary Scharf. The basic idea is to get together top people from Government to private-sector technology industry, as well as educational institutions, to make sure that America maintains its leadership position with respect to science and technology development in the years ahead.

The President. Good. That's great.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Next, sir, we have a Presidential memorandum encouraging departments and agencies in your Government, including the Department of the Interior, to promote Federal recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of——

The President. Ohh.

Staff Secretary Scharf. ——North Carolina.

The President. I love the Lumbee Tribe. So this is their first big step, right?

Staff Secretary Scharf. This would be a huge step for them, sir.

The President. Yes. They were with me all the way. They were great—North Carolina Lumbee Tribe.

[*The President signed a memorandum titled, "Federal Recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina."*]

And we'll send—you'll send them a copy of that?

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. They were great.

Okay?

Staff Secretary Scharf. And, if you'd like, I could get them that pen, sir, as well.

The President. Yes, let's do that.

[*The President gave the signing pen to Staff Secretary Scharf.*]

Staff Secretary Scharf. Next, we have a set of pardons for peaceful pro-life protesters who were prosecuted by the Biden administration for exercising their First Amendment rights.

The President. Do you know how many?

Staff Secretary Scharf. I believe it's 23, sir.

The President. Twenty-three people that were prosecuted. They should not have been prosecuted. Many them are elderly people. They should not have been prosecuted. This is a great honor to sign this.

[*The President signed a document granting pardons to 23 protesters arrested for violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act of 1994.*]

They'll be very happy.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

The President. So they're all in prison now?

Staff Secretary Scharf. Some are. Some are out of custody.

The President. It's ridiculous.

Okay?

Staff Secretary Scharf. Lastly, sir, we have an Executive order ordering the declassification of files relating to the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The President. That's a big one, huh? A lot of people are waiting for this for a long—for years—

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. —for decades. And everything will be revealed.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Declassification of Records Concerning the Assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr."*]

Okay. Give that to RFK, Jr.

[*The President gave the signing pen to Staff Secretary Scharf.*]

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. Okay.

Okay. Thank you very much.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

The President's Executive Order Abolishing "Birthright Citizenship"

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President, a U.S. judge temporarily blocked the birthright citizenship order. Do you have any reaction to—

The President. No. Obviously, we'll appeal it. They put it before a certain judge—in Seattle, I guess, right? And there's no surprises with that judge.

Senate Confirmation Vote for Peter B. Hegseth as Secretary of Defense

Q. Mr. President, Senators Collins and Murkowski have now said they will vote against Pete Hegseth. Are you worried about his confirmation, and your reaction?

The President. No. And no surprises there. It's too bad. You know, it's the way it is. Too bad.

Senate Confirmation Process

Q. And when would you adjourn Congress to make recess appointments, Mr. President?

The President. Well, I'd take a look at that. I'd listen to John Thune. He's doing a fantastic job. We're moving along. The Democrats are trying to delay Government, as they always do. They can't help themselves. Even John Ratcliffe, who's very, very strong, very popular and liked by the Democrats—I guess, he gets a lot of Democrat votes—that's taking a long time, and it shouldn't be taking a long time.

They're maxing everything out so they can delay everything as much as possible.

Q. Does Senator Thune support an effort to use recess appointments if you choose to do that?

The President. I'd be willing to use recess appointments. It's up to John. We'll see. John Thune is a great guy, great Senator, knows his stuff inside out and backwards. But I would use recess appointments if he wants to do that. Absolutely.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The Democrats are just delaying. They always delay.

Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. President, you spoke with the Saudi Crown Prince yesterday.

The President. Who?

Q. The Saudi Crown Prince.

The President. Yes.

Q. How was the call?

The President. Great. It was great.

Saudi Arabia-U.S. Trade

Q. And they said \$600 million—billion dollar they can invest?

The President. Six hundred. I'll ask them for a trillion.

Q. You said you're going to ask them for a trillion. Will Saudi Arabia be the first foreign country you will visit, since they're investing that much money?

The President. Well, if they do that, I would, yes.

Q. You would?

The President. I would be glad to do that. I did it, as you know, 4 years ago. We did \$450 billion—meaning the money all goes to American companies—and they purchased jets, and they purchased computers and everything else. And we did \$450 billion, and I guess we're at 600, 650.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And I'll see if I can talk them into a trillion.

U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff

Q. And on the Middle East again. You showed great confidence in Steve Witkoff. Why you said that you doubt that the cease-fire in Gaza will hold since you appraised his efforts?

