

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks at a Document Signing Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters
February 3, 2025

The President. Thank you very much.

We have some very exciting news today. We have—numerous fronts are being covered.

Before we do that, Will will give me certain proclamations. We'll sign them, and you'll hear a little bit about them.

Will, please proceed.

White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf. Yes, sir. First, we have for your signature five official designations of Special Envoys.

The first is Mr. Steve Witkoff, who is actually in the room, to be your Middle East Envoy.

[*At this point, the President signed the appointment.*]

The President. Where is Steve?

U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff. I'm right here, Mr. President.

The President. Steve Witkoff, everybody.

Special Envoy Witkoff. Hello.

The President. He's done a great job in the Middle East—really great. But we'll see how it all turns out. It's complex, but I think he's going to do very well. [*Inaudible*]*—really good.*

Staff Secretary Scharf. Next, we have Mauricio Claver-Carone to be your Special Envoy to Latin America, sir.

The President. Okay. Good man.

[*The President signed the appointment.*]

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Next, we have retired General Keith Kellogg to be your Special Envoy on Russia and Ukraine issues.

The President. We've made a lot of progress on Russia-Ukraine. We'll see what happens, but a lot of progress has been made. We're going to stop that ridiculous war.

[*The President signed the appointment.*]

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Next, we have designation of Richard Grenell—Ric Grenell—to be your Envoy for Special Missions.

The President. I sent him to California to turn on the water. We turned it on. It was not easy, because we had to go through a lot of environmentalists that are causing a lot of problems.

And we have billions of gallons of water. It was on 3 days ago. You probably saw. It should have gotten a lot of press, but it didn't get much. All we doing is giving Los Angeles and the

entire State of California virtually unlimited water, which they could have done 5 years ago, which I told them they should do, but the environmentalists stopped them. And we opened it, and we did it, regardless of the State.

And now the State seems to be very happy. I spoke with Gavin Newsom—Newsom, and he's very happy. I almost called him by the other name, didn't I? *[Laughter]* My little nickname for him.

But I think they were all happy. They have a lot of water in California. Too bad we didn't have it about 2 months ago, right?

[The President signed the appointment.]

Q. Mr. President, Ric Grenell had big—

The President. That was—by the way, that was a big—that was a big move. We have—I don't—I don't know if you saw the pictures that were released of the water pouring down from the Pacific Northwest and Canada and lots of other places. And it's a pretty amazing sight.

U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Special Missions Richard A. Grenell

Q. Mr. President. Ric Grenell had a big Friday trip as well.

The President. He had a very big Friday trip. You're right. We'll talk about that. He's doing a—he's a good man, Ric.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Lastly, sir, we have a designation of Mark Burnett as your Special Envoy to the United Kingdom.

The President. You know who Mark Burnett is? Huh?

U.S. Special Envoy to the United Kingdom Mark Burnett

Q. He produced "Survivor."

The President. Figure he should be good. He has certainly done a great job. A friend of mine and very talented guy. We have very talented people working for us.

[The President signed the appointment.]

I'll hold that one up because Mark gets so much television. *[Laughter]* We'll hold it up, right? He'll be thrilled to see it. He's going to do a good job.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Next, your administration has smashed records for appointing large numbers of highly qualified, capable people at all levels the Federal Government. These are 28 sub-Cabinet-level officials being appointed to a number of different departments and agencies. Some of them are quite important positions, like departmental—departmental General Counsels, but these are people who have been pre-vetted and have received your approval previously.

The President. Yes. Very good.

[The President signed the appointments.]

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Next, this is an Executive order. This charges your Secretary of the Treasury, Scott Bessent, and your Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick, to begin a process that will hopefully result in the creation of an American sovereign wealth fund.

The President. It's a very exciting event. We're going to have a sovereign wealth fund, which we've never had. We have a lot of things that create wealth, and you've seen that over the last 2 weeks. I think we've created more wealth. Other people have created de-wealth, the people—my predecessors. We're creating a lot of wealth.

Scott, maybe you'd like to say something about it? And I'd ask also, Howard—

Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick. I'm over here.

