

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2025*

**Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One En Route to Joint Base Andrews, Maryland**

*January 27, 2025*

*The President.* Hello, everybody.

*Q.* Mr. President.

*Q.* Hi, Mr. President.

*The President.* Hi, everybody. Nice to see you.

*Q.* Nice to see you.

*The President.* So we signed numerous Executive orders today, as you know—and very successful. I think we'll give you a little rundown with Karoline.

Want to come over here, Will? You know Will.

Why don't we open this door?

*White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt.* Yes, we can.

*The President.* From now on, we should use this one.

*Q.* Okay.

*The President.* Gives you more room.

Yes, go ahead.

So we're going to give you a little bit of a rundown on the executive office.

*Press Secretary Leavitt.* Go for it, Will.

*White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf.* Good evening, y'all. Will Scharf, White House staff secretary.

The President just signed five items in the forward cabin of Air Force One.

First is an Executive order, as he alluded to in his speech earlier, reinstating members of the military who were terminated or forced to separate because of the vaccine mandates.

The second item was an Executive order establishing a process to develop what we're calling an American Iron Dome, a comprehensive missile—missile defense shield to defend the American homeland.

The third Executive order that President Trump signed relates to eliminating gender radicalism in the military.

And the fourth is about eliminating DEI and DEI set-asides and DEI offices within the military.

Lastly, the President signed a proclamation commemorating the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. The Trump administration sent a delegation to an event at Auschwitz. I believe that occurred today. This proclamation memorializes that event and expresses, obviously, sympathy to the victims and the people of Poland as well.

*The President.* Pretty good recap, wouldn't you say?

*Q.* Very good.

*The President.* Pretty smart guy.

*Press Secretary Leavitt.* Do you guys have questions?

*Q.* Yes.

*The President.* So we had a very good week, to put it mildly. A lot of things have been happening.

We turned on the water today in California, pleased to report. The water is beginning to flow. It should have flowed 7 years ago, but it's now beginning to flow, and a lot of good things are happening for our country.

### *Tariffs*

*Q.* Mr. President, what level do you want to set your tariffs at on steel, aluminum, copper? What you announced today—

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* —what level would you want to set that at? And when would that begin?

*The President.* Well, I won't be setting it yet. I have it in my mind what it is going to be, but I won't be setting it yet. But it will be enough to protect our country.

### *Artificial Intelligence*

*Q.* Sir, do you have a comment on the stock market falling so fast today? It seemed like you were pretty okay with China developing the AI technology to sort of see how that would go.

*The President.* I think it could be good, because if it comes in cheaper, that's going to benefit us too. So it's a technology, and if it comes in cheaper, I think it could affect us too, positively.

*Q.* But you talk about "chasing the rabbit." Is the rabbit going to get away now? Is—are we at risk of losing AI supremacy?

*The President.* If there's a different way of doing something—other people are going to be announcing various AI solutions as soon as next week, from what I understand, which will top that one. So we're going to see.

Look, it's a very new world, in that sense. This is very complex stuff. And frankly, if you can do it cheaper, if you can do it less, but get to the same end result, I think that's a good thing for us.

*Q.* Do you—are you concerned about China's dominance in AI, Mr. President?

*The President.* No, we're going to dominate. We'll dominate everything.

### *Illegal Immigration*

*Q.* You talked today about being hopeful you were close to a deal with a third country to take deportees. Can you tell us who you're talking to and how close you are to a deal?

*The President.* We have numerous countries, and they are very happy to take them. And obviously, they benefit in certain ways, through trade or whatever. But we have numerous countries that will take them, yes.

*Q.* Albania was in the news as one of the possibilities. Is that one you're talking to?

*The President.* Could be one of them, yes.

### *TikTok*

*Q.* Mr. President, is Microsoft in discussion for acquiring TikTok?

*The President.* I would say yes.

*Q.* You spoke about——

*The President.* A lot of interest in TikTok. There's great interest in TikTok.

*Q.* You spoke about, you know, different companies bidding for it; you want them to bid for it. Are you talking about a bidding war?

*The President.* I like bidding wars because you make your best deal, so if there's a bidding war, that's a good thing. But we have a lot of interest in it—in TikTok, because it's very cut and, you know, dry. It's very clear.

If I sign, then somebody's going to buy it, pay a lot of money, have a lot of jobs, keep a platform open, and have it be very secure. If I don't sign, then it closes.

*Q.* What are some of the other companies, sir——

*The President.* I'd rather not say.

*Q.* ——that are involved?

*The President.* But you'll be able to figure it out. But all top-of-the-line companies.

#### *Colombia/Illegal Immigration*

*Q.* And, on Colombia, sir. We saw what happened yesterday.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* You know, you announced and then they backed down. How does that impact cooperation with the country going forward? Do you think they'll stop migrants crossing the Darién Gap——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* ——going forward?