The President. Well, no, I think he's great. But it's a very tricky place. It's very tricky. And we'll see. And if it—if something does happen, they will not be happy.

U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff/Cease-Fire and Hostage-Release Deal Between Israel and Hamas

Q. Sir, follow-up on that one. In terms of Steve Witkoff, are you going to put him in charge of—of Iran strategy? And do you want him talking directly with the Iranians?

The President. No, but he certainly is somebody I would use. He's done a fantastic job. He's a great negotiator. He's a very good person, great—a very popular person. Gets along with people. I have great negotiators. They have no personality whatsoever, and then I have some that do.

Steve has a wonderful way about him and people like him. And even in this case, both sides like him, and he was able to make a deal. That deal would have never been made without Steve.

The Biden people couldn't make the deal. They were working on it for a year and a half. They couldn't make a deal. We got it done prior to the Inauguration. We said it has to be before the Inauguration.

I mean, the deal should hold, but if it doesn't hold, there'll be a lot of problems.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Artificial Intelligence

Q. Related to your AI EO. Just hours after you made that big Stargate announcement, Elon Musk tweeted that they don't actually have the money. Is that true?

The President. I don't know if they do, but you know, they're putting up the money. The Government is not putting up anything. They're putting up money. They're very rich people, so I hope they do.

And, I mean, Elon doesn't like one of those people. So—*[inaudible]*.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Are you worried that AI is going to replace many American jobs?

The President. No.

Q. Does that worry you?

The President. No, no. It's going to create tremendous numbers of jobs. It's going to also create a lot of benefits, medically, for cancer research and other things. It's going to have a huge positive impact.

And you know, we want to be ahead of China. We're, right now, way ahead of China.

David Sacks is one of the alltime experts. You know, that—people are amazed that he—you just met him. I don't know if he's still here.

Chair Sacks. *[Inaudible]*

The President. There he is.

But one of the most respected people in that world. It's a world. That's a whole different world.

And we're ahead of China now because of what I'm doing, and I think it's going to be very successful.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. On NATO spending, please. You just asked the Davos forum again that NATO countries should spend 5 percent of GDP on defense.

The President. Yes.

Q. The United States don't spend 5 percent.

The President. Well, I don't think so, no.

Q. Do you think it should also apply to the United States?

The President. We're protecting them, you know? They're not protecting us. We're protecting them. So I don't think we should be spending—I'm not sure we should be spending anything, but we should certainly be helping them. But they should—they should up their 2 percent to 5 percent, yes.

Q. Mr. President, what did you mean yesterday——

Federal Reserve System/Interest Rates

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President, you said earlier during your speech at Davos that you would like to see interest rates come down.

The President. Yes.

Q. How much would you like to see them come down?

The President. A lot.

Q. And will you talk with Powell?

The President. I'd like to see them come down a lot, and oil prices will come down. And when oil prices come down, everything is going to be cheaper for the American people—and actually for the world—but for the American people. So I'd like to see oil prices come down.

And when the energy comes down, that's going to knock out a lot of the inflation. That's going to automatically bring the interest rates down.

Q. Are you worried that it's too much going on at once if you're——

Inflation

Q. Mr. President, you said that you would demand——

Q. Are you worried that there's too much going on at once if you're trying to bring interest rates down and——

The President. No, no.

Q. ——get the economy back going?

The President. No. It just works that way. I mean, it just economically works that way. When the oil comes down, it will bring down prices, then you won't have inflation, and then the interest rates will come down. *[Inaudible]*

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Interest Rates

Q. You said that you would demand that the interest rates come down.

The President. Well, I would put in——

Q. Do you expect the Fed——

The President. I would put in a strong statement.

Q. Do you expect the Fed to listen to you?

The President. Yes.

Q. Are you going to talk to Powell about this and—bringing the rates down?

The President. At the right time, I would.

Civil Unrest and Violence at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021

Q. Sir, do you plan to meet with any of the people you pardoned that were—participated in the January 6, 2021, attack—do you plan to meet with any of them or meet with them at the White House?

The President. I don't know. I'm sure that they probably would like to. I did—I did them something important. But what they did is, they were protesting a crooked election. And you know, I mean, people understand that also. And they were treated very badly. Nobody's been treated like that.

So I'd be open to it, certainly. I don't know of anything like that, but I think they—they're going to—meeting some of the Congresspeople—Congressmen, -women——

Q. Have you spoken to them?

The President. ——who want to—want to meet. But I'd certainly be open to it.