The President. —to say something about it.

Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. Yes, sir. This is very exciting.

We're going to stand this thing up within the next 12 months. We're going to monetize the asset side of the U.S. balance sheet for the American people. We're going to put the assets to work. And I think it's going to be very exciting.

We're going to study best practices, as done around the world. It will be a combination of liquid assets, assets that we have in this country as we work to bring them out for the American people.

Secretary Lutnick. The extraordinary size and scale of the U.S. Government and the business it does with companies should create value for American citizens. If we are going to buy 2 billion COVID vaccines, maybe we should have some warrants and some equity in these companies and have that grow for the help of the American people.

So I—bringing all these things together, I think, will create—Scott and I will create an amazing sovereign wealth fund for you, sir.

The President. So, other countries have sovereign wealth funds, and they're much smaller countries—and they're not the United States. We have tremendous potential in this country, tremendous. You're seeing that—what's happened just in a short period of time.

And, as an example, TikTok—we're going to be doing something, perhaps, with TikTok, and perhaps not. If we make the right deal, we'll do it. Otherwise, we won't. But I have the right to do that. And we might put that in the sovereign wealth fund, whatever we make, or if we do a partnership with very wealthy people—a lot of options. But we could put that, as an example, in the fund. And we have a lot of other things that we could put in the fund.

And I think, in a short period of time, we'd have one of the biggest funds. And you know, some of—some of them are pretty large, I must tell you. Some of the—like the Saudi Arabia fund is on the large side, but eventually we'll catch it.

But we're going to create a lot of wealth for the fund, and I think it's about time that this country had a sovereign wealth fund. And these two gentlemen and some others are going to work with them very closely, and they'll be heading it up. And they're going to do a great job. Two highly respected people that have done unbelievably well in the world—in the real world.

So that's a big deal, huh?

Secretary Bessent. Yes, sir. I think it's going to create value and be of great strategic importance.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "A Plan for Establishing a United States Sovereign Wealth Fund."*]

White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk/U.S. DOGE Service

Q. Mr. President, why is it important for Elon Musk to have access to the payment systems at Treasury?

The President. Well, he's got access only to letting people go that he thinks are no good, if we agree with him, and it's only if we agree with him. He's a very talented guy from the standpoint of management and costs, and we put him in charge of seeing what he can do with certain groups and certain numbers.

The numbers—some of the numbers are horrible, what he's found. A hundred—think of it—a hundred million dollars on condoms to Hamas—condoms to Hamas—and many other things that are, frankly, even more ridiculous.

And they're finding tremendous waste—really, waste, more than anything else, I think you could say. Probably, fraud and abuse can be added to it—more standard: waste, fraud, and abuse. But they're finding tremendous amounts of really bad things, bad spending.

You've been reading about, you've been writing about some of it, frankly, and some of the things that they've been doing is—is just terrible.

Leon—Elon can't do and won't do anything without our approval. And we'll give him the approval where appropriate; where not appropriate, we won't.

But he reports in, and he—it's something that he feels very strongly about. And I'm impressed, because he's running, obviously, a big company. Has nothing to do—if there's a conflict, then we won't let him get near it.

But he does have a good natural instinct. He's got a team of very talented people. We're trying to shrink Government, and he can probably shrink it as well as anybody else, if not better. Where we think there's a conflict or there's a problem, we won't let him go near it.

But he has some very good ideas, and we have a lot of very—other talented people also. We're bringing in the most talented people in the world.

By the way, we just—unrelated, but we have two of the most talented people in the world: the legendary Rupert Murdoch and Larry Ellison. So they are two legends in—in business, publishing, and probably every other—Rupert is—Larry, pretty much in a class by himself—right?—I mean, you know, you may have a couple of bucks more. I don't know.

But Rupert is in a class by himself. He's an amazing guy. And Larry is Larry. Larry is one of the most serious players anywhere in the world. So it's an honor to have you.

This has nothing to do with you people, but they're here, and I thought it would be appropriate. *[Laughter]* I'm sure you didn't recognize them. *[Laughter]* They're all going crazy. They're saying, "What are they doing here?"