*The President.* They're going to. That's part of the deal. Part of the deal is that they have to stop that. Yes, they have to do what they have to do.

And I think that will be—I think it's really—it serves the world well to look at it. We're in a very strong position. We're going to remain in a strong position. We're going to get much stronger with time.

And people were laughing at our country a year ago. They're not laughing anymore.

*Q.* Mr. President, what did you learn from the episode with Colombia this weekend?

*The President.* Peace through strength.

#### *Gaza, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* What's your reaction to the Middle East? Your comments to us on Saturday about sort of cleaning out the area and, potentially, you know, starting almost with a clean slate really caused a—quite a stir. Were you watching that? And do you have any other, you know, reaction?

*The President.* What caused a stir?

*Q.* When you—when you talked to us on Saturday about Gaza and the possibility that——

*The President.* Oh, yes.

*Q.* —there are more than a million and half people moved out of there.

*The President.* Well, I'd like to get them living in an area where they can live without disruption and revolution and violence. So much is—you know, when you look at the Gaza Strip, it's been hell for so many years, and it just seems to be—there's been various civilizations on that strip. You know, and it didn't start here. It started thousands of years before, and there's always been violence associated with it.

So I think you can get people living in areas that are a lot safer and maybe a lot better and maybe a lot more comfortable.

*Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel*

*Q.* Sir, what does that mean for the two-state solution? Are you still committed to a Palestinian state——

*The President.* Well—[inaudible]—meet with——

*Q.* —existing alongside Israel?

*The President.* —Bibi Netanyahu in the not-too-distant future. He's coming here to meet with me.

*Q.* Have you got a date? Is that set?

*The President.* Very soon. Yes.

*President Abdelfattah Said Elsisi of Egypt/Mideast Peace Process*

*Q.* Have you spoken with Elsisi, yet? You said you were thinking of talking of talking.

*The President.* I have. I spoke to him.

*Q.* What was his response to that?

*The President.* His response is, he'd like to see peace in the Middle East.

*Q.* [Inaudible]—to——

*The President.* And so would, I, by the way.

*Q.* —taking Palestinians onto Egyptian——

*The President.* I would like to see peace in the Middle East also.

*Q.* But he wasn't—he didn't express any—any opinion on taking Palestinians into Egypt?

*The President.* I'd love to do that. I'd—I wish he would take some. I mean, we help them a lot, and I'm sure he'd help us.

He's a friend of mine. He's in a very rough part of the world. I mean, to be honest with you, it's a rough—as they say, it's a rough neighborhood.

But I think he would do it, and I think the King of Jordan would do it too.

*Illegal Immigration/Colombia*

*Q.* Mr. President, any reason you changed guidance for ICE to allow them to arrest noncriminals over criminals?

*The President.* No, we're going to work with Tom Homan and his people. They're doing a fantastic job. They're getting criminals, at a tremendous rate, out of our country—really hard-line criminals—very, very bad people.

I mean, they were talking about shackles. Could you imagine? You have murderers, drug lords, gang members, killers of so many different variety, and they don't want them to be shackled. How would you like to be two pilots sitting up front of the plane, and you have 300 people in the plane that are murderers, drug lords, and everything else, and you're supposed to fly them without being shackled? That doesn't make sense.

So—but it's all worked out very well with Colombia. I appreciate that they agreed to do what we wanted them to do.

### *Tariffs*

*Q.* And with Colombia, you used tariffs as a tool to get something, but——

*The President.* They're——

*Q.* —you also talked today of it being a way of raising revenue the way it was in the 19th century. Do you see it both options, or is——

*The President.* [Inaudible]

*Q.* —it one that you prefer——

*The President.* Could be.

*Q.* —over another?

*The President.* Not only with Colombia, with everyone else—yes. Could be.

*Q.* But it could raise revenue as well as be a tool——

*The President.* It was when we were at our best in terms of financially, as you know. From 1870 to 1913, that's when we were really, relatively speaking, at our—our strongest economically.

### *Tariffs*

*Q.* Mr. President, there's reporting that Secretary Bessent would like to propose a 2.5-percent universal baseline tariff and then grow that from there. Is that something that you would support?

*The President.* Well, I haven't heard that. We very much agree on everything. I mean, he's talking about 25 percent?

*Q.* Two-point-five, sorry.

*The President.* What?

*Q.* Two-point-five percent to start and then grow it from there.

*The President.* A 2.5-percent tariff?

*Q.* Yes.

*The President.* No, I don't think so. I don't think he's saying that. No, that wouldn't be acceptable to me. I don't think he said that.

*Q.* You want bigger?

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* Huh?

