

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks on Withdrawing United States Support for United Nations Organizations and Imposing Economic Sanctions on Iran and an Exchange With Reporters

February 4, 2025

The President. Thank you very much. We had a busy day. We're dealing with lots of different people on lots of different things. We had some terrific people in today on trying to solve some of the problems that are going on in the country and outside of the country.

We're doing very well with respect to other countries really behaving on taking the criminals that they sent into our country, and we're getting them out. These are some of the worst people on Earth, and they're getting out, and they're being accepted back in their countries, as you've heard, without exception.

So a lot of people thought that was not going to happen, but it's happening very full-force. Now we're getting some very, very dangerous people out of our country, which is very important.

Will, perhaps we'll go through the first one, please.

White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf. Yes, sir.

So, earlier today, before the press came in, you signed a commission appointing Chris Wright to be your next Secretary of Energy.

The President. Right.

Staff Secretary Scharf. We have another commission prepared for your signature, sir. This is Doug Collins to be Secretary of the VA—Doug Collins of Georgia.

The President. Two very good men.

[At this point, the President signed the commission.]

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Next up, in light of numerous actions taken by a number of bodies of the United Nations which exhibited deep anti-American bias, we have an Executive order prepared for your attention that would withdraw the United States from the U.N. Human Rights Council; would withdraw the United States from the UNRWA, which is a refugee organization. It would also review American involvement in UNESCO, which has also exhibited anti-American bias.

More generally, the Executive order calls for a review of American involvement in funding in the U.N. in light of the wild disparities in levels of funding among different countries that, as you've expressed previously, is deeply unfair to the United States.

The President. So I've always felt that the U.N. has tremendous potential. It's not living up to that potential right now. It really isn't. Hasn't for a long time.

It has—there are great hopes for it, but it's not being well run, to be honest, and they're not doing their job. A lot of these conflicts that we're working on should be settled, or at least, we should have some help in settling them, but we never seem to get help. That should be the primary purpose of the U.N.—the United Nations.

And, again, it's got great potential. And based on the potential, we'll continue to go along with it, but they've got to get their act together.

[The President signed an Executive order titled, "Withdrawing the United States From and Ending Funding to Certain United Nations Organizations and Reviewing United States Support to All International Organizations."]

United Nations

Q. What would they need to do, sir, to get their act together?

The President. Well, you got to be fair to countries that deserve fairness. They have some countries, as you know, that are outliers, that are very bad. And they're being almost preferred, as countries, to those that do their job and are doing a good job.

And they have to really—they're going to end up losing a lot of countries. They're going to end up losing their credibility, like other organizations. And then, they're going to be nothing.

The potential of the United Nations—and not everybody agrees with me on this—the potential of the United Nations is fantastic if properly run. So we'll see what happens.

Q. How much money are you willing to take away from them?

The President. Well, we're taking away a little bit, but we're not looking to take away money is what—this is so important that we're really—as you know, the United Nations is largely funded by us, but—and it shouldn't be. It should be funded by everybody, but we're disproportionate, as we always seem to be.

But it's something that if it ever lived up to the potential, in 10 minutes, it would make up the difference. That's the kind of power it could have. Right now it doesn't have that power.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Next, sir, this is a national security Presidential memorandum that seeks to impose maximum pressure on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Many of these provisions are similar to actions that your administration took during your first administration.

The basic idea here is to have every department and agency—or many departments and agencies in your Government attempt to sanction and control Iranian activities, particularly relating to the Iranian nuclear program and the Iranian export of terrorism through support of various proxy groups abroad.

And the intent here is to give you all of the possible tools to, I'd say, engage with the Iranian Government to ensure that, going forward, they are less of a malign actor on the world stage.

The President. So this is one that I'm torn about. Everybody wants me to sign it. I'll do that. It's very tough on Iran. It's what we had before. We would have never had the problem—you would have never had October 7. We would have never had the problem had the election gone the different way, which it should have.

But this one, I think, more than made up for it. I think we're doing things and it shows it more than made up for it—much more historic.

The Iran situation hopefully—I'm going to sign it, but hopefully, we're not going to have to use it very much. We will see whether or not we can arrange or work out a deal with Iran and everybody can live together. And maybe that's possible, and maybe it's not possible.