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Mexico-U.S. Trade/Border Security/Canada-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, on the tariffs. Is there any chance that Canada or China could also get out of the tariffs after you struck a deal with Mexico today?

The President. Well, nobody is out. With Mexico—we had a great talk with Mexico, and we had—President Sheinbaum is a woman—I like her very much, and we've had good relationships. But we have to stop fentanyl from coming in, whether I like somebody or not, and we have to stop the illegal aliens from coming in.

I think we've lost 200,000 people on average a year, for many years—much higher than the 100,000. Could be even closer to 300,000.

And they've agreed to put in 10,000 soldiers permanently—like, forever—10,000 soldiers at their side of the border and stop fentanyl and illegal aliens from coming into our country. They have a big incentive to do.

Other than that, we've agreed to talk and consider various other things. We haven't agreed on tariffs yet—and maybe we will; maybe we won't—but we have a very good relationship.

I also spoke with Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada, and we had a good talk in the morning, but I did ask him a couple of questions. Like, you know, banks aren't allowed to do business in Canada. Canada is very tough. Canada is very—you know, we're not treated well by Canada, and we have to be treated well.

Banks are not, as an example, allowed—did you know that?—that banks—American banks are not allowed to do business in Canada. Can you believe that? And that's one of many things that we talked about, and I think we'll win most of the subjects.

But, for some reason, a lot of things have been very unfair with Canada. I noticed that in the first term. You deal with people, and after a while, you begin to realize—like you learn that Larry Ellison is very tough to do business with. Okay? [Laughter] He's a very tough guy. I mean, I'm sure you're shocked to hear that. [Laughter]

But Canada is very tough. They're very, very tough to do business with, and we can't let them take advantage of the U.S. They don't take our agricultural product, for the most part. They don't take our cars. They make cars, but they basically don't take our cars.

And you know, we don't need—and look, I think we're going to have another good conversation today. We're actually speaking at three o'clock again. But we don't need them to make our cars. We don't need them to give us lumber.

We don't need them for agricultural products because we have all the agricultural we need. They don't take our agricultural product for the most part—our milk and dairy, et cetera. A little bit they do, but not much. We take theirs.

And, as far as cars are concerned, they took in a big percentage, almost 19 percent of the market. And you know, I wouldn't mind making our cars in the United States. So I—we have a problem there. I'd like to make our cars in the U.S. We don't need Canada to make our cars.

With that being said, we're going to have another call at 3 o'clock. We had a call this morning. It was a pretty good call, I'd say.

So the call with Mexico went very well, in the sense that they're very strong now on the border. They're going to put soldiers there. So—actually, their—best military soldiers, and they're going to be at the border. Ten thousand. That's a lot of soldiers.

And they want to protect it also. You know, they want—they don't want people running through Mexico, coming through Mexico to come into our country. So they're going to do that.

And then we're going to talk about other things over the next—and we're going to have—over the next 30 days, we're going to have Scott, Howard, and Marco—Marco Rubio, Secretary of State—lead the delegation, and we're going to have a big negotiation with Mexico.

I'll be involved too, and President Sheinbaum will be involved to see whether or not we can work something out on the tariffs.

China/Fentanyl/Panama Canal

Q. What about China, sir?

Q. On fentanyl—on fentanyl and China.

The President. China—we'll be speaking to China probably over the next 24 hours.

Q. On fentanyl and China, President Trump.

The President. We don't want fentanyl coming into our country. Now, we had another big thing. Speaking of China, China is involved with the Panama Canal. They won't be for long, and that's the way it has to be.

Marco just got back. As you know, he's in the process of coming back. I guess he's almost back by now. And he had a very long conversation with the leader of Panama, the respected man, and some others—the entire leadership group. And we're trying to work a deal on the Panama Canal.

The Panama Canal was given foolishly years ago to—it shouldn't have been—happened—years ago to Panama, by Jimmy Carter and the group. We lost 38,000 people building the Panama Canal, like the—one of the great wonders of the world. It's the biggest job we've ever built. The biggest project we've ever built in this country, dollar-wise and every other way. Thirty-eight thousand people died—Americans, all men, just about—laborers and construction people that went to Panama.