Q. Have you spoken to them since you issued the pardons?

The President. I haven't spoken to any of them yet, but I know they're very happy.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I gave them—I gave them their life back. Their life was taken away from them unnecessarily and unfairly. I gave them their life back. So I can imagine they probably would like to.

Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr./Civil Unrest and Violence at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021

Q. What did you mean when you said that Biden took bad advice in not pardoning himself yesterday?

The President. Well, he did. I think he did, because he pardoned all these people that are crooked as hell. Look, the Congressmen, they're crooked. What they did is they destroyed evidence. When you destroy evidence, especially criminally like that—they did it criminally.

And the reason they destroyed the evidence is because it proved that I was right. They didn't destroy evidence for no reason. They destroyed it because they found many documents saying that I offered 10,000 soldiers. If they had 500 soldiers or National Guard, there would have been no problem. If they had 200, that would have been—I offered 10,000, if they needed them—there would have been no problem.

That's been now totally disproven. And it's also been disproven by Nancy Pelosi's daughter, who has her on tape saying it was her fault, that she has full responsibility for this.

But—and they have all that stuff. They destroyed everything, and they go through a year and a half, 2 years of nonsense, they come up with tremendous evidence, and they destroyed evidence.

And Schiff knew about it. That's why he's on there. He knew all about the destruction of evidence. A lot of people said he's the one that got them to do it. And he's a crooked guy—you know?—totally crooked politician. And so he's pardoned, and some other people are pardoned.

And these are crooked politicians, every one of them. Bennie Johnson [Thompson; White House correction], what he did is incredible. I mean, he was the leader of the Committee, and he did it. Cheney, Crying Adam Kinzinger, all of them—they destroyed evidence and deleted everything.

There's nothing with—there's no evidence now. They're crooked politicians, and they should be punished. You know, that's—even in a civil trial, you go to jail for a thing like that. They destroyed every document, from what I understand—every document—because it proved that I was totally innocent.

Q. Mr. President——

U.S. Capitol Security/Border Security

Q. Do you plan to send up to 10,000 troops to the southern border, sir?

The President. Yes. Oh, southern border?

Q. Yes, the border.

The President. When you say "southern border"—when I said "10,000 troops," I was referring to the Capitol.

Q. Oh, I see. And when does that—

The President. No, no, you got it wrong. I was referring——

Q. When do you plan——

The President. ——to the Capitol——

Q. When do you plan to do that?

The President. I offered 10,000 troops to the Capitol before January 6.

Border Security

Q. And as for the 1,500 at the southern border, sir, to clarify, what exactly do you want them to be doing right now?

The President. Making sure that the border is safe and secure and that criminals don't come into our country.

Q. Sir——

Russia

Q. Mr. President, do you think that sanctions on Russia will force President Putin to negotiate?

The President. I don't know, but I think he should make a deal.

Artificial Intelligence Infrastructure

Q. Mr. President, does it bother you that Elon Musk criticized a deal that you made publicly, that he said—that he tweeted that?

The President. No, it doesn't. He hates one of the people in the deal. So——

Q. Have you spoken to him since then?

The President. No, no. I've—well, I've spoken Elon, but——

Q. Not about that?

The President. I've spoken to all of them, actually.

No, no. The people in the deal are very, very smart people. But Elon, one of the people he happens to hate. But I have certain hatreds of people too——

Q. Sir——

The President. ——you know?

Russia/Ukraine/China

Q. Sir, on China. What do you think Xi Jinping can do on the Ukraine-Russia war?

The President. Which one?

Q. Ukraine-Russia war. What can Xi Jinping do about that?

The President. China?

Q. Yes.

The President. They have a lot of power over Russia. They supply energy to Russia, and Russia supplies energy to them. They supply other things to—you know, it's really a very big trade. It's a very big trading partner. But Russia supplies a lot of energy to China, China pays them a lot of money for that, and I think they have a lot of power over Russia. So I think Russia should want to make a deal.

Maybe they want to make a deal. I think, from what I hear, Putin would like to see me, and we'll meet as soon as we can. I'd meet immediately. Every day we don't meet, soldiers are being killed in a battlefield, and that—battlefield is like no battlefield since World War II. That's a——

Q. You said that—Ukraine wants to——

The President. And I have pictures that you don't want to see. Soldiers are being killed on a daily basis at numbers that we haven't seen in decades. And it would be nice to end that war. It's a ridiculous war.