*Q.* You want bigger than 2.5?

*The President.* Much bigger.

*Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India*

*Q.* You had a chat with Prime Minister Modi, Mr. President. How did that go?

*The President.* Right.

*Q.* I mean, especially, did he—did immigration come up at all? I mean —

*The President.* Yes. Everything came up. I had a long talk with him this morning, and he's going to be coming to the White House in—over the next month, probably in February, when we have a very good relationship with India.

*Q.* Would he—did he agree to take back illegal—you know, the immigrants—[inaudible]—

*The President.* He will do what's right. We discussed it. But he will do what's right.

*Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom*

*Q.* Sir, you also talk to U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Can you tell us a bit about that conversation?

*The President.* Very good conversation. We get along very well. He's liberal, but not everybody can be perfect. But we —

*Q.* Have you decided whether that's going to be your first trip now?

*The President.* We haven't. No, I—we haven't. We're talking to Saudi Arabia. We're talking to them. We're talking—a lot of people would like the first trip of the President of the United States to go to their country, so we'll make that determination over the next week, I would say.

*Q.* A year ago, you shared one of our Daily Mail graphics suggesting you would seek revenge in your second term. Is that what motivates you now: revenge over your critics?

*The President.* No. No. Remember my statement? Success will be my revenge. Success will be my revenge.

*White House Senior Adviser Elon Musk/The President's Executive Actions*

*Q.* Sir, can you clarify something for us that you said on Saturday? You were asked a question about whether Elon Musk has an office in the West Wing, and you talked about how there was an office that was used for Executive orders. Does Elon have his own office in the West Wing?

*The President.* No. We have an office for almost 40 people using it, headed up by him. And those people take my Executive or—you know, orders. And you see this, like I just signed five of them, actually—it's—it's four plus one—we did something on the Holocaust, as you know—and all very important.

And that group of 40 very smart people goes around to make sure they're worked on—that the Executive order is worked on and accepted and done.

As an example, water started flowing down in California—I say off the record—without anybody else's approval, except for the approval that we needed—the legal approval that we needed. So water is going to start flowing into California like it should have when I first brought it up many years ago.

*Q.* So it's headed up by him, that office, just to be clear?

*The President.* So—so —

*Q.* Oh, sorry.

*The President.* The office is used by all 40 people as a place to coordinate with the White House.

*Press Secretary Leavitt.* Sir, we're landing in 5 minutes.

*The President.* Okay.

*U.S. Citizen Austin B. Tice*

*Q.* Have you—have you been briefed on the search for the missing journalist, Austin Tice, in Syria, and do you have an update——

*The President.* I've known about it for a long time, and it's a very sad situation. I think the mother of—his mother is a wonderful woman. She's working so hard to find her son. It's a tough situation. I know it—I know it very well—a very tough situation.

*Q.* President Joe Biden——

*The President.* She's a great mother, that I can say.

*Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr./U.S. Citizen Austin B. Tice*

*Q.* President Joe Biden, before he left office, said he believed Tice was alive. Is—what's your thought?

*The President.* Does he know he's alive? That's my thought. Does he know he's alive?

You know, when I watched that, that could have been solved many years ago if they did the right thing. They just didn't do the right thing.

The mother is, like, this wonderful woman that's desperately seeking her son. It's a tough situation, really tough situation. I hope it works out.

Okay. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to King Abdullah II of Jordan; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent; and Debra Tice, mother of Austin B. Tice, a U.S. freelance reporter who was abducted outside Damascus, Syria, on August 14, 2012. Staff Secretary Scharf referred to Executive Order 14184, Executive Order 14186, Executive Order 14183, Executive Order 14185, and Proclamation 10889. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on January 29. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Air Force One.

*Locations:* Air Force One.

*Names:* Abdullah II, King; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Elsisi, Abdelfattah Said; Homan, Thomas D.; Leavitt, Karoline; Modi, Narendra; Musk, Elon R.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Scharf, William O.; Starmer, Keir; Tice, Debra.

*Subjects:* Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Auschwitz, National Day of Remembrance of the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of; California, wildfires in Los Angeles area; Colombia, acceptance of deportees from U.S.; Egypt, President; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Illegal immigration; Immigration reform; India, Prime Minister; India, relations with U.S.; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Israel, Prime Minister; Jordan, King; Middle East, regional integration and security; Migration flows, international cooperation; News media, Presidential interviews; Saudi Arabia, relations with U.S.; Secretary of the

Treasury; Syria, missing U.S. citizen and freelance reporter; TikTok; U.S. tariffs on imports, adjustment; Undocumented immigrants, deportation; United Kingdom, Prime Minister; Water management policy, improvement efforts; White House Border Czar; White House Press Secretary; White House Senior Adviser; White House Staff Secretary.

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