The mosquito got them. Between mosquito and snakes, we lost 38,000 people. It was the most expensive project ever built by the United States. Most—the biggest, most expensive project we ever built, 110 years ago. If you bring it up to now, it would have been the equivalent of \$2 trillion. The most expensive we ever built, and we gave it away for \$1. Okay? We gave it away, essentially, for nothing.

And we either want it back, or we're going to get something very strong, or we're going to take it back. And China will be dealt with.

And we didn't give that to China. We gave it to Panama. We shouldn't have given it to Panama. But Panama, as you know, has violated the agreement. Totally violated the agreement. So that's in the process right now.

But they did have a very good meeting with the head of Panama.

China/Tariffs/COVID-19 Pandemic

Q. In addition to tariff—in addition to tariffs on—China, could you say your current thinking about whether China should be forced to pay reparations, both for fentanyl deaths and the million COVID-19 deaths?

The President. No, I haven't talked about that. But they do have tariffs. Honestly, nobody—the amount of money that was lost and—and, most importantly, the lives lost because of COVID will—is not something that anybody could ever even imagine.

It's probably \$60 trillion that—all the countries in the world don't have \$60 trillion. The amount of death and the amount of destruction and the amount of money lost is probably \$60 trillion. I had it figured by people about 3 months ago. I was just—it's just a figure that nobody knows what the real number is, but it's an—almost an infinite number, the damage done. No, but I have not discussed that.

What I have discussed is, we'll have some good meetings with China. We have meetings planned, and we'll see what happens. But that was just a—an opening salvo. If we can't make a deal with China, then the tariffs will be very, very substantial.

Okay. I'm going to sign this one.

[*The President signed a proclamation titled, "American Heart Month, 2025."*]

Staff Secretary Scharf. Sir, this is—you've obviously made making America healthy again a key priority of this administration. A key component of that is obviously heart health. This is a ceremonial proclamation declaring the month of February to be National Heart Month.

[*The President signed a proclamation titled, "Career and Technical Education Month, 2025."*]

The President. Okay. I hear we're doing very well with nominations. We'll see, but it—it looks like we're doing very well with nominations.

The President's Cabinet Nominations

Q. Mr. President, have you been involved with calling Senators who had some concerns about Tulsi Gabbard or——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——RFK?

You have?

The President. Yes. I've gotten great response, and they want to do what's right, and we've had a good response. I think we'll do well.

We have great people, like—people like this. We have great, great people coming in. I think I'd like to say the best ever recruited for Government. I think we have the finest people ever recruited for Government.

Q. Will it take an act of Congress to——

The President. And you know what? You're starting to see that because we've done more in 2 weeks than Biden has done in 4—5 years, 6 years. If they could be here—between him and Obama, you add it up. Okay? We've done more in 2 weeks than they've done in 12 years.

U.S. Agency for International Development

Q. Will it take an act of Congress to do away with USAID, or do you believe you have the legal authority——

The President. I don't know. I don't think so.

Q. ——to do that?

The President. No, we—not when it comes to fraud, if there's fraud. These people are lunatics. And if it—if it comes to fraud, you wouldn't have an act of Congress. And I'm not sure that you would anyway.

But we just want to do the right thing. That's—it's something that should have been done a long time ago. It went crazy during the Biden administration—they went totally crazy, what they were doing and the money they were giving to people that shouldn't be getting it and to agencies and others that shouldn't be getting—it was a shame.

So they—tremendous fraud, but we'll be doing a report. We'll be giving you that report at the appropriate time.

Q. As you know, in the first term, though, USAID was something that you liked, in some respects.

The President. I love the concept.

Q. Ivanka had a——

The President. Yes. I——

Q. ——had some programs.

The President. Sure. I love the concept, but they turned out to be radical-left lunatics. And the concept of it is good, but it's all about the people.

