

**Remarks at a Document Signing Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters**  
*February 10, 2025*

*The President.* Well, thank you very much, everybody. We have a lot of big signings, good signings—one, in particular, which we'll save for the end. And I'll ask Will to go over these individually, and we can see how we do.

*White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf.* Yes, sir. First for your review, we have 56 subcabinet-level appointments. This includes, probably most notably, seven Ambassador appointments. Those will be the first Ambassadors, I believe, that you've——

*The President.* Right.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* ——transmitted to the Senate.

*The President.* Okay. And they're very good.

*[At this point, the President signed the appointments document.]*

Okay.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Thank you, sir.

Second, we have acting designations. We're actually designating Doug Collins to be the acting leader of both the Office of Special Counsel and the Office of Government Ethics.

*[The President signed the designation document.]*

*The President.* You know Doug, everybody, I think. He was in charge of the fake impeachment hearings—remember? That I won very conclusively—fake charges by the radical-left Democrats.

Okay.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Next, sir, the—the Federal Executive Institute is a program that was set up during the Johnson administration to train senior-level government bureaucrats. As you've identified repeatedly in the last few years, the senior levels of our Federal Government are not adequately serving as stewards of taxpayer dollars, so we're recommending zeroing out that program, effectively. *[Laughter]*

*[The President signed an Executive order titled, "Eliminating the Federal Executive Institute."]*

*The President.* We're actually getting rid of a few programs that are just a waste—just really a waste.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Thank you, sir.

Next, we have an Executive order relating to the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. As you have repeatedly identified, the way that this act has been enforced over the years has been devastating to American business opportunities and business competitiveness abroad. We are essentially ordering the Department of Justice to use its prosecutorial discretion in a way to ameliorate the negative effects of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act to allow Americans to do business abroad and to allow our foreign partners to do business with Americans without fearing unjust prosecution.

*The President.* And for those of you that know this, it turned out to be—it sounds good on paper, but in practicality, it's a disaster. It means that if an American goes over to a foreign country and starts doing business over there—legally, legitimately, or otherwise—it's almost a guaranteed investigation, indictment. And nobody wants to do business with the Americans because of it. Nobody wants to do business.

They say: "Look, we can deal with China. They can do whatever they want. We can deal with Russia. We can deal with anybody, and we have a normal life. You deal with America, the FBI gets over there. They don't investigate death and murders on the street in New York and Los Angeles. They—they go over and investigate a business guy trying to do business."

So it made it very, very hard, from a practical standpoint, to make deals. They want to deal with the Americans, but they don't want to be under investigation every time they speak to an American, every time an American makes a phone call to somebody in a different country.

It's a disaster for this country, and the—I guess it was a Jimmy Carter concept. And it sounds so good, but it's so bad. It hurts the country. And many, many deals are unable to be made because of it. Nobody wants to do business because they don't want to feel like every time they pick up a phone, they're going to jail.

So we'll sign this. And it takes courage to sign it, because you only get bad publicity when you sign it. It sounds so nice. The title is so lovely. But it's an absolutely horror show for America. So we're signing it because that's what we have to do to make it good.

*[The President signed an Executive order titled, "Pausing Foreign Corrupt Practices Act Enforcement To Further American Economic and National Security."]*

Okay? Thank you. That's an important one. It's going to mean a lot more business for America. Okay.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Thank you, sir.

Next, this is an Executive order relating to the use of paper straws. As you've consistently identified, nobody really likes paper straws.

*The President.* Number one trending. *[Laughter]* Can you believe it, a paper straw? It was number one trending for 3 days or something.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* The environmental impact of plastic straws versus paper straws is entirely unclear. This has cost both the Government and private industry an absolute ton of money and left consumers all over the country wildly dissatisfied with their straws.

So we're asking aspects of—of the Federal Government, Federal departments and agencies, to look at their existing procurement processes, and we're asking your Domestic Policy Council to look holistically at this issue, to address it. And it really is something that affects ordinary Americans in their everyday lives.

*The President.* We're going back to plastic straws. These things don't work. I've had them many times, and, on occasion, they break. They explode. If something's hot, they don't last very long, like a matter of minutes, sometimes a matter of seconds. It's a ridiculous situation.

So we're going back to plastic straws. I think it's okay.

*[The President signed an Executive order titled, "Ending Procurement and Forced Use of Paper Straws."]*

And I don't think that plastic is going to affect a shark very much as they're eating—as they're munching their way through the ocean. *[Laughter]* Okay.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Thank you, sir.

Next, we have a full and unconditional pardon for former Governor Rod Blagojevich of the state of Illinois.

*The President.* Good. It's my honor to do it. I've watched him. He was set up by a lot of bad people, some of the same people that I had to deal with. He wasn't quite as successful, but he had somebody that saw what was going on.

I didn't know him, other than, I believe, he was on "The Apprentice" for a little while. He was a—just a very nice person. He had a fantastic wife. She fought like hell to get him out. He was given a sentence of, like, 18 years, and—there was a—sort of a terrible injustice. They just were after him. They go after a lot of people. These are bad people, the—the other side.

So I think he's a—just a very fine person. And this shouldn't have happened, and it shouldn't have happened to him, and let him have a normal life and let him go out and do what he has to do. So I'm signing—this is a full pardon. Rod Blagojevich.

[*The President signed the pardon document.*]

*Former Governor Rod R. Blagojevich of Illinois*

*Q.* Mr. President, are you considering him for Ambassador to Serbia?

*The President.* No, but I would. [*Laughter*] I mean, he's now cleaner than anybody in this room. [*Laughter*] He got a pardon. He's cleaner than anybody in the room. Okay.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Thank you, sir.

Next, in 2018, you imposed ad valorem duties tariffs on imports of steel at a 25-percent rate. Since that time, a large number of exclusions and exceptions to that tariff rule have been implemented. Because of the damage to the United States steel industry that those exceptions and exclusions have imposed, we're now—this order would reimpose that 25 percent ad valorem tariff rate on imports of steel, and it's presented for your signature now.

*The President.* Okay. Do you understand what that means?

It's a big deal. It's a big deal. This is the beginning of making America rich again.

[*The President signed a Proclamation titled, "Adjusting Imports of Steel Into the United States."*]

Mr. Secretary, do you have anything to say? This—as you know, Howard is Secretary of Commerce. Doing a fantastic job. And what do you have to say about it?

*Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick.* So, when you imposed the tariffs the first time——

*The President.* Right.

*Secretary Lutnick.* ——you added 120,000 jobs. And since that time, it's been picked away and nicked away and excluded away, and we've lost 107,000 jobs. And remember, these aren't just general jobs. These are steelworkers in America, and now you're going to bring them back. You're going to bring those 120,000 jobs back to America.

You are the President who is standing up for the American steelworker, and I am just tremendously impressed and delighted to stand next to you.

[*Several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

*Q.* Mr. President, steelworkers——

*The President.* So let me just make a statement. And essentially, we're—this is another way of saying we're doing a 25-percent tariff on steel and aluminum.

So the failed American trade policies have led our once-incredible United States steel and aluminum industries—once incredible. That's once incredible. They're not now, but they're not bad. I saved them because of my first term. I totally saved them. If I didn't do what I did—I put massive tariffs—not the highest level, but pretty—pretty massive tariffs. We got—we took in a lot of money, and we took in a lot of jobs.

But we were being pummeled by both friend and foe alike. Our Nation requires steel and aluminum to be made in America, not in foreign lands. We need to create, in order to protect our country's future, a resurgence of U.S. manufacturing and production, the likes of which has not been seen for many decades. It's time for our great industries to come back to America. I want them back to America.

This is the first of many. And you know what I mean by that. We're going to be doing others on other subjects, topics. Protecting our steel and aluminum industries is a must. And today I'm simplifying our tariffs on steel and aluminum so that everyone can understand exactly what it means.

It's 25 percent, without exceptions or exemptions. And that's all countries, no matter where it comes from—all countries. If made in the United States, however—United States of America—there is no tariff—zero. So, if it's made in the United States, there is no tariff. All you have to do is make it in the United States. We don't need it from another country.

As an example, Canada. If we make it in the United States, we don't need it to be made in Canada. We'll have the jobs. That's why Canada should be our 51st State.

We'll bring back industries, and we'll bring back our jobs, and we'll make America industry great again. So, essentially, we're putting on a 25-percent tariff, without exception, on all aluminum and all steel. And it's going to mean a lot of businesses are going to be opening in the United States.

Now, we're going to be meeting over the next 4-week period, maybe on a weekly basis, and maybe we'll do a couple of them at different times and maybe together. But we'll be talking about other subjects, like cars. We'll be talking about drugs and pharmaceuticals. We'll be discussing chips, and we're going to be doing some other things in addition to that, all which will bring in a lot of jobs into our country.

Cars is going to be a very big one and a very important one. And America is going to be stronger than it ever was before. Okay?

So are you finished with everything, I think?

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* We have aluminum still to sign here, sir.

*The President.* Okay. Let's go.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* So, with respect to aluminum, similarly to steel, since 2018, a large number of exceptions and exemptions have been added into the law. This eliminates all of those and also increases the ad valorem tariff rate from 10 to 25 percent.

*The President.* Mostly, the last part is the most important.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Yes.

*The President.* Right? Would you say?

*Secretary Lutnick.* Totally. [Laughter]

*The President.* So, basically, this is aluminum. The same thing. No exceptions, no nothing. And it's going to bring our aluminum business back. It may go higher. I mean, frankly, it may go higher.

And we're going to also be talking about receptive—we're going to be talking about things over the next 3 weeks that I think will be amazing for our country, amazing for our jobs, and will bring us to a new level of prosperity.

And I think, frankly, our allies and our enemies all over the world expected this. They really expected it for years. They really expected it sometime during the Biden administration, but they didn't do anything.

As you know, I put tariffs on China. We took in hundreds of billions of dollars with those tariffs, and Biden wasn't able to get them out. He tried to, but it was too much money. He couldn't do it.

And we're going to be doing a very concise and, you know, a very—it's going to be good. And I don't think if—if done properly—and we're going to try and do that. We don't want it to hurt other countries, but they've been taking advantage of us for years and years and years, and they've charged us tariffs. Most of them have charged us—almost every one, I would say, almost without exception.

*Secretary Lutnick.* Definitely.

*The President.* They've charged us, and we haven't charged them. And it's time to be reciprocal. So, very, very—you'll be hearing that word a lot: reciprocal. If they charge us, we charge them. If they're at 25, we're at 25. If they're at 10, we're at 10. And if they're much higher than 25, that's where we are too.

So that's having to do with everything. That's not just steel and aluminum. But we'll be discussing that over the next couple of weeks.

But we will be looking at chips, and we will be looking at cars, and we're going to be looking at pharmaceuticals. And there'll be a couple of other things also, in addition. That will be—[inaudible].

[*The President signed a proclamation titled, "Adjusting Imports of Aluminum Into the United States."*]

*Q.* Mr. President——

*Q.* Mr. President, you spoke to the Prime——

#### *U.S. Steel Industry/Tariffs*

*Q.* Mr. President, U.S. steelworkers have said that they support this move. But what would you say to American consumers who are worried that prices might go up?

*The President.* That they do support this move?

*Q.* U.S. steelmakers, a