

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

February 4, 2025

President Trump. Thank you very much.

That's a lot of press. Congratulations. You bring them out. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you.

President Trump. You really bring them out.

Today, I'm delighted to welcome Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu back to the White House. It's a wonderful feeling and a wonderful event. We had fantastic talks—and thank you very much—with your staff.

He's the first foreign head of state to visit during our administration. And, Bibi, I want to say, it's an honor to have you with us. Over the past 4 years, the U.S. and the Israeli alliance has been tested more than any time in history, but the bonds of friendship and affection between the American and Israeli people have endured for generations, and they are absolutely unbreakable. They are unbreakable.

I'm confident that, under our leadership, the cherished alliance between our two countries will soon be stronger than ever. We had a great relationship. We had great victories together four years ago. Not so many victories over the past four years, however.

In my first term, Prime Minister and I forged a tremendously successful partnership that brought peace and stability to the Middle East like it hadn't seen in decades.

Together, we defeated ISIS, we ended the disastrous Iran nuclear deal—one of the worst deals ever made, by the way—and imposed the toughest ever sanctions on the Iranian regime. We starved Hamas and Iran's other terrorist proxies, and we starved them like they had never seen before—resources and support disappeared for them.

I recognized Israel's capital; opened the American Embassy in Jerusalem, and got it built, by the way—built it too, just—not only designated it but got it built at a price that nobody has seen for 40 years. We got it built. It's beautiful, all Jerusalem stone, right from nearby, and it was—it's something that's very special. And recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, something that they talked about for 70 years and they weren't able to get it. And I got it.

And with the historic Abraham Accords—something that was really an achievement that was, I think, going to become more and more important, because we achieved the most significant Middle East peace agreements in half a century—but the Abraham Accords, in particular. And I really believe that many countries will soon be joining this amazing peace and economic development transaction. It really is a big economic development transaction. I think we're going to have a lot of people signing up very quickly.

Unfortunately, for 4 years, nobody signed up. Nobody did anything for 4 years, except in the negative—unfortunately, the weakness and incompetence of those years, those past 4 years—the grave damage around the globe that was done, including in the Middle East—grave damage all over the globe.

The horrors of October 7 would never have happened if I were President. The Ukraine and Russia disaster would never have happened if I were President.

Over the past 16 months, Israel has endured a sustained, aggressive, and murderous assault on every front, but they've fought back bravely. You see that, and you know that. What we have witnessed is an all-out attack on the very existence of a Jewish state in the Jewish homeland.

The Israelis have stood strong and united in the face of an enemy that has kidnapped, tortured, raped, and slaughtered innocent men, women, children, and even little babies. I want to salute the Israeli people for meeting this trial with courage and determination and unflinching resolve. They have been strong.

In our meetings today, the Prime Minister and I focused on the future, discussing how we can work together to ensure Hamas is eliminated and ultimately restore peace to a very troubled region. It's been troubled, but what's happened in the last four years has not been good.

I want to thank Prime Minister Netanyahu for working closely with my transition team; the Special Envoy, Steve Witkoff, who is here somewhere. Steve. Stand up, Steve, please. What a job you have done. What a good job you've done. Proud of you. Done a fantastic job. National Security Adviser Mike Waltz. Thank you, Mike, for working so well with us. Thank you.

We have, in addition, Marco Rubio, who is on the phone right now, listening to every single word that we say—[*laughter*]*—and he's going to be great. And, Pete, congratulations. And, Scott, congratulations. I see you're here. And Karoline has been doing a great job. She's, really, probably talked about more than anybody here. [Laughter] She's done a fantastic job. And thank you very much, Karoline. We're proud of you.*

But we'll only be satisfied when all of these problems are solved. And we have the team to solve them, and that's going to happen, and it's going to happen, I think, very quickly.

I also strongly believe that the Gaza Strip, which has been a symbol of death and destruction for so many decades and so bad for the people anywhere near it, and especially those who live there—and frankly, who's been really very unlucky—it's been very unlucky; it's been an unlucky place for a long time—being in its presence just has not been good, and it should not go through a process of rebuilding and occupation by the same people that have really stood there and fought for it and lived there and died there and lived a miserable existence there.

Instead, we should go to other countries of interest with humanitarian hearts—and there are many of them that want to do this—and build various domains that will ultimately be occupied by the 1.8 million Palestinians living in Gaza, ending the death and destruction and, frankly, bad luck.

This could be paid for by neighboring countries of great wealth. It could be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12. It could be numerous sites, or it could be one large site. But the people will be able to live in comfort and peace, and we'll get sure—we'll make sure something really spectacular is done. They're going to have peace. They're not going to be shot at and killed and destroyed like this civilization of wonderful people has had to endure.

The only reason the Palestinians want to go back to Gaza is, they have no alternative. It's right now a demolition site. This is just a demolition site. Virtually, every building is down. They're living under fallen concrete that's very dangerous and very precarious.

They instead can occupy all of a beautiful area with homes and safety, and they can live out their lives in peace and harmony, instead of having to go back and do it again.

The U.S. will take over the Gaza Strip, and we will do a job with it too. We'll own it and be responsible for dismantling all of the dangerous unexploded bombs and other weapons on the site, level the site, and get rid of the destroyed buildings. Level it out, create an economic development that will supply unlimited numbers of jobs and housing for the people of the area. Do a real job. Do something different.

Just can't go back. If you go back, it's going to end up the same way it has for a hundred years. I'm hopeful that this cease-fire could be the beginning of a larger and more enduring peace that will end the bloodshed and killing once and for all.

With the same goal in mind, my administration has been moving quickly to restore trust in the alliance and rebuild American strength throughout the region, and we've really done that. We're a respected nation again. A lot has happened in the last couple of weeks. We are actually a—we're very respected nation again.

I ended the last administration's de facto arms embargo on over \$1 billion in military assistance for Israel. And I'm also pleased to announce that this afternoon, the United States withdrew from the anti-Semitic U.N. Human Rights Council and ended all of the support for the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which funneled money to Hamas and which was very disloyal to humanity.

Today I also took action to restore a maximum-pressure policy on the Iranian regime. And we will once again enforce the most aggressive possible sanctions, drive Iranian oil exports to zero, and diminish the regime's capacity to fund terror throughout the region and throughout the world.

We had no threat when I left office. Iran was not able to sell oil. Nobody was buying oil because I said: "Don't buy it. If you buy it, you're not doing any business with the United States." And Hamas was not being funded. Hizballah was not being funded. Nobody was being funded. There would never have been an October 7.

Two weeks ago, I once again designated the Houthis as a terrorist organization. They're trying to destroy world shipping lanes, and that's not going to happen. And over the weekend, I ordered air strikes against senior ISIS leaders hiding in the caves of Somalia and took them out.

Here in America, we've begun the process of deporting foreign terrorists, jihadists, and Hamas sympathizers from our soil, just as we have people that are extremely evil, and we're sending them out of our country. They came from jails, they came from mental institutions and insane asylums, and they were dumped into our country. They're gang members. We're getting them out at numbers that nobody can actually believe.

And every single country is taking those people back. They said they would never take them back, and they're all taking them back. And they're taking them back very gladly.

And I recently signed an executive order combating the vile wave of anti-Semitism that we've seen in the aftermath of the October 7 attacks.

Together, America and Israel will renew the optimism that shined so brightly just four years ago. It was really a bright, beautiful light. We will restore calm and stability to the region and expand prosperity, opportunity, and hope to our nations and for all people of the Middle East, including the Arab and Muslim nations. Very important. We want the Arab and Muslim nations to have peace and have tranquility and have great lives.

I'd like to now invite Prime Minister Netanyahu to say a few words, and we'll take some questions afterwards.

Thank you very much.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm honored that you invited me to be the first foreign leader to visit the White House in your second term. This is a testament to your friendship and support for the Jewish state and the Jewish people.

I've said this before; I'll say it again: You are the greatest friend Israel has ever had in the White House. And that's why the people of Israel have such enormous respect for you.

In your first term, you recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. You moved the American Embassy there. You recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

You withdrew from the disastrous Iran nuclear deal. I remember we spoke about it. You said, "This is the worst deal I've ever seen. I'm elected, I'm walking out of it." That's exactly what you did, and I think it speaks loudly for just common sense, just looking at things and seeing them as they are.

And of course, you also brokered the groundbreaking Abraham Accords, in which Israel made peace with four Arab states. You did this in four months. Nothing happened for a quarter of a century, but in four months, we were able—working together, under your leadership—to have four historic peace accords.

And now—now, in the first days of your second term—you picked up right where you left off. Your leadership helped bring our hostages home—among them, American citizens. You freed up munitions that have been withheld from Israel. They had been withheld from Israel in the midst of a seven-front war for our existence, and you just freed it.

You ended unjust sanctions against law-abiding Israeli citizens. You boldly confronted the scourge of anti-Semitism. You stopped funding, as you just said, international organizations, like UNRWA, that support and fund terrorists. And today you renewed the maximum pressure campaign against Iran.

Ladies and gentlemen, all this in just 2 weeks. Can we imagine where we'll be in four years? I can. I know you can, Mr. President.

For our part, we in Israel have been pretty busy too. Since the horrendous October 7 attack, we've been fighting our common enemies and changing the face of the Middle East.

On that infamous day, Hamas monsters savagely murdered 1,200 innocent people, including more than 40 Americans. They beheaded men, they raped women, they burnt babies alive, and they took 251 people hostage to the dungeons of Gaza.

And after this worst attack on Jews since the Holocaust, Iran and its henchmen in the Middle East were absolutely ecstatic. Haniyeh praised the massacre. Sinwar said that Israel was finished. Nasrallah boasted that Israel was—here's what he said—"is feeble as a spider's web."

Well, Mr. President, Haniyeh is gone. Sinwar is gone. Nasrallah is gone. We've devastated Hamas, we decimated Hizballah, we destroyed Asad's remaining armaments, and we crippled Iran's air defenses.

And in doing this, we've defeated some of America's worst enemies. We took out terrorists who were wanted for decades for shedding rivers of American blood, including the blood of 241 marines murdered in Beirut.

We accomplished all this with the indomitable spirit of our people and the boundless courage of our soldiers. The Bible says that the people of Israel shall rise like lions, and, boy, did we rise. Today, the roar of the Lion of Judah is heard loudly throughout the Middle East. Israel has never been stronger, and the Iran terror axis has never been weaker.

But as we discussed, Mr. President, to secure our future and bring peace to our region, we have to finish the job.

In Gaza, Israel has three goals: destroy Hamas's military and governing capabilities, secure the release of all of our hostages, and ensure that Gaza never again poses a threat to Israel.

I believe, Mr. President, that your willingness to puncture conventional thinking—thinking that has failed time and time and time again—your willingness to think outside the box with fresh ideas will help us achieve all these goals. And I've seen you do this many times. You cut to the chase. You see things others refuse to see. You say things others refuse to say. You know, and after the jaws drop, people scratch their heads, and they say, "You know, he's right."

And this is the kind of thinking that enabled us to bring the Abraham Accords. This is the kind of thinking that will reshape the Middle East and bring peace.

We also see eye to eye on Iran. That's the same Iran that tried to kill us both. They tried to kill you, Mr. President. They tried, through their proxies, to kill me. But we're both committed to rolling back Iran's aggression in the region and ensuring that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon.

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, Israel will end the war by winning the war. Israel's victory will be America's victory. We will not only win the war; working together, we will win the peace.

With your leadership, Mr. President, and our partnership, I believe that we will forge a brilliant future for our region and bring our great alliance to even greater heights.

Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you very much, Bibi. Very nice. Thank you.

And J.D. Vance, everybody. J.D., please. Vice President, stand up. He's been doing a good job. He's been working very hard on all things, but this in particular.

We'll take some questions, please.

[At this point, several reporters began speaking at once.]

Yes, ma'am. Go ahead, please. Go ahead.

Yes, go ahead.

Saudi Arabia/Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Mr. President, can a normalization deal with Saudi Arabia be achieved without the acknowledgment of a Palestinian state? That question for you too, Mr. Prime Minister.

And, Mr. President, given what you've said about Gaza, should the U.S. send troops to help secure the security vacuum?

President Trump. So Saudi Arabia is going to be very helpful, and they have been very helpful. They want peace in the Middle East. It's very simple. We know their leader and their leaders very well. They're wonderful people, and they want peace in the Middle East.

As far as Gaza is concerned, we'll do what is necessary. If it's necessary, we'll do that. We're going to take over that piece, and we're going to develop it, create thousands and thousands of jobs, and it will be something that the entire Middle East can be very proud of.

But everybody feels that continuing the same process that's gone on forever, over and over again, and then it starts, and then the killing starts, and all of the other problems start, and you end up in the same place, and we don't want to see that happen.

So, by the United States, with its stability and strength, owning it—especially the strength that we're developing and developed over the last fairly short period of time—I would say, really since the election—I think we'll be a great keeper of something that is very, very strong, very

powerful, and very, very good for the area—not just for Israel, for the entire Middle East—very important.

And we'll, again, have thousands of jobs. And there will be jobs for everyone, not for a specific group of people, but for everybody.

Okay, please.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I think peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia is not only feasible, I think it's going to happen. I think if we had another half a year in your first term, it would have already happened.

President Trump. It's true—many, many more. I agree, many more nations.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. It would have happened.

I think you can't prejudge and preguess how we'll achieve it, but I'm committed to achieving it, and I know the President is committed to achieving it, and I think the Saudi leadership is interested to achieve it. So we'll give it a good shot, and I think we'll succeed.

Q. President Trump?

President Trump. Yes, please, go ahead.

Cease-Fire and Hostage-Release Deal Between Israel and Hamas

Q. First of all, President Trump, did you hear from Prime Minister Netanyahu in your meeting a guarantee that the cease-fire will hold, including phase two?

And, Prime Minister Netanyahu, a question for you. Why are you refusing to set up a national commission to investigate the failures of October 7? Thank you.

President Trump. Well, I can't tell you whether or not the cease-fire will hold. We've done, I think, a very masterful job. And we weren't helped very much by the Biden administration, I can tell you that.

But we've gotten quite a few hostages out. We're going to get more out. But we're dealing with very complex people, and we are going to see whether or not it holds. We certainly want to have more come out. They've come out damaged—in many ways, damaged—very damaged people, but they're going to get better, and they're going to be strong, and they're going to have a good life. And we hope to get as many as possible out.

Whether or not it holds, I don't know. We hope it holds. We hope it holds.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I think that at the appropriate time, which I think will enable us to really investigate what happened, what were the causes of the failures, by an independent commission that will be accepted by the majority of the people. We don't want it accepted by one half of the people and not the other. I think we should have it, and we should find out exactly what happened. I'm insisting on it. And believe me, it will surprise a lot of people when it happens.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. Kelly [Kelly O'Donnell, NBC News]. Kelly, go ahead, please.

Q. Mr. President, you are outlining something that is really quite striking tonight. You are talking about—

[A White House aide offered a microphone to Ms. O'Donnell.]

White House aide. I've got to hold onto it.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Okay.

Thank you, Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister. You are talking tonight about the United States taking over a sovereign territory. What authority would allow you to do that? Are you talking about a permanent occupation there, redevelopment?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, do you see this idea as a way to expand the boundaries of Israel and to have a longer peace, even though the Israeli people know how important that land is to you and your citizens, just as the space is inherited by the Palestinians as well?

President Trump. I do see a long-term ownership position, and I see it bringing great stability to that part of the Middle East, and maybe the entire Middle East. And everybody I've spoken to—this was not a decision made lightly. Everybody I've spoken to loves the idea of the United States owning that piece of land, developing and creating thousands of jobs with something that will be magnificent in a really magnificent area that nobody would know. Nobody can look because all they see is death and destruction and rubble and demolished buildings falling all over. It's just a terrible sight.

Q. By—by what mechanism——

President Trump. I've studied it——

Q. ——on the world stage, Mr. President?

President Trump. I've studied this very closely over a lot of months, and I've seen it from every different angle. And it's a very, very dangerous place to be, and it's only going to get worse.

And I think this is an idea that's gotten tremendous—and I'm talking about from the highest level of leadership—gotten tremendous praise. And if the United States can help to bring stability and peace in the Middle East, we'll do that.

Bibi.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, please. Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I mentioned again tonight our three goals, and the third goal is to make sure that Gaza never poses a threat to Israel again.

President Trump is taking it to a much higher level. He sees a different——

Q. So you support his idea, sir?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. He sees a different future for that piece of land that has been the focus of so much terrorism, so much—so many attacks against us, so many trials and so many tribulations.

He has a different idea, and I think it worth—it's worth paying attention to this. We're talking about it. He's exploring it with his people, with his staff. I think it's something that could change history, and it's worthwhile really pursuing this avenue.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Q. Mr. President.

President Trump. Yes, please, go ahead. Go ahead.

Q. Mr. President, a question for you. Can you hear me?

President Trump. Yes.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories/Status of Palestinian Refugees

Q. So, before rebuilding Gaza again, obviously, you'll take out all the hostages, and one of them is Edan Alexander, an American soldier who is alive. How will you be assured that you will take out all the hostages and then rebuild?

President Trump. We're working very hard to get all the hostages. The word is "all," and we are working very hard. So far, it's been moving along fairly rapidly, pretty much on schedule. It's—I'd love to have them all out at one time, but we're taking them out.

And tomorrow, more are being released, and over the days more, and then we'll go into a phase two. But we'd like to get all of the hostages.

Q. How much time you think it will—[inaudible]?

President Trump. And if we don't, it will just make us somewhat more violent, I will tell you that, because they would have broken their word.

Mr. Witkoff and his entire group have been working 24 hours, around the clock, and they want them out. And promises have been made to them, and we'll see whether or not those promises will be kept.

But we want all the hostages. That's right.

Q. How much time you think it will take? A month?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Gaza/West Bank

Q. Do you support—Mr. President, do you support Israeli sovereignty in Judea and Samaria areas, which many believe is the biblical homeland of the Jewish people?

President Trump. Well, we're discussing that with many of your representatives. You're represented very well, and people do like the idea, but we haven't taken a position on it yet, but we will be—we'll be making an announcement probably on that very specific topic over the next 4 weeks.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead, please. Please.

Q. Mr. President—thank you so much, Mr. President. So, you—you just—

[A White House aide held up a microphone.]

White House aide. I've got to hold onto it, but you can speak into it.

Status of Palestinian Refugees/Gaza

Q. You just said that you think all—all the Palestinians should be relocated to other countries. Does that mean that you do not support a two-state solution?

President Trump. It doesn't mean anything about a two-state or a one-state or any other state. It means that we want to have—we want to give people a chance at life. They have never had a chance at life because the Gaza Strip has been a hellhole for people living there. It's been horrible. The Hamas has made it so bad—so bad, so dangerous, so unfair to people.

And by doing what I'm recommending that we do, it's a recommendation—a very strong recommendation—but it is a strong recommendation—by doing that, we think we're going to bring perhaps great peace to long beyond this area.

And I have to stress, this is not for Israel. This is for everybody in the Middle East—Arabs, Muslims. This is for everybody. This would be where they can partake in terms of jobs and living and all of the other benefits. And I think it's very important.

It just doesn't work the other way. You know, you can't keep trying. They just—has been going along for so many decades, you can't even count. You just can't keep doing—you have to learn from history. You can't keep doing the same mistake over and over again.

Gaza is a hellhole right now. It was before the bombing started, frankly, and we're going to give people a chance to live in a beautiful community that's safe and secure. And I think you're going to see tremendous—a tremendous outflowing of support.

I can tell you, I spoke to other leaders of countries in the Middle East, and they love the idea. They say it would really bring stability, and what we need is stability.

Yes, sir, please.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead.

Q. Thank you. Are you still committed to imposing sanctions on the ICC, despite the move being stalled in the Senate?

And, please, a question for the Prime Minister as well. The President has been very clear about his desire to achieve a deal with Saudi Arabia. How do you settle this if Israel is required to renew the war against Hamas in the future?

President Trump. Go ahead, Bibi.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I think everybody understands that, just as the president fought and defeated Al Qaida and ISIS, that we can't leave Hamas there, because Hamas will continue the battle to destroy Israel.

They'll do—you know, when—in this temporary cease-fire, one of their leaders comes out. You know what he says? "We're going to do October 7 again, except we'll do it bigger." So, obviously, you can't talk about peace—neither with Hamas or in the Middle East—if this, you know, toxic, murderous organization is left standing any more than you could make peace in Europe after World War II if the Nazi regime was left standing and the Nazi army was left standing.

You want a different future? You've got to knock out the people who want to destroy you and destroy peace. That's what we're going to do. I think that will also bring—usher in, actually, the peace with Saudi Arabia and with others. And I think there will be others too.

President Trump. Yes, ma'am. Go ahead.

Afghanistan

Q. Mr. President, I'm from Afghanistan. My name is Nazira Karimi [Ariana Television Network]. Afghan—*[inaudible]*—woman has a high expectation from you. Do you have any plan to change Afghanistan's situation? Are you able to recognize Taliban? Because I'm an Afghan journalist. Afghan—*[inaudible]*—suffer women. Any comment about Afghanistan? What's your future plan for the Afghan people, especially Afghan woman? Thank you very much.

President Trump. I have a little hard time understanding you. Where are you from?

Q. Afghanistan.

Q. Afghanistan.

Q. I am from Afghanistan.

President Trump. Oh, actually, it's a beautiful voice and a beautiful accent. The only problem is, I can't understand a word you're saying. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President, I said——

President Trump. But—but I just say this: Good luck. Live in peace.

Q. ——what's your plan for Afghanistan?

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

President Trump. Go ahead, please.

Iran/U.S. Sanctions

Q. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President——

President Trump. That's okay. Yes, please.

Q. ——and Prime Minister. You said earlier today that it was tough for you to implement these sanctions on Iran, but you did indicate that you were willing to negotiate with them. What would that look like, and are you in conversations with them?

President Trump. Yes.

Q. And the same for the Prime Minister, sir.

President Trump. I hated doing it. I want Iran to be peaceful and successful. I hated doing it. I did it once before, and we brought them down to a level where they were unable to give any money. They had to survive themselves, and they had no money. They were essentially broke, and they had no money for, as I said, Hizballah. They had no money for Hamas. They had no money for any form of terror—the 28—if you call it, the 28 sites of terror. They had no money for any of it.

They had to do their own and focus on their own well-being. And I hated to do it then, and I hate it—I hate to do it just as much now.

And I say this, and I say this to Iran, who is listening very intently: I would love to be able to make a great deal, a deal where you can get on with your lives, and you'll do wonderfully. You'll do wonderfully.

Incredible people—industrious, beautiful, just an unbelievable group of people in Iran. And I know them well. I have many friends from Iran and many friends that are Americans from Iran, and they're very proud of Iran.

But I hated to do it, just so you understand. And I hope we're going to be able to do something so that it doesn't end up in a very catastrophic situation. I don't want to see that happen. I want to see——

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

I really want to see peace, and I hope that we're able to do that.

They cannot have a nuclear weapon. It's very simple. I'm not putting restrictions. I'm not—they cannot have—one thing: They cannot have a nuclear weapon.

And if I think that they will have a nuclear weapon, despite what I just said, that—I think that's going to be very unfortunate for them.

If, on the other hand, they can convince us that they won't, and I hope they can—it's very easy to do; it's actually very easy to do—I think they're going to have an unbelievable future.

Yes, please. Sir, go ahead.

Ukraine/Russia

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You just laid out your plan for Gaza.

President Trump. Yes.

Q. Can you lay down your plan for Ukraine? And also——

President Trump. For Ukraine?

Q. For Ukraine, yes. You consider yourself a strong leader. You blamed your predecessor for letting Russia to take over Ukraine. Will you demand from Putin to get out of Ukraine—from sovereign territory of Ukraine?

President Trump. So we're dealing right now on the subject—I don't want to spend a lot of time because we're here for another reason—but we are having very good talks, very constructive talks on Ukraine. And we're talking to the Russians. We're talking to the Ukrainian leadership.

It would have never happened. That would have never happened—it should have never happened. I get reports every week: the number of soldiers—mostly soldiers now. The cities have been largely demolished. You talk about a very sad sight to see.

We talk Gaza. Well, many of these cities look as bad as Gaza and worse—what's happened to them—and I want to see that end.

And I want to see it end for one simple reason: the life of young people being absolutely obliterated on both sides. You probably have 700,000 Ukrainian soldiers dead, 800,000—maybe more—Russian soldiers dead. It's very flat land, and the only thing that's going to stop a bullet is a human body—in this case, usually soldiers.

And the numbers are staggering, when you hear the real numbers in Ukraine, what the numbers are, and this doesn't include the cities that have been demolished and all of the people that were killed. So I want to see it stopped.

We're having very good talks, and I think we're going to get it. I think something will be, hopefully, dramatically—it will—it will rise above everything. You have to. You can't let this continue. You can't—this is an absolute slaughter that's taking place on the beautiful farmlands of Ukraine, and we have to stop it. We can't let this continue.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

It's a human—it's a human—it is a human tragedy, and we're going to try very hard to stop it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes, please. Go ahead, sir. Go ahead.

Q. Mr. President——

[A White House aide held up a microphone.]

Sorry. Thank you very much.

White House aide. *[Inaudible]*

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Okay. Mr. President, what's your view about Palestinian leader Abbas role in all the regional changes you want to do?

And a question for the Prime Minister. What's your view on President Trump wanting to reach a deal with Iran and offer a much more active military stance towards them?

President Trump. Go ahead, Bibi. Go ahead.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I think the President just said something that I think is the pivot of everything that we're talking about. He said Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon, and we fully agree with that. If this goal can be achieved by a maximum pressure campaign, so be it, but I think the most important thing is to focus on the goal, which the president just did. And I fully agree with him.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. Well, I said it, and he said it very well. It's a—it's a campaign of pressure to see if we can get something done. He doesn't want to do what some people think will automatically happen, because they're very difficult people to deal with, as you know.

But if we could solve this problem without warfare, without all of the things that you've been witnessing over the last number of years, it would be—I think it would be a tremendous thing.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead, please.

The President's Travel Schedule

Q. Do you have the plans to visit Israel soon? Do you have any plans to visit Israel soon?

President Trump. To visit where?

Q. Israel.

Q. Israel, and Gaza too.

President Trump. Oh, well, I love—I love Israel. I will visit there and I'll visit Gaza and I'll visit Saudi Arabia, and I'll visit other places all over the Middle East. The Middle East is an incredible place—so vibrant, so—it's just one of the really beautiful places and the—with great people.

And I think a lot of bad leadership has taken place in the Middle East that's allowed this to happen. It's just terrible—and that includes on the American side, by the way. We should have never gone in there a long time ago, spent trillions of dollars, and created so much death, so—and that includes Americans.

But yes, I'll be visiting a lot of different places in the Middle East. I've been invited everywhere, but I will be visiting some. Yes.

Okay.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Let's go.

Q. Just to follow up——

Q. Thank you, Mr. President—

President Trump. Kaitlan [Kaitlan Collins, CNN], go ahead. Kaitlan.

Q. Just to follow up—thank you so much, President Trump.

Q. Thank you—oh——

President Trump. Kaitlan, go ahead.

Q. Just to follow up on—on what you were saying there about——

President Trump. Say it? Go ahead, please.

Gaza/Status of Palestinian Refugees/Jordan/Egypt

Q. Just to follow up on what you were saying about the Gazans leaving Gaza, going to other countries. One, where exactly are you suggesting that they should go? And two, are you saying they should return after it's rebuilt? And if not, who do you envision living there?

President Trump. I envision world people living there—the world's people. I think you'll make that into an international, unbelievable place. I think the potential in the Gaza Strip is unbelievable. And I think the entire world—representatives from all over the world will be there, and they'll——

Q. But not the Palestinians?

President Trump. ——and they'll live there. Palestinians, also. Palestinians will live there. Many people will live there.

But they've tried the other, and they've tried it for decades and decades and decades. It's not going to work. It didn't work. It will never work. And you have to learn from history. History has—you know, you just can't let it keep repeating itself.

We have an opportunity to do something that could be phenomenal—and I don't want to be cute, I don't want to be a wise guy—but the Riviera of the Middle East. This could be something that could be so——

Q. But where would those people go in the meantime, Mr. President?

President Trump. ——this could be so magnificent.

But more importantly than that is the people that have been absolutely destroyed—that live there now—can live in peace in a much better situation, because they are living in hell. And those people will now be able to live in peace. We'll make sure that it's done world class. It will be wonderful for the people—Palestinians——

Q. But they'll want to know where you want them to go in the meantime.

President Trump. ——Palestinians, mostly, we're talking about. And I have a feeling that—despite them saying no, I have a feeling that the King in Jordan and the general, President—but that the general in Egypt will open their hearts and will give us the kind of land that we need to get this done, and people can live in harmony and in peace.

Thank you all very much.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 6:49 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Peter B. Hegseth; Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent; White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt; King Abdullah II of Jordan; and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to former President Bashar al-Assad of Syria. Reporters referred to Israeli soldier Edan Alexander of Tenaflly, NJ, who was

captured during the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. The transcript was released by the Office of the Communications on February 5.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences, Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abdullah II, King; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Elsisi, Abdelfattah Said; Hegseth, Peter B.; Leavitt, Karoline; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Rubio, Marco A.; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Waltz, Michael G.; Witkoff, Steve.

Subjects: Anti-Semitism; Arab-Israeli conflict, peace process; Counterterrorism and homeland security; Egypt, President; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, regional involvement; 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; Israel, relations with U.S.; Israel, U.S. recognition of Golan Heights sovereignty; Israel, U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as capital; Jordan, King; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary organization; Middle East, regional integration and security; National Security Adviser; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Saudi Arabia, relations with U.S.; Secretary of Defense; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury; Somalia, U.S. counterterrorism efforts; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; United Nations Human Rights Council; United Nations Relief and Works Agency; Vice President; White House Press Secretary.

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