European Union-U.S. Trade/Tariffs/North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, you said you also want to impose tariffs on the EU. What kind of tariffs are you thinking about, and are——

The President. Well, we have massive deficits with the European Union—massive—like \$350 billion, if you can believe it. They don't take our farm product. They don't take our cars. They don't take almost anything.

But we take their cars. We have millions of cars coming in—BMW and Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen and just so many different cars. And we don't do anything about that, and we don't charge them tariffs. They make it impossible to sell cars in the European Union. They make it very difficult.

Agricultural product, they actually don't take it. And they have a lot of excuses. Some of them are the pesticides and the different chemicals used. And Bobby Kennedy, actually, is looking at that very, very seriously because maybe it's not necessary to use all of that. You know, we want to be the healthiest country, and we're not.

We spend more money on food than anybody else, in terms of its creation, but we're not the healthiest country. So maybe there is something to the fact that we shouldn't be using so much chemical, and maybe that will stop. But Bobby Kennedy is the one, because is not a believer in all of the things we have done and neither are the Europeans. So we'll see what happens.

But they use it as an excuse not to buy our product, and they—you try—I asked a couple of the leaders—I don't want to use names—but how many Chevrolets or Fords do you see in the middle of Munich? And the answer is none——

Q. So cars——

The President. ——because they don't take any cars. They don't take anything. So, the European has abused the United States for years, and they can't do that.

And they want to make a deal. Let me tell you, in all cases, they all want to make deals. There's nobody that doesn't want to make deals. They've been abusers, and they want to make deals. So we'll see about that. But we'll have, I think, some very fair—all we want is a fair deal.

And you know, there's a word: reciprocal. I'd go right now reciprocal tariffs on everybody, because many of the countries that you feel so horrible about the way they're being treated by Trump—you're saying, "Oh, President Trump is so terrible to them"—well, they charge us tariffs.

European Union has a VAT tax, which is through the roof. Okay? It's a similar thing, similar to a tariff. It's a VAT, and they have it. And it's numbers like you wouldn't believe.

And Canada, I told you about the banks, and I told you, they charge us. And people don't say that. They don't like to say it, just like they don't like to say that I opened up the water for California. It's a great thing. It's too bad they didn't do it themselves. I had to do it, and it was not easy. We did it a very rough way, and I didn't like to do it a rough way. We shouldn't have to do it a rough way.

But a lot of these countries that we're talking about, you know, they're our so-called allies, but they don't treat us well. And just like I got \$420 billion—and now it's actually over \$600

billion—the Secretary General of NATO came in 2 weeks ago, and he said it was a miracle. When Trump came in—when President Trump came into NATO, I got—he said it was \$636 billion by saying to them: "No, you have to pay. And if you don't pay, we're not going to be there for you." You know, somebody has to say it, and they paid, and it was a large amount of money.

And one of the problems we have with the Russia/Ukraine situation is that. We wanted to see some equalization, because we're in for close to \$300 billion, and they're in for \$200 billion less. Why are they in for less? Because Biden never asked them for money. He never said, "You've got to pay." He never did. All he did is hand out money.

So we're talking with them right now, and we're actually working some deals right now so we have some—some guarantees and some other things to keep that whole situation to go—really going—I mean, going.

We're telling Ukraine they have very valuable, rare earth. We want what we put up to go in terms of a guarantee. We want a guarantee. We want—we're handing them money hand over fist. We're giving them equipment. European is not keeping up with us. They should equalize. They're—look, we have an ocean in between. They don't. It's more important for them than it is for us, but they're way below us in terms of money, and they should be paying at least equal. They should really be paying much more than us, but let's say equal to us, and they are billions and billions of dollars below.

So we're looking to do a deal with Ukraine where they're going to secure what we're giving them with their rare earth and other things.

News Corp. Executive Chairman Rupert Murdoch/Tariffs

Q. Mr. President, in terms of the deal with Mexico this morning, was that partially related to the market reaction and a criticism from Mr. Murdoch's own newspaper? He called it "the dumbest trade war" on the editorial page on Saturday.