Q. You said that Ukraine is ready to make a deal. Did President Zelenskyy tell you that at—personally?

The President. Yes, sure. He's ready to negotiate a deal. He'd like to stop. He's a—he's somebody that lost a lot of soldiers, and so did Russia—lost a lot. I mean, Russia lost more soldiers. They lost 800,000 soldiers. Would you say that's a lot? I'd say it's a lot.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs

Q. Mr. President, you said that you wanted to make Dr. King's dream a reality. What's your response to his children and civil rights leaders who say that your DEI orders are a contradiction of his dream and could further drive racial disparities?

The President. Well, I haven't heard that.

Houthi Rebel Group

Q. Mr. President, you put the Houthis back on the terror list. How do you see the war in Yemen end now?

The President. Well, we'll see what happens, but they can't shoot down our ships—the Houthis?

Q. Yes.

The President. And that—you can't shoot down our ships or any ships, and that's what they've been doing. So they're on the terror list, and——

Q. Mr. President——

The President. ——that's not good for them.

Q. Mr. President——

Security Details for Former Administration Officials

Q. Sir, why did you revoke security protections for former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Brian Hook?

The President. Well, the same reason I do—when you, you know, have protection, you can't have it for the rest of your life. Do you want to have a large detail of people guarding people for the rest of their lives? I mean, there's risks to everything.

Q. Do you think a former Presidents should—[inaudible].

Israel/Iran

Q. Sir, would you support striking Iran's nuclear facilities?

The President. Say it?

Q. Would you support Israel, for example, striking Iran's nuclear facilities? Or do you——

The President. Well, I'm not going to answer that.

Q. ——believe in diplomacy?

The President. Obviously, I'm not going to answer that question. We'll have to see. I—I'm going to be meeting with various people over the next couple of days, and we'll see. But hopefully, that can be worked out without having to worry about it. It would be nice—it would really be nice if that could be worked out without having to go that further step.

The President's Schedule

Q. And who are you going to meet with, if I may ask?

The President. Well, I'd rather not say that, but very high-level people. But hopefully, that could be worked out.

You know, look, Iran, hopefully, will be—make a deal. And if they don't make a deal, I guess that's okay too.

Interest Rates

Q. And, Mr. President, just to follow up, you said you think the Fed should listen to you. Can you elaborate on why you think it should?

The President. With regard to interest rates?

Q. Correct, yes.

The President. Because I think I know interest rates much better than they do, and I think I know it certainly much better than the one who's primarily in charge of making that decision.

But no, I'm guided by them very much, but if I disagree, I will let it be known.

Q. Mr. President——

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Sir, your tariffs planned for China and Mexico are much tougher—or the ones for Canada and Mexico are much tougher than the one for China. Why is it softer for China?

The President. Well, China is already paying a lot of tariffs because of me, and when you add them up, I would say, you know, they're paying a lot. They paid hundreds of billions of dollars. They never paid 10 cents until I came along. When I came along, they pay hundreds of—they've paid hundreds of billions of dollars. Never paid anything. And so they've already started at a higher base.

Mexico/Canada/Fentanyl Trafficking

Q. Is February 1——

Q. Sir, about the border——

Q. ——the date for Chinese tariffs as well, sir? February 1? Or was that just Mexico and Canada?

The President. It's Mexico and Canada. But we'll—we're talking about China too. Look, China is sending us tremendous amounts of bad drugs: fentanyl—really bad stuff. Most of it comes through Mexico. And we're losing, I think, 300,000 lives a year because of that. People say 150, 100, 120. I think 300,000 lives a year. Those are old numbers. The other—the lower number is a low number. And we can't have that. They've got to stop sending it.

I had a deal with President Xi, but it was a deal that wasn't followed up by Biden, of course, where they were going to issue the death penalty to people that make fentanyl, and that would have stopped it. But we'll have to stop it with tariffs.

Okay? Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. So is China—[inaudible].

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Health and Human Services—designate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.; John C. Coughenour, judge, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington; Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John L. Ratcliffe; Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk; Sam Altman, chief

executive officer, OpenAI; Rep. Nancy Pelosi, in her former capacity as Speaker of the House of Representatives, and her daughter Alexandra; Sen. Adam B. Schiff, in his former capacity as a U.S. Representative; Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, in his former capacity as chair, former Rep. Elizabeth L. Cheney, in her capacity as vice chair, and former Rep. Adam D. Kinzinger, in his capacity as a member, of the House Select Committee To Investigate the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol; and Jerome H. Powell, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System. Reporters referred to President Xi Jinping of China; former U.S. Special Representative for Iran and Senior Policy Adviser to the Secretary of State Brian H. Hook; and Martin Luther King III and Bernice A. King, children of Martin Luther King, Jr. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 24.

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