So I'm signing this, and I'm unhappy to do it, but I really have not so much choice, because we have to be strong and firm. And I hope that it's not going to have to be used in any great measure at all. It'd be great if we could have a Middle East—and maybe a world—at total peace. Right now, you don't have that.

When I left, you had peace all over the world. And now you have—the world is blowing up. As you know, Bibi is coming in to see me later, others are coming in to see me. We'll see what we can do.

But I'm signing this, and hopefully it will be a document which won't be very important, will hardly have to be used.

Iran's Nuclear Weapons Program

Q. Sir, what kind of deal would you be prepared to make with Iran?

The President. Well, we're going to see. I mean, we're going to see. They cannot have a nuclear weapon. With me, it's very simple: Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon.

Q. Do you support——

The President. We don't want to be tough on Iran. We don't want to be tough on anybody, but they just can't have a nuclear weapon.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, are you going to engage on conversations with your counterpart in Iran?

The President. I would.

Iran/U.S. Sanctions

Q. Do you want to block the sale of Iranian oil to other nations?

[*The President signed a national security Presidential memorandum on imposing maximum pressure on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, denying Iran all paths to a nuclear weapon, and countering Iran's malign influence.*]

The President. Well, we have the right to do that, and that's what I did before, and they had no money. They wouldn't have had the money for Hamas or Hizballah and anybody else. I just—it could have been solved. This thing—it just—if things went the way they should have, this would have been over long ago, but it's not over. And——

Iran's Nuclear Weapons Program

Q. How close do you think Iran is to developing a nuclear weapon?

The President. I think they're close. I think they're close. They're too close. But, again, you could go back 4 years, I would have said they would have had it during this intervening period. But they're pretty close, Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News].

Iran

Q. And why—you said that you were unhappy to sign it—if it's Iran and their proxies who have threatened to retaliate against you——

The President. Yes.

Q. —and your team by killing you guys for taking out Soleimani?

The President. Well, they haven't done that, and that would be a terrible thing for them to do. Not because of me. If they did that, they would be obliterated. That would be the end. I've left instructions. If they do it, they get obliterated. There won't be anything left. And they shouldn't be able to do it.

Q. Do you want——

The President. And Biden should have said that, but he never did. I don't know why. Lack of intelligence, perhaps?

Q. If—Mr. President, if—

The President. But he never said it. If that happens to a leader or close to a leader, frankly—if you had other people involved also—you would call for total obliteration of a state that did it. That would include Iran.

So I'm signing this, and it's a very powerful document, but hopefully we're not going to have to use it.

Q. And, Mr. President, if the Prime Minister today were to ask your help in striking at Iran's nuclear facilities to prevent the kind of progress towards a nuclear weapon, would you give him the green light? Would it—either to do it himself or for—

The President. Yes—

Q. —the U.S. to participate with him?

The President. —I don't know that that's what he's going to be asking for. I have no idea that it is. You're telling me.

We're going to have a pretty long meeting. We're going to be discussing a lot of things—not only that but a lot of things. And I'll let you know if the time comes to let you know.

But right now that's not something that I can discuss.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, when you just said—when you said, "If they do it, they get obliterated," just to be clear, you're talking about if Iran made another—made an attempt on your life?

The President. Yes. Yes. That would be called total obliteration. And I can't imagine they'd do that.

It should have been stated by Biden, but he didn't state it because he had no clue, as you know—as everybody knows.

Iran-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, what is your vision, actually, for a relationship with Iran?

The President. Do you have anything else?

Staff Secretary Scharf. No, that's all we have.

The President. My vision for what?

Q. A relationship with Iran. And what do you—what do you think Israel would—

The President. I'd love to have a good relationship with everybody. They can't have a nuclear weapon. That was my only—that was the only thing that was very important: They can't have a nuclear weapon.

Beyond that, I—you know, we'd be very tough if they insist on doing that. They have—some of their leadership, I can tell you right now—and maybe you know it; maybe you don't—but there are many people at the top ranks of Iran that do not want to have a nuclear weapon just for that very reason.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, what's your reaction to China's retaliatory tariffs?

The President. That's fine. It's fine. We're going to do very well against China and against everybody else.

Right now they've taken advantage of the Biden administration like I've never seen. I've never seen—the deficit with China is about a trillion dollars. Think of it, a trillion dollars. They're—they're using our money to build their military, and Biden let that happen.

You know, we're taking a lot of fires here. We—we came back, this is like a different place. The good news is we're doing very well. We're doing well with countries that nobody expected we'd do well with. We are respected again as a nation, maybe at a level that people haven't seen for many, many decades.

But when I left, we didn't have any wars. I defeated ISIS—100 percent of the ISIS caliphate, and now the world seems to be ready to blow up, but we'll see if we can stop it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Iran-U.S. Relations/Middle East Peace Process/Russia/Ukraine

Q. Have you reached out to the Iranians about any kind of deal?

The President. Say it.

Q. Have you reached out to the Iranians about any kind of deal to start——

The President. I would reach out.

Q. ——those discussions?

The President. I mean, I have nothing—I—see, I'm one that doesn't care whether I reach out or they reach out. A lot of people say, "Let them reach out, sir." To me, it doesn't matter. It's just——

Q. But that hasn't started yet?

The President. It's just talk.

But I want to see everybody do well. I want to see great countries, and I want to see peace in the Middle East and elsewhere.

We're also working very hard with respect to Russia, Ukraine. That's a bloodbath. It's a total bloodbath. What's going on there is incredible. What's going on with the soldiers—young, young soldiers being killed by the thousands. I mean, literally, by the thousands. And we want to see if we can get that stopped, and I think we've had some very good talks.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Any update on when you would speak to President Xi, sir? Any update on when you would speak to President Xi?

The President. No, we'll speak to him at the appropriate time. I'm in no rush. I'm in no rush. At the appropriate time.

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

Q. Do you think that conversation can lend itself to the type of—of freeze that it meant for the tariffs for Canada and Mexico?

The President. Well, we'll see what happens. Well, there's a short-term freeze with Mexico——

Q. Right.

The President. —as you know, and with Canada. But they've agreed to be very, very strong on the border, stronger than they ever were, by far, by a factor of about 30.

And, in addition to that, as you can see, we've been strong because we've had numbers like you've never seen before. I mean, the border is now closed—really closed. And with that being said, we're letting good people come through, and we want good people to come into our country, but the border is closed.

Israel-Hamas Conflict

Q. In your talks—in your talks with President Netanyahu today, do you intend to press him about how many deaths there have been amongst Palestinians? Are you concerned about that death toll?

The President. I talked about that too. You know, both sides mean a lot. I talk about that. I talk about the other side. I talk about everything.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Q. What's your main message to him today during your meeting?

The President. Well, I'm here to listen. He's here to see me, and I'm here to listen. So—

Q. Will you continue to press—

The President. There's not much of a message. At the right time, I'll give him my message.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories/Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees

Q. Will you continue—Mr. President, will you continue to press for this idea that Jordan and Egypt take Palestinians from Gaza?

The President. Yes. I would like to see Jordan, I'd like to see Egypt take some—look, the Gaza thing has not worked. It's never worked. And I feel very differently about Gaza than a lot of people. I think they should get a good, fresh, beautiful piece of land, and we get some people to put up the money to build it and make it nice and make it habitable and enjoyable—

Q. Somewhere else, you're talking—

The President. —and make it a home.

Q. They don't want to leave, though. Palestinians say they don't want to leave.

The President. I don't know how they could want to stay. It's a demolition site. It's a pure demolition site. If we could find the right piece of land or numerous pieces of land and build them some really nice places—there's plenty of money in the area. That's for sure. I think that would be a lot better than going back to Gaza, which has had just decades and decades of death.

Q. Where would those pieces of land be if those Arab countries—

The President. Well, they could be in Jordan—

Q. —don't want them to go?

The President. —and they could be in Egypt, and they could be in other places. You could have more than two—more than one—but you could have more than two. And you'd have people living in a place that could be very beautiful and safe and nice. Gaza, humanitarian situationGaza has been a disaster for decades.

Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees

Q. Would the U.S. pay for that or contribute?

The President. I don't think the——

Q. Would the United States contribute?

The President. I don't think the U.N. would pay, but I think there's plenty of people that would in the area. They have a lot of money. They certainly have a lot of money.

Some of the countries over there, they'd like to see it. I know that Saudi Arabia wants to see peace. I can see that. And many of the countries there—as far as I'm concerned, they all want peace. I think—you know, maybe I'm wrong on this, but I think Iran would like to see peace too. They've had enough. Don't you think they've had enough?

Venezuela/Panama Canal

Q. But the leaders of—but the leaders of Egypt and Jordan have said bluntly they—they have no interest in doing this.

The President. Well, they may have said that, but a lot of people said things to me. They said they wouldn't take the-anybody back in Venezuela, and right now they're flying them right back into Venezuela, and lot of people—and they're doing the right thing in Venezuela.

The Panama Canal is an active discussion right now, and they said things about that. And virtually everything that's been said has been incorrectly stated based on the result.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories/Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees

Q. Doesn't that amount to forcibly displace—or wouldn't that amount to forcibly displacing those people from Gaza if they say they want to say they want to stay?

The President. I don't think so. I think if they had the opportunity, they'd love it. If they had an alternative to Gaza—they have no alternative right now. I mean, they're there because they have no alternative.

What do they have? It is a big pile of—of rubble right now. I mean, have you seen the pictures of it? Have you been there? It's terrible to live—who can live like that? And very dangerous. There's shooting all over the place. There's bombing all over the place on both sides.

No, I would think, if they had an option of moving to an—either in a large group or various smaller groups and take care of the close to 2 million people, I would think that they would be thrilled to do it.

They have no—you know, when you say about the Gaza Strip, they don't have an option.

Q. To be clear, you're saying they'd be thrilled to——

The President. It's very dangerous.

Q. —they'd be thrilled to leave Gaza?

The President. Oh, I think they'd love to leave Gaza if they had an option. Right now they don't have an option. What are they going to do? They have to go back to Gaza. But what is Gaza? There's practically not a building standing.

And they're very dangerous. You know, those buildings are shifting, and they're falling down all over the place. And there's gunfire all over. It's going to be that way for a while.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories/Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees

Q. Mr. President, wouldn't have it made more sense to evacuate people while the war was ongoing, rather than now when there's a cease-fire?

The President. Which is what you're talking about?

Q. When it was more dangerous, when there were strikes overhead than now.

The President. Well, the strikes could start tomorrow. There's not a lot that—there's not a lot left to strike.

Q. Exactly.

The President. It's a demolition site. The whole place is demolished. It's unsafe. It's unsanitary. It's not a place where people want to live.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, on—Mr.—

The President. Nobody—nobody has got—it's—they—they have no alternative but to go back. If we gave them an alternative of living in a beautiful, open place with some, you know, nice quarters there, nice housing of sorts—and we have the money in the Middle East to build that.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Do you support Israelis actually moving back and creating settlement—building settlements in Gaza?

The President. Not necessarily, no. I just support cleaning it up and doing something with it. But it's failed for many decades, and somebody will be sitting here in 10 years or 20 years from now, and they'll be going through the same stuff—the wars.

And you know, they've had civilizations on Gaza—many civilizations on Gaza, and they're buried in the sand.

Q. Secretary Rubio—

The President. It doesn't seem to work.

Q. Mr. President, on Elon Musk—

Q. Secretary—

Q. —is there—on Elon, sir.

The President. Go ahead.

White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk/U.S. Agency for International Development/California Passenger Rail Construction Project

Q. Thank you, sir. On Elon Musk. How often are you talking to him? And have there been ideas that he has brought to you that you've said: "Oh, no. Wait a minute. This is going a little too far"?

The President. Well, many ideas. But look, he has done a great job. Look at all the fraud that he has found in this USAID. It's a disaster what the people—radical-left lunatics. They have things that nobody would have even believed. The whole thing with \$100 million spent on you know what, with money going to all sorts of groups that shouldn't deserve to get any money.

With the money, I'd like to see what the kickbacks are. How much money has been kicked back? Who would spend that kind of money to some of the things that you read about and I read about and I see every night on the news and every morning when I read the papers? Who would spend money for that?

I would say this: The people that got all that money, are they kicking it back to the people that gave it from Government? No, that's, to me, very, very corrupt. The real question is, how much of a kickback has there been?

And one of the things I want to investigate rapidly, because I've never seen anything to this extent—the train that's being built between Los Angeles and San Francisco is the worst managed project I think I've ever seen, and I've seen some of the worst. Billions and billions—hundreds of billions of dollars over budget.

In fact, I read where you could take every single person that was going to go on the train and get the finest limousine service in the world, and take them back and forth with limousines, and you'd have hundreds of billions of dollars left over. It is the worst thing, and we're going to start an investigation on that, because it's not possible.

I built for a living, and I built on time, on budget. It's impossible that something could cost that much. And now it's not even going to San Francisco, and it's not going to Los Angeles. It's—they made it much shorter. So now it's at little places way away from San Francisco and way away from Los Angeles.

No, we're going to start a big investigation on that, because it's—I've never seen anything like it. Nobody has ever seen anything like it. The worst overruns that there have ever been in the history of our country.

And it wasn't even necessary. I would have said: "You don't buy it. You take an airplane." It costs you \$2. It costs you nothing. You take an airplane. But this got started—and if you have to, you drive. You can drive.

Q. Are there other agencies—

The President. They have hundreds of billions of dollars of cost overruns, and it's not even the same project. It's much shorter. It's way outside of San Francisco and way outside of Los Angeles. So we're going to be looking into it.

Q. Who's going to investigate that? Is that DOGE who's going to investigate the train?

The President. No, I'm doing that myself. No.

U.S. DOGE Service/Air Traffic Control System/U.S. Agency for International Development

Q. Some of these DOGE engineers that Elon Musk has helping him are as young as 19 years old.

The President. That's good. They're very smart, though, Peter. They're like you. They're very smart people. [Laughter]

Q. Thank you. Has he—have you met any of these guys or—

The President. No, I haven't seen them. They work actually out of the White House. They're smart people, unlike what they do in the control towers, where we need smart people. We should use some of them in the control towers, where we were putting people that were actually intellectually deficient. That was—one of the qualifications is you could be "intellectually deficient."

No, we need smart people. Some are young, and some are not young. Some are not young at all. But they've found great things.

Look at the list of things. I'll—maybe I'll do it tomorrow. I'll read off a list of 15 or 20 things that they found inside of the USAID. It's—has to be corrupt. Nobody could approve that. They could only approve that if they were getting kickbacks.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

You're talking about—you're talking about hundreds of millions of dollars.

Q. And it sounds like you're going to wind down USAID—

The President. It sounds like it. *[Laughter]*

Q. —when this is all—

The President. I mean, I think so. Yes.

Q. So—so, when that—

The President. I would think.

Q. —when that happens, which part of the Government would be—

The President. Well, I could see—

Q. —responsible for paying—

The President. —Marco Rubio being in charge—the State Department—because they're giving money to—I mean, some of the money is well spent, I guess, but much of it is really fraudulent.

Department of Education/Public Schools

Q. And on the Education Department. Why nominate Linda McMahon to be the Education Department Secretary if you're going to get rid of the Education Department?

The President. Because I told Linda, "Linda, I hope you do a great job and put yourself out of a job." I want her to put herself out of a job.

Education Department. So we're ranked number 40 out of 40 schools, right? We're ranked number one in cost per pupil. So we spend more per pupil than any other country in the world, and we're ranked at the bottom of the list. We're ranked very badly.

And what I want to do is let the States run schools. I believe strongly in school choice, but in addition to that, I want the States to run schools. And I want Linda to put herself out of a job. Okay?

Q. Do you that's some—

Q. Sir, do you want to eliminate the—do you want to eliminate the Department of Education—

Department of Education/U.S. Global Ranking in Education

Q. Do you think that's something that you can do with an Executive order, or are you going to ask Congress—

The President. I'd like to be able to do it.

Q. —are you going to ask Congress to do it?

The President. Yes, I'd like to be able to. Look, if I could give the schools back to Iowa and Idaho and Indiana and all these places that run properly—there's many of them.

I—I think—so, if you look at the list, Denmark, Sweden, Norway—believe it or not, China is doing very well on that list—a list of well-educated—you know, where they run their school system well. You have a lot of countries—not surprising names. I think that if you moved our schools into some of these States that are really well-run States, they would be as good as Denmark and Norway and Sweden and some of the other States.

And then you'd have the—the laggards, and you know who they are; I don't have to go to it. But you'd have the laggards—the same laggards that are laggards with everything else, including crime. But even them, you'll break it into systems.

As an example, if you went to New York—you go to Westchester County, you go to Dutchess County, you go to Suffolk in Long Island and Nassau on Long Island—you have maybe six or seven locations. Then you have New York City, which would include the five boroughs, and I think even that would run much better than it does right now.

Same thing with Los Angeles or California. You'd have Riverside, you'd have—you'd break it up into six or seven pieces.

But most of them would be States, and you'd have one. Like in Iowa—you give it to the State of Iowa, you give it to the State of Indiana, you give it—these are really well-run States—they don't have debt, they don't have problems, they don't have any crimes, you know, relatively speaking, to speak of—and you would have education that would be the equivalent of Norway and Denmark and various other places that are at the top of the list.

So we're at the bottom of the list, and we're the most expensive. We're at the top of the list when it comes to cost per pupil. We spend more money per pupil than any other nation in the world, and yet we're rated number 40.

The last ratings came out. You saw them. So they—they talk about 40 countries. We're rated number 40. And I say that if we did this, we would go 20, 30 notches up. We could do great. And we would have some of the best districts in the world.

Q. But are you looking to do that with an Executive order, sir, or do you need to work with Congress to—

The President. Well, there are some people that say I could.

Q. —end the Education Department?

The President. I think I'd work with Congress. I think we'd get—look, we'd have to work with the teachers' union, because the teachers' union is the only one that's opposed to it. Nobody else would want to hold them back.

Look, and we have to tell the teachers' union we're rated last in the world in education of the top 40. We're rated last. We were 38. Now we're 40. We went to 39. We went to 40. We were 37. But we're at 40 now. The thing just came out.

That's under Biden. Remember that.

Deportation of U.S.-Citizen Criminals to Other Countries

Q. Secretary Rubio announced a deal this week that would allow, potentially, American citizens who are criminals to be put in a different country. Is that something you're looking to do?

The President. Well, no, I—I didn't know that he announced that yet, but I—if he did, it's fine. Yes.

We have hard—hardened criminals, horrible people. You see them pushing people into subways—the train is coming—last week. A guy walking around and just sees somebody waiting

for the train. The train is coming 40 miles an hour, and he gets pushed into the subway. And that happens all the time. These are sick people.

If we could get them out of our country and we have other countries that would take them, they could—it's no different than a prison system, except it would be a lot less expensive. And it would be a great deterrent. Send them to other countries.

We—if we could go a step further—in other words, we're talking about getting the criminals out of our country that come in through other countries illegally—right?—the illegal migrants, as I call them. Well, we have people that are just as bad as them in our country. If we could get them out, I'd be very happy to get them out.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. The President—the President of El Salvador said that he would—wanted you to pay a fee for that. Would you pay that?

The President. Well, it's a lot—a very small fee compared to what we pay to private prisons.

Q. But under what authority—

The President. And a very, very small fee—I don't know. We'll have to find that out legally. I'm just saying, if we had the legal right to do it, I would do it in a heartbeat. I don't know if we do or not. We're looking at that right now.

Q. Is there enough space—

The President. But we can make deals where we'd get these animals out of our country. And you know, if you take the shooters; the people that hit old ladies in the back of their head with a baseball bat when they're not looking then walk down the street; the people that use—and you see it, the people that take out a gun and shoot you for no reason at all, if we could get these animals out of our country and put them in a different country under the supervision of somebody that made a relatively small fee to maintain these people—because, you know what? These are criminals. You call them hardened criminals. They've been in jail 40 times. There's one 42 times. And every time, the person gets out—it's a he—every time he gets out, he commits another crime within 24 hours, and it's a heinous crime. It's a rough crime.

We don't want these people in our country either. We don't want them in our country.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

If we had the option—if we had the option to get them out and let them be based in some other country at a fraction of the cost—and frankly, they could keep them, because these people are never going to be any good.

That person that has been arrested 42 times or 22 times or 17 times and is all in for manslaughter and everything else and only gets out because of a very weak judicial system that only goes after people like Trump. They don't go after the criminals. They don't go after people like this, and they laugh at our law.

If that took place, you would have a lot less crime automatically.

Naval Station Guantanamo Bay

Q. Mr. President, is Guantanamo Bay a—

Q. But, sir, is—[inaudible]—that would allow this?

Q. Oh, on Guantanamo Bay, is—is there—

The President. Yes.

Q. — enough space there to accommodate the number of people?

The President. There's a lot of space to accommodate a lot of people. Yes. So we're going to use it.

Q. Can you talk a little bit——

The President. We have it. It's already up.

Q. — more about why——

The President. It—it's—we have it for nothing.

But we can do less expensive and even more secure. We've had other countries come to us saying: "We would love to do that. We would love to take your criminals, and we'll maintain that, we'll—you know, we'll be their jail."

And I'm only talking for the most severe cases, like I watched that guy on tape pushing the man into the subway last week. That man that did that is a real bad guy. Many, many arrests, and do you think you're going to convince him someday to be good and a wonderful—a wonderful citizen for our country? It's never going to happen. I want to get those people out.

I'd love to get them out, along with the illegal migrants. The migrants are rough, but we have some bad ones too. I'd like to get them out.

It would be all subject to the laws of our land, and we're looking at that to see if we can do it.

Q. Mr. President——

Deportation of U.S.-Citizen Criminals to Other Countries

Q. What counties have offered to take American citizens?

The President. Say it.

Q. What other countries have offered to take these Americans—[inaudible]?

The President. Numerous. Many.

Q. Could you name some of them?

The President. And Marco brought it up today. I'm glad he did, because a lot of people are thinking it.

When I watch some of the crimes being committed in New York City and Chicago—look at Chicago. The—volume of crime they have—and the—the viciousness of the crime is—these people are horrible people.

And if somebody thinks they're going to be wonderful citizens someday, they're wrong. It's not going to happen. It's not going to happen. They're bad. These are hard, tough criminals. In many cases, they're crazy. They're absolutely crazy. But they're very dangerous.

If I could get them out of the country and be in some other country where they're glad to have them because they make a small fee compared to what we pay to a private prison or to, you know, put them in one of our prisons that cost even more money, I think it would be great. I'd love to get them the hell out of our country.

Thank you very much everybody.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Super Bowl LIX

Q. President Trump, who is going to win the Super Bowl?

The President. I don't want to say it, but there's a certain quarterback that seems to be a pretty good winner.

Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Q. And just, last one, because you mentioned him many times today. What do you think about Joe Biden signing on with a talent agency?

The President. You've got to be kidding. [Laughter] He signed on with a talent agency?

Q. He does. He's got some entertainment agents now.

The President. I think he's got bigger problems than that. I really do. I think he's got much bigger problems than that. But I wish him well.

I—we inherited a mess. This place is a mess, but it's quickly being solved—the problem. We're going to make America great again.

Thank you very much everybody.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Abdelfattah Said Elsisi of Egypt; King Abdullah II of Jordan; Secretary of Education—designate Linda E. McMahon; and Kamel Hawkins, who was charged with pushing Joseph Linskey off a subway platform at the West 18th Street station in New York City on December 31, 2024. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. A reporter referred to President Nayib Armando Bukele Ortez of El Salvador.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Withdrawal of U.S. support for United Nations organizations and U.S. sanctions on Iran; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abdullah II, King; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Collins, Douglas A.; Elsisi, Abdelfattah Said; Hawkins, Kamel; Linskey, Joseph; McMahon, Linda E.; Musk, Elon R.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Rubio, Marco A.; Scharf, William O.; Wright, Christopher A.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: California, passenger rail construction project; Canada, trade with U.S.; China, President; China, trade with U.S.; Education, global competitiveness; Egypt, Palestinian refugees, humanitarian situation; Egypt, President; Football; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Guantanamo Bay, U.S. Naval Base in Cuba, detention facility; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Illegal immigration; International Development, U.S. Agency for; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, U.S. sanctions; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Israel, Prime Minister; Jordan, King; Jordan, Palestinian refugees, humanitarian situation; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary organization; Mexico, trade with U.S.; Middle East, regional integration and security; Panama Canal, ownership and operations; Secretary of Energy; Secretary of State; Secretary of Veterans Affairs; U.S. DOGE Service; U.S. foreign aid programs, funding and policies; United Nations organizations, withdrawal of U.S. support; United Nations, reform efforts; Venezuela, acceptance of U.S. deportees; White House Senior Adviser; White House Staff Secretary.

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