The President. Well, I'm going to have to talk to him. [*Laughter*]

Q. Was this market reaction or concern about—

The President. I've been right over the Wall Street Journal—

Q. —the economy?

The President. —many times, I will tell you. [*Laughter*] I don't agree with him on some things.

Q. I don't want to pick a fight here, sir, but—

The President. No, it's—not only is it not dumb, you're going to see. You're going to see. Every single one of those countries is dying to make a deal. You know why? Because they're ripping us off really badly, and the United States is tired of been ripping—just being ripped off. And that's why we have \$36 trillion in debt. We have it for a reason, because we make bad deals with everybody. And we don't allow that anymore.

So the Wall Street Journal is wrong, because—very simply, every single country that you're writing about right now is dying to make a deal, because the deals they have right now are so good and so good for them and so profitable for them. You didn't know that Canada didn't allow our banks. You didn't know all of these different things.

And I think, in the end, you're going to see that either very, very substantial tariffs are going to be paid by them, or they're going to make some kind of a deal.

President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo of Mexico/Border Security/China/Fentanyl

Q. Sir, did you blink this morning, or did Mexican President Sheinbaum blink?

The President. Did what?

Q. Did you blink this morning or did your counterpart?

The President. There was no blinking. She's a wonderful woman, but she did agree to 10,000 soldiers on the border. I would say that's a lot. Wouldn't you say that's pretty good? Ten thousand soldiers on the border.

Q. Sir, just—

The President. And the 10,000 soldiers are going to keep illegal aliens out, and they're going to keep them out—seriously out, and—otherwise, they're going to have a big penalty. Mexico is going to be penalized. They're not going to come through Mexico anymore, and they're not going to—let the fentanyl come in from China.

And China, hopefully, is going to stop sending us fentanyl. And if they're not, the tariffs are going to go substantially higher.

Ukraine

Q. Sir, on—just to clarify, when you said about Ukraine earlier. The rare earths, is that something you want them to give the rare earths to the United States?

The President. Yes.

Q. Okay.

The President. Yes, I want to have security of rare earth. We're putting in hundreds of billions of dollars. They have great rare earth. And I want security of the rare earth, and they're willing to do it.

Q. Sir, you mentioned earlier that you want—

Canada-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, on Canada, when you talk to Justin Trudeau again, is there anything he can give you at 3:00 p.m., when you talk again, to also—

The President. I don't know.

Q. —secure a pause—

The President. I don't know.

Q. —like you said, with Mexico?

The President. I don't know. We have big deficits with Canada, like we do with all countries. I mean, I look at some of the deals made, I say: "Who the hell made these deals? They're so bad."
[Laughter]

But, with Canada, I have a talk with him that you maybe know, maybe not. We're going to meet again or talk again at 3 o'clock, right after my next meeting, and we'll see what happens. I don't—I can't—

Canada-U.S. Relations

Q. Anything on the banks—

The President. —tell you what's going to happen.

Q. —you mentioned that he could agree to to change your mind on the tariffs?

The President. Well, we can always—look, what I'd like to see: Canada become our 51st State. We give them protection, military protection. We don't need their—them to build our cars. I'd rather see Detroit or South Carolina or any one of our—Tennessee, any one of our States build the cars. They could do it very easily.

We don't need them for the cars. We don't need them for lumber. We don't need them for anything. We don't need them for energy. We have more energy than they do. We don't need them for energy.

So I say, why are we doing this? Why do we—why are we willing to lose between \$100 billion and \$200 billion a year? We don't need them.

As a State, it's different. As a State, it's much different, and there—there are no tariffs. So, I'd love to see that, but some people say that would be a long shot.

If people wanted to play the game right, it would be a hundred-percent certain that they'd become a State, but a lot of people don't like to play the game because they don't have a threshold of pain. And there would be some pain, but not a lot. It—the pain would be really there.

So we're going to meet again by phone at 3 o'clock, and we'll let you know what happens.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Q. On Israel—on Israel, President Trump, you're prepared to meet with Benjamin Netanyahu.

The President. Coming in tomorrow.

Q. Yes. You've mentioned in the past your concern about Israel being too small geographically. Would you support annexation of parts of the West Bank by Israel?

The President. Well, I'm not going to talk about that. It certainly is a small—it's a small country in terms of land. I take—

See this pen—this wonderful pen?

[*The President held up a signing pen.*]

My desk is the Middle East, and this pen—the top of the pen, that's Israel. That's not good, right? You know, that's a pretty big difference.

I use that as analogy. It's pretty accurate, actually. It's a pretty small piece of land, and it's amazing that they've been able to do what they've been able to do, when you think about it. There's a lot of good, smart brainpower, but it is a very small piece of land. No question about it.

White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk

Q. Mr. President, you said earlier that Elon Musk is doing everything with your say-so. So is there—everything that he has done thus far—going into all the agencies, shutting off access, getting access to Federal payments—that all has your—you're okay with all of that?

The President. For the most part, yes. If we—I mean, if there was something that didn't have my okay, I'd let you know about it really fast.

Q. And you said there are some areas where you wouldn't let him work because he has conflicts of interest. What are—

The President. If there was a conflict—no, no, I haven't seen that, and he would know not to do it. So we haven't had that yet. But if there was a conflict, we wouldn't let him work in that area.

Panama-U.S. Relations

Q. But then earlier you said on—with regard to Panama that you were going to—they were going to make a deal or—the U.S. was going to take it. How long do they have to make that sort of deal? And are you still leaving on the table military action?

The President. We're going to meet with Panama—we're going to Panama on Friday at about 3:30 in the afternoon by phone, and maybe there'll be some representatives that—you know, here or there, but we're going to be talking to Panama on Friday, essentially, and they've agreed to certain things, but I'm not happy with it.

Israel-Hama Cease-Fire Agreement

Q. On the Middle East, Mr. President, if I may. Do you still have doubts that the cease-fire will hold?

The President. On what?

Q. On the Middle East, do you think the cease-fire——

The President. I have——

Q. ——will hold?

The President. I have no assurances that it will hold. I mean, I've seen people brutalized. I've never—nobody's ever seen anything like it. No, I have no guarantees that the peace is going to hold.

Steve, you might want to say something about that. Steve Witkoff.

Special Envoy Witkoff. It's—it's holding so far. So—and we're certainly hopeful. And that's the President's direction, to get the hostages out and save lives and come to, hopefully, a peaceful settlement of it all. So, so far, it's holding.

Federal Bureau of Investigation/Department of Justice

Q. Mr. President, on a different topic. Questionnaires have been going out to FBI agents across the country who were involved potentially in the investigation. Do you believe anyone involved at any level should be fired, sir?

The President. Well, I think the FBI was a very corrupt institution, and I'm a victim of it, in a true sense. I was able to beat it, but other people have been treated horribly.

I think the FBI has a great—had a great reputation. I think its reputation was really damaged badly, as is DOJ.

Look at what they've done in terms of weaponization. Look at what they've done to a political opponent. Probably got me elected by what they did, or——

Q. But should the agents be fired?

The President. I think I was doing well anyway, but they might have gotten me elected.

But you know what? We have to have pristine, beautiful, perfect law enforcement. And what we want to do—and I—and Kash is the one to do it. He's the one guy that is going to do it.

We have to bring the reputation of the FBI—we have to bring the fact of the FBI back to what it could be, not even to what it was, even better than it ever was.

Because who would have thought that the FBI could have been corrupted like they were corrupted? Who would have thought that would have happened? Who would have thought they

would have been used to go after, you know, political opponents, essentially—but me being the number one—and so many other things beyond that?

And they've been hurt very badly. And we'll see what happens. But Kash is the one to do it, and I hear he's doing very well. Kash will straighten it out. We have great confidence that we can make the FBI great again.

Director of National Intelligence—Designate Tulsi Gabbard

Q. Mr. President, on Tulsi Gabbard's——

The President. Okay. One or two more, and we'll be done.

Q. On Tulsi Gabbard's nomination is——

The President. Say it.

Q. Tulsi Gabbard——

The President. Yes, I think——

Q. ——for intelligence——

The President. ——Tulsi is going to be doing okay. I mean, I—she——

Q. So——

The President. I can't guarantee anything, but she's liked by so many people, especially people in the military and law enforcement.

Former National Security Agency Contractor Edward J. Snowden

Q. She has a little bit of trouble with some Senators over her thoughts on Edward Snowden. I know Snowden—you've mentioned in the past you're thinking about pardoning him. Are you still? And what do you think about that criticism of her?

The President. No, I don't talk to—about it right now. I just—people feel very differently. Some people think he should be pardoned, and some people think it would be a terrible thing to do, but I don't get involved in that.

News Corp. Executive Chairman Rupert Murdoch/Tariffs/Colombia

Q. Mr. President, what are you discussing with Mr. Murdoch and—and Mr. Ellison here today?

The President. Just respect. I have great respect for Rupert Murdoch. I disagree with him a lot of times with the Wall Street Journal, but that's all right. We've disagreed before, but—and I'm sure they didn't have any idea what they were talking about, because already you see what's happening.

Look at Colombia. Look at what happened with that. Everybody said that with Colombia, it was going to be a disaster. In one—in 1 hour, everything was settled. You know why? Tariffs. Tariffs. Without tariffs, they wouldn't have been the same way. They wanted—would not have treated me the way they treated me, which was extremely nicely.

And I don't want to use countries—I don't want to use names, but tariffs are very powerful, both economically and in getting everything else you want. Tariffs for us. Nobody can compete with us because we're the pot of gold. But if we don't keep winning and keep doing well, we won't be the pot of gold, and then tariffs won't be so good for us. But when you're the pot of gold, the tariffs are—the tariffs are very good. They're very powerful, and they're going to make our country very rich again.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

Stock Market

Q. Is the stock market—how is the market doing today?

The President. I don't know. I don't know.

Q. Do you think it responded well to Mexico?

The President. How is the market doing?

Q. It ticked up after the Mexico agreement.

The President. It did? I don't know. I don't think about it.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:44 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California; Lawrence J. Ellison, chairman and chief executive officer, Oracle Corp.; President Jose Raul Mulino Quintero of Panama; Secretary of Health and Human Services–designate Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.; Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and Director-designate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Kashyap P. "Kash" Patel. A reporter referred to the President's daughter Ivanka M. Trump, in her former capacity as Assistant to the President.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Document signing ceremony; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Burnett, J. Mark; Claver-Carone, Mauricio; Ellison, Larry; Gabbard, Tulsi; Grenell, Richard A.; Kennedy, Robert F., Jr.; Lutnick, Howard W.; Mulino Quintero, Jose Raul; Murdoch, Rupert; Musk, Elon R.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Newsom, Gavin C.; Obama, Barack; Patel, Kashyap P. "Kash"; Rubio, Marco A.; Rutte, Mark; Scharf, William O.; Sheinbaum Pardo, Claudia; Snowden, Edward J.; Trudeau, Justin P.J.; Witkoff, Steve.

Subjects: American Heart Month; Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; California, Governor; Canada, Prime Minister; Canada, trade with U.S.; China, relations with U.S.; China, synthetic opioid supply chain; China, trade with U.S.; Colombia, acceptance of U.S. deportees; COVID–19 pandemic; European Union, trade with U.S.; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; International Development, U.S. Agency for; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Israel, Prime Minister; Mexico, immigration enforcement cooperation with U.S.; Mexico, President; Mexico, trade with U.S.; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat; Panama Canal ownership and operations; Panama, President; Panama, relations with U.S.; Pardons and commutations; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury; Senate confirmation process; TikTok; U.S. DOGE Service; U.S. foreign aid programs, funding and policies; U.S. sovereign wealth fund, plan for establishment; U.S. Special Envoy for Latin America; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East; U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Special Missions; U.S. tariffs on imports, adjustment; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; United Kingdom, U.S. Special Envoy; Water management policy, improvement efforts; White House Senior Adviser; White House Staff Secretary.

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