

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba of Japan
February 7, 2025

President Trump. Thank you very much.

Thank you very much. It's a great honor to be with the Prime Minister. We had a picture taken a little while ago. And it was so nice, I thought I'd present it to you on stage, and here's the picture.

Audience member. Ahh.

President Trump. I wish I was as handsome as him, but I'm not. *[Laughter]*

[At this point, the President gave the Prime Minister a photograph.]

Prime Minister Ishiba. Thank you.

[The President gave the Prime Minister a book.]

Okay, thank you. Beautiful.

President Trump. We remember that day.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it.

I'm delighted to welcome Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru to the White House for the first time. And, Prime Minister, it's an honor to have you with us, a great honor. Japan is a great country. Thank you very much.

Japan is strong and proud. It's a nation that is home to one of the great civilizations in the history of the world. For nearly 80 years, the American-Japanese people have enjoyed a friendship like few others—we've had a great friendship—across a vast ocean. And we found ourselves united by bonds of history, commerce, culture, mutual admiration, and great respect.

After our meeting today, I'm confident that the cherished alliances between our two countries—and others, also—will continue to flourish long and into the future.

The military cooperation between the United States and Japan is one of our closest security partnerships, and it's one of the closest we have anywhere in the world. Our servicemembers work together every day to defend our common interests.

Japan has committed to double its defense spending by 2027, compared to my first term. They've invested a lot of money because of my first term. We worked on that very hard with Shinzo—you know, the great Shinzo Abe. And we look forward to seeing even more so. Shinzo and I worked very, very long and hard, and those numbers are very reflective, after my first term. And now they're going up very substantially based on our conversations today.

In addition to being vital for our shared security, Japan is one of the top purchasers of U.S. military exports and equipment. And I'm pleased to say that, this week, my administration approved nearly a billion dollars in foreign military sales to Tokyo.

The United States is totally committed to the security of Japan. We will extend the full strength of American deterrence capabilities in defense of our friend and ally, hundred percent.

In the years to come, the Prime Minister and I will be working closely together to maintain peace and security—and I also say peace through strength—and all over the Indo-Pacific. And to

that end, we also remain committed to the effort I began in my first term to ensure safety and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Prime Minister Ishiba and I spoke long and hard about a vital economic relationship between our two countries and the continuance of that relationship. The United States and Japan trade over \$300 billion in goods and services each year. Japan has invested nearly \$800 billion—and that's going to go up very, very substantially in the coming months—more than any other country.

And they're going to have some competition. We have a lot of people coming in and investing in the United States. I think our—the feeling throughout the world has never been stronger about this country.

As a result of our victory in 2024, the Presidential election, the Japanese investment and technology giant SoftBank announced plans to invest between \$100 and \$200 billion. We have many other companies investing that number, higher than that number. Some, a little bit less. But we have trillions of dollars of investment pouring into our country now that you didn't have just a short while ago.

Today our teams discussed how our two Nations can do even more to stay on the cutting edge of artificial intelligence, along with the quantum computing, semiconductors, and other critical technologies—and they're coming out. The problem with technology, that kind: It's obsolete in about 2 days, so we have to start all over again. Doesn't last long.

We agreed to cooperate even more closely to combat the Chinese economic aggression, which is quite aggressive.

I'm also pleased to announce that Japan will soon begin importing historic new shipments of clean American liquefied natural gas in record numbers. It will be record numbers.

With our Secretary of the Interior, we were talking—I think Doug is here. Hello, Doug. Please stand up, Doug. Doug Burgum, everybody.

We're talking about the pipeline in Alaska, which is the closest point of major oil and gas to Japan by far, less than half the distance of any other location. We're talking about a joint venture of some type between Japan and us, having to do with Alaska oil and gas, and that's very exciting. They're very excited about it. So are we.

As we deepen our economic relationship, I made clear that the United States will be conducting trade with all countries based on the principle of fairness and reciprocity. Chronic trade deficits not only undermine our economy—they really do, and we're going to get rid of the trade—we have a trade deficit with Japan of over \$100 billion. But we're going to work that out, and I think very quickly. Frankly, we can do it just on oil and gas. We can work it out. So we intend to do it very quickly. We both understand that.

And as America welcomes new foreign investment, we also want to ensure that companies build their products and factories here in America, not simply by the assets that we have.

And Japan is going to be opening up auto plants. New auto plants are being built, currently as we speak. They've just been started. Toyota is one, and Nissan is going to be doing something very exciting about—about U.S. Steel. They'll be looking at an investment rather than a purchase.

We didn't like the idea. U.S. Steel is a very important company to us. It was the greatest company in the world for 15 years many years ago—80 years ago—and we didn't want to see that leave. And it wouldn't actually leave, but the concept—psychologically, not good.

So they've agreed to invest heavily in U.S. Steel, as opposed to own it. And that sounds very exciting. And we're going to meet with Nissan next week, the head of Nissan—a very great company—and they'll work out the details. I'll help. I'll be there to mediate and arbitrate.

And I had the privilege of working closely with the great Prime Minister—as you know, and you knew him very well—Shinzo Abe, the longest serving Prime Minister in Japan's history. Likewise, I expect that this Prime Minister is going to be a great one.

I really believe that. He's going to be a great one. I've gotten to know him for not long, but I can see what they have. He's got—he's got the qualities of greatness. He's going to do a fantastic job for Japan and for the Japanese people.

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

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you. Thank you very much.

Prime Minister Ishiba. Mr. President Trump, I would like to sincerely thank you for inviting me to the White House today immediately following your Inauguration. I also thank you for your very warm hospitality.

I have come to Washington, DC, with the hope of having a face-to-face meeting and deepening our mutual understanding at this early date with President Trump, who is now leading the United States, the most important country for Japan's diplomacy and security, and aligning our perspectives and visions that Japan and the United States should pursue.

What should we do to advance the national interests of both of our countries in synergy and to realize peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific? I am convinced that the answer lies in further strengthening the strong and unwavering Japan-U.S. alliance to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific.

President and I concurred to strengthen the deterrence and response capabilities of the alliance and to work closely in addressing strategic challenges that both countries are facing in this region.

I conveyed to the President that Japan, as an ally of the United States, is ready to share responsibilities and to play its own role. I also reiterated Japan's unwavering commitment to fundamentally reinforcing its defense capabilities, and we confirmed the unwavering commitment by the United States to the defense of Japan.

We reaffirmed that Article V of the Japan-U.S. Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security applies to the Senkaku Islands.

With half of the world's population and approximately 60 percent of the world's GDP, the Indo-Pacific serves as the engine of growth and vitality for Japan, the United States, and the world.

President and I also concurred that the United States and Japan will make further efforts in a wide range of areas, working hand in hand together to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In this context, we also concurred to further advance cooperation of the multi-layered networks of the like-minded countries, including the Quad and trilateral cooperation with the Republic of Korea and the Philippines.

We also discussed Japan-United States cooperation to bring about growth and prosperity. Economic cooperation, including on economic security, is important from the perspective of strengthening alliance cooperation.

Japan is the closest economic partner of the United States and has been the world's largest investor in the United States for 5 consecutive years.

Also, with the inauguration of President Trump, the momentum for Japanese companies to invest in the United States is growing even stronger.

Today I conveyed my willingness to cooperate together to elevate Japan's investment in the United States to an unprecedented amount of \$1 trillion.

President Trump and myself also concurred to elevate the Japan-U.S. partnership to an even higher level through improving business environment and increasing bilateral investment in employment; strengthening each other's industries; leading the world in developing advanced technologies, such as AI and leading-edge semiconductors; and strongly promoting efforts to harness the energy of the growing market in the Indo-Pacific region.

We also confirmed that we will cooperate to strengthen energy security between the two countries, including increasing exports of United States liquefied natural gas to Japan in a mutually beneficial manner. Regarding foreign exchange, as in the first Trump administration, close discussions will continue between Japanese and the U.S. Finance Ministers, who are experts in this field.

We also held candid discussions on challenges the Indo-Pacific region is facing. We confirmed that we are resolved not to allow unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, and to oppose such attempts in the East and South China Seas in order to fully defend a free and open Indo-Pacific. We also reiterated the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Regarding North Korea, we affirmed the need to address its nuclear and missile program, which poses a serious threat to Japan, the U.S., and beyond, and that Japan and the U.S. will work together toward the complete denuclearization of North Korea.

As the abductees and their families continued to age, I conveyed my strong sense of urgency and determination directly to President Trump and gained his renewed strong support for the immediate resolution of the abductions issue.

While this was my first face-to-face meeting with President Trump, we were able to openly and frankly exchange views, and our meeting turned out to be very productive and meaningful.

As a result of today's meeting, which marked a new departure for the Japan-U.S. relations, we are issuing a Japan-U.S. joint leaders' statement. This document will serve as a compass for further cooperation between our two countries.

On the basis of these deliverables, I look forward to working together with President Trump, who I respect immensely, to usher in a new golden age of Japan-U.S. relations. I look forward to welcoming you to Japan, and I am very excited about that prospect.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Any questions, please? Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News].

White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk

Q. President Trump, I have two on DOGE. Elon Musk said today, "I love Donald Trump as much as a straight man can love another man." [*Laughter*] What does the First Lady think about that?

President Trump. Oh, I think she'll be okay with it somehow. [*Laughter*]

Government Payment Systems/Department of Education/Efforts To Reduce Government Waste

Q. So Democratic lawmakers are really upset that DOGE engineers have access to these Treasury payment systems. The Senate intel Dems wrote a letter to Susie Wiles. They're saying

that these systems are used to disperse trillions of dollars each year and contain everyday Americans' personal information, like Social Security numbers, home addresses, bank accounts. Why does DOGE need all of that stuff?

President Trump. Well, it doesn't, but they get it very easily. I mean, we don't have very good security in our country, and they get it very easily. And what we're doing, if you look at what has just taken place with respect to some of the investments that have been made on another agency that people have been talking about for years, but nobody did anything about it, it's absolutely obscene—dangerous, bad, very costly.

I mean, virtually every investment made is a con job. There's nothing of value to anybody, unless there's a kickback scheme going on, which is possible.

And we're going to be doing more and more and more of that. We're going to be looking at Department of Education. We're going to be looking at even our military. We're going to be looking at tremendous amounts of money, Peter, being spent on things that bear no relationship to anything and have no value.

We're talking about trillions of dollars. It will be, in the end, trillions of dollars being absolutely wasted and perhaps illegally—I would say, certainly, in many cases, illegally—but perhaps illegally overall.

And I'm very proud of the job that this group of young people—generally, young people, but very smart people—they're doing. They're doing it at my insistence. It would be a lot easier not to do it, but we have to take some of these things apart to find the corruption. And we've found tremendous corruption.

Education/School Choice Programs

Q. You mentioned the Department of Education. What did you think when you saw Democratic lawmakers trying to get into the Department of Education earlier today?

President Trump. Oh, I see the same ones. I see Maxine Waters, a lowlife. I see, you know, all these people. They don't—they don't love our country. They don't love our country. We want great education.

So they rank 40 countries in education. We're ranked dead last—dead last. But the good news is we're number one in one category. You know what that is? Cost per pupil. We spend more per pupil than on—any other country in the world. You look at Norway, Denmark, Sweden, various countries all up and down—Finland—China does very well in education—and then you look at us. We spend much more money than they do per pupil—or any other way, but we spend much more money than they do. And yet we're ranked, this year, last—Biden's last year—congratulations, Joe—we're ranked dead last.

So what I want to see is education. Number one, I like choice. We all like choice. But beyond choice—long beyond choice, I want to see it go back to the States, where great States that do so well—have no debt, they're operated brilliantly—they'll be as good as Norway or Denmark or Sweden or any of the other highly ranked countries. They'll be—you'll probably have 30—I figure 35 to 38 States will be right at the top, and the rest will come along. They'll have to come along, competitively.

And by the way, we'll be spending a lot less money, and we'll have great education.

Q. As part of this DOGE cost-cutting effort, one of the DOGE engineers was fired for some inappropriate posts. The Vice President says, "Bring him back." What do you say?

President Trump. Well, I don't know about the particular thing, but if the Vice President said that—did you say that?

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance. I did say that.

President Trump. I'm with the Vice President. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Peter.

[Several reporters began speaking at once.]

Yes. Go ahead, please. Yes, red dress.

U.S. Military Readiness/Secretary of Defense Peter B. Hegseth

Q. Red dress? Thank you so much, President. Thank you. Just how strong do you want Japan's military to be? And do you specifically hope that their increased military spending will deter China and North Korea? What did you talk about that with—today?

President Trump. Well, I want our military to be the strongest. I also don't mind spending so much money on the military, because we build it here. It's made in the U.S.A. All made in the U.S.A.

We have—you know, I rebuilt our military during my first term. Did a great job. We left some of it behind in Afghanistan, stupidly. There was no reason for that. But it was still—as much as it was—it was billions and billions of dollars, but it was a small part of it.

But we're going to have the strongest military by far. We have great people. I want to congratulate Pete Hegseth for having gone through the gauntlet. He went through a lot, but he got through, and he's going to be a tremendous—I have no doubt he's going to be a tremendous leader. And other of the leaders sitting here, they're—in their own fields, they're going to—we're going to do something very—very great, and we expect great things.

But I expect the strongest military, by far, in the world—far stronger than China, far stronger than anybody, and that's the way it is.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President.

President Trump. Would you like to ask a question? Please. Go ahead.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. Thank you.

Q. This is Hiramoto from Nippon Television. My question—two—let me ask two quick questions.

President Trump. Sure.

Japan-U.S. Relations/U.S. Trade Policy

Q. First, this is the first meeting between Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister Ishiba. So what kind of impression do you have on him?

And, number two, do you have an idea or do you have a plan to impose tariff against Japan so far?

Thank you.

President Trump. I think that he is going to be a great Prime Minister. I think he's a very strong man—very, very strong. I have great respect for him. I've known him for a long time,

through a reputation. Shinzo Abe thought the world of him, and I think he's going to do a fantastic job as Prime Minister.

A very strong person. I wish he wasn't so strong. [*Laughter*] I wish he was a little bit weaker than that, but that's what I got. [*Laughter*] I have to get strong guys all the time. He's going to be a great Prime Minister.

I also—in terms of tariffs, I mean, we're going to have tariffs. Mostly reciprocal tariffs, where we go with—and I'm going to be probably meeting on that Monday or Tuesday—have an announcement, probably a news conference. But probably reciprocal tariffs, where a country pays so much or charges us so much, and we do the same.

So very reciprocal, because I think that's the only fair way to do it. That way, nobody is hurt. They charge us. We charge them. It's the same thing. And I seem to be going in that line, as opposed to a flat fee tariff.

Okay.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Trump. Yes, go. Please. Please, go ahead. Why don't you go ahead?

Q. This is Ota from Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper. I have a question for Prime Minister Ishiba. So this is your very first summit meeting. What was your impression of President Trump? Were you able to build a good relationship of trust and confidence?

In Northeast Asia, there are many challenges: China, North Korea, and so forth. And with President Trump, what did you appeal to him? And what kind of understanding were you able to obtain?

On the economic field, there is the acquisition of U.S. Steel by Nippon Steel. And there are expansion of import of LNG. What were the communication, discussion did you have with President Trump? For the \$1 trillion of investment from Japan's investment, what was his reaction? What about your communication on tariff front?

Prime Minister Ishiba. This is the first time that I met with President Trump in person. So this was the first time meeting face to face. But for many, many years, I have watched him on television. So it was quite exciting—I was so excited to see such a celebrity on television to see in person. On television, he is frightening—[*laughter*—and he has the very strong personality.

But when I met with him actually, he was very sincere and very powerful and with strong will for the United States as for the whole world. I was able to feel that—this is not the sort of polishing or trying to suck up to him—for the world peace and for the regional stability that both of our countries need to play our role and make our endeavors and responsibility.

As for the increase of our defense expenditures, it is not that we are told by the United States to do so. Japan, on our own—on our own decision and on our own responsibility—we need to increase our defense expenditures. But of course, we need to communicate and consult with the United States. But the responsibility is with Japan, and the decision is with Japan.

Now, on the tariffs—that if it is mutually beneficial, tariffs need to be set. And as for Japan, as Mr. President has introduced to us, an unprecedented investment will be made from Japan to the United States, and so many jobs will be created. So \$1 trillion is the target. And this will be to the benefit of the United States, but also to the benefit of Japan as well. Investment is mutually beneficial.

So, be it with U.S. Steel, as Mr. President says, it is not acquisition. It is investment. So the Japanese technology will be provided, and the better quality products will be manufactured in the

United States. And U.S. Steel will make products which will contribute not only to the United States and Japan, but also to the whole world.

It is not one-sided. It will be reciprocal. It will be mutually beneficial. And I believe we were able to share on this, and that is the biggest result that I have seen today.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. Thank you very much.

Go ahead, please.

Q. Me?

President Trump. Yes.

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

[A White House aide held up a microphone.]

Oh, sorry.

U.S. Steel Corporation

Edward Lawrence from Fox Business. I wanted to ask you about that U.S. Steel deal. So you're saying that—is this a restructuring of the deal that's happening? And then, will you approve——

President Trump. They're doing it as an investment, no longer a purchase.

Q. Okay.

President Trump. I didn't want it purchased, but investment I love.

Q. And is that——

President Trump. And they're going to do a big investment, subject to getting the deal done. And they'll be doing a big——

Q. And that's something you would approve, where the U.S.——

President Trump. I'm okay with that, sure.

U.S. Trade Policy/Domestic Energy Production

Q. And for the Prime Minister, what was your argument to the President related to U.S. Steel?

And one more on tariffs, Mr. President, if I could. You said on tariffs that you'd like them to have—be reciprocal, back and forth. What was the reception from the Japanese Prime Minister when you said that or when you talked about it in your meeting?

President Trump. Well, we didn't discuss tariffs too much. We really discussed many other things, including the pipeline in Alaska, which I think is going to be maybe the most exciting thing—with Doug and Chris. We discussed that at length, the pipeline. I mean, it seemed to be of great interest to them.

It's—we have potentially more oil and gas than in Saudi Arabia, just in Alaska. We have the most of any country in the world. It's a big asset for the United States, but we haven't used it.

We go to Venezuela, we go to other places to take oil and gas, and we have more than anybody. It's an amazing phenomenon that took place over the last 4 years. Nobody understands

it, including the people that were in charge of it. They had no clue what they were doing. So it was a big problem.

They were surprised, actually, too. They were saying, "Why? Why didn't they"—They—they wouldn't sell them LNG. They wouldn't sell. Japan wanted to buy LNG, and Biden wouldn't sell it. And I'm trying to figure that one out. Maybe it was the environment.

You might answer that question. He's curious about that himself, I think.

Thank you very much.

If you want to answer that, you may—about LNG, that the United States wouldn't sell you LNG.

Prime Minister Ishiba. That was a really unfortunate thing, but the current administration—I'm sorry, the previous administration was not allowing the LNG to be exported to us.

I believe that President Trump, on the day of his Inauguration, allowed us to resume this importing. I think this is something that is really wonderful for us. And as the country of Japan, we are interested in importing not just LNG, but also bioethanol, ammonia, and other reasonable—other resources at a stable price, a reasonable price from the United States.

And we also want to improve the trade deficit the U.S. has towards Japan. So, if we are able to buy those at a stable and reasonable price, I think it would be a wonderful situation. And, for that, I am very appreciative to President Trump. And we also look forward to LNG and hope that it's a success.

President Trump. I want to just say that, on the ethanol, Iowa is going to be very happy. All of the—Nebraska, all of our farm States are going to be very happy. They want ethanol, and we'll be able to provide it. So our farmers—who I like, and they like me—I think they're going to be very, very happy.

We've opened the sale of LNG immediately. Actually, we did it a few days ago. And China—and right now, not only China, everybody wants to buy it. We have more than anybody, and they're all buying it. But Japan, in particular, we're very happy that they're going to start immediately, and we can supply it to the world, but we're supplying it to Japan, and they're going to always be right up in the front of the line.

Yes, go ahead. Please. Go ahead.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Government Spending Review/Defense Budget

Q. Thank you so much. Mr. Prime Minister, I have a question for you as well, but, Mr. President, I'll start with you.

Quickly, to follow up on what Peter was asking, have you directed Elon Musk to review Pentagon spending, given it's the biggest discretionary spending——

President Trump. Yes, I have.

Q. ——in the Federal budget?

President Trump. Pentagon, Education, just about everything. We're going to go through everything, just as it was so bad with what we just went through with this horrible situation we just went through, and I guess 97 percent of the people have been dismissed. It was very, very unfortunate.

You're not going to find anything like that, but you're going to find a lot. And I've instructed him to go check out Education, to check out the Pentagon, which is the military. And you know, sadly, you'll find some things that are pretty bad. But I don't think, proportionally, you're going to see anything like we just saw.

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Q. And your FBI has turned over a list to the Justice Department of the FBI agents who worked on the January 6 rioters' cases. Are you planning to fire the FBI agents who worked on those investigations?

President Trump. No, but I'll fire some of them because some of them were corrupt. I have no doubt about that. I got to know a lot about that business, that world.

Q. Which ones do you plan to fire?

President Trump. I got to know a lot about that world, and we had some corrupt agents, and those people are gone, or they will be gone, and it will be done quickly and very surgically.

Q. Are those the ones who worked on the January 6 investigation?

President Trump. Did you have a question for the Prime Minister?

Q. Are—just to clarify, are those the ones who worked on the January 6 investigations?

President Trump. Talk up.

Q. Are those the ones who worked on the January 6th investigations?

President Trump. I don't know. I don't know. I know we have some that are very corrupt, and we don't like it. We're going to bring back the reputation of the FBI. Kash Patel is going to do a great job, and we're going to bring back the reputation of the FBI, which has been hurt very badly. It's been devastated over the last 4 years.

North Korea

Q. And, Mr. Prime Minister, you have just been meeting for the first time with President Trump. The last administration famously did not have hardly any, if at all, contact with North Korea. President Trump certainly did the last time he was in office. Would you like to see him resume that—that contact, and also that in-person meeting that he had with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un?

Prime Minister Ishiba. That is something that the United States needs to determine on its own, and it's not something that we should request. Having said that, but—for example, in Vietnam or Singapore, the President of the United States, President Trump, was able to meet with Kim Jong Un. I think that's a very positive development.

So now that President Trump is in power again, if we are able to move towards resolving issues with the North Korea, I think it would be a great—and of course, for us, that includes not only denuclearization, but also resolving the abductee issue. And so the—not only the victims of the abductees but also their families, too, are aging, and so our time is limited.

So, if the President of the United States, if President Trump, is able to resolve this issue—we do understand that it's a Japan issue first and foremost. Having said that, we would love to continue to cooperate with them.

President Trump. It's actually a good question, and we will have relations with North Korea and with Kim Jong Un. I got along with him very well, as you know. I think I stopped a war. I think if I wouldn't have won that particular election, you would have ended up in that——

Q. Are you planning on speaking with him?

President Trump. —a very bad—a very bad situation, but I did. And we had a good relationship, and I think it's a very big asset for everybody that I do get along with him. I like—I mean, I get along with him. He gets along with me. And that's a good thing, not a bad thing.

And I can tell you that Japan likes the idea, because their relationship is not very good with him. And if I can have a relationship with not only him but other people throughout the world where there seem to be difficulties, I think that's a tremendous asset for the world, not just the United States.

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. Go ahead, Garrett [Garrett Haake, NBC News].

White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk

Q. Thank you. I have a question for you and for the Prime Minister as well. Mr. President, I wonder what you make of the criticism from Democrats that these staff reductions, the cuts that Elon Musk and DOGE are doing are an unlawful power grab? And is there anything you've told Elon Musk he cannot touch?

President Trump. Well, we haven't discussed that much. I'll tell him to go here, go there. He does it. He's got a very capable group of people, very, very, very capable. They know what they're doing. They'll ask questions, and they'll see immediately, as somebody gets tongue tied, that they're either crooked or don't know what they're doing.

We have very smart people going in. So I've instructed him, "Go into Education, go into military, go into other things as we go along." And they're finding massive amounts of fraud, abuse, waste, all of these things.

So—but I will pick out a target, and I say, "Go in." There could be areas that we won't, but I can—I think everything's fertile. You know, we're a Government. We have to be open, and as an open Government—I don't know, I guess you could say maybe some high intelligence or something. And I'll do that myself, if I have to.

But generally speaking, I'll just say, "Go." But he will be looking at Education pretty quickly, and he will be looking at military too.

Entitlement Programs/Illegal Immigration

Q. To that end, as you know, the bulk of Federal spending is Social Security, Medicare programs——

President Trump. Sure.

Q. —like that. Would you like to see him look at those programs as well?

President Trump. Well, they don't really have to be looked at by him. They can be looked at by us. Social Security will not be touched. It will only be strengthened.

We have illegal immigrants on Social Security, and we're going to find out who they are and take them out. We have illegal immigrants in other—Medicare. We have—we found a lot of bad people, a lot of people that shouldn't be on that were put on when—through California. They come—a lot of them come out of California. We're not going to stand for that.

So we're going to strengthen our Social Security, et cetera. We're not going to touch it, other than to make it stronger. But we have people that shouldn't be on, and those people we have to

weed out. Most of them or many of them, so far, have been illegal immigrants. They shouldn't even be in the country.

Do you have a question for the Prime Minister?

Q. I do. Mr. Prime Minister, the President's affinity for tariffs is well known. If the U.S. places tariffs on Japanese imports, would Japan retaliate?

Prime Minister Ishiba. I am unable to respond to a theoretical question. That's the official answer that we have. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. That's a very good answer. *[Laughter]* Very good answer. Wow. That's very good. He knows what he's doing.

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

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. *[Inaudible]*—on Taiwan?

Q. Mr. President—

Q. Can you assure that U.S. troops will not be on the ground?

President Trump. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Makoto Uchida, chief executive officer, Nissan; Secretary of Energy Christopher A. Wright; and Federal Bureau of Investigation Director-designate Kashyap P. "Kash" Patel. Prime Minister Ishiba referred to Minister of Finance Katsunobu Kato of Japan; and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. A reporter referred to White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles. Prime Minister Ishiba and a reporter spoke in Japanese, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences, Prime Minister Ishiba of Japan.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Burgum, Douglas J.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Ishiba, Shigeru; Kim Jong Un; Musk, Elon R.; Patel, Kashyap P. "Kash"; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Waters, Maxine M.; Wright, Christopher A.

Subjects: Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; Education, global competitiveness; Ethanol and biofuels; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Federal workforce, reduction efforts; Government spending, reduction efforts; Illegal immigration; Japan, defense relationship with U.S.; Japan, investment and business ventures in U.S.; Japan, Prime Minister; Japan, relations with North Korea; Japan, relations with U.S.; Japan, trade with U.S.; Medicare and Medicaid programs; News media, Presidential interviews; North Korea, relations with Japan; North Korea, State Affairs Commission President; Oil and natural gas, domestic production; Secretary of Defense; Secretary of Energy; Secretary of the Interior; Social Security program; U.S. DOGE Service; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; U.S. Steel Corp.; U.S. tariffs on imports, adjustment; Vice President; White House Senior Adviser.

DCPD Number: DCPD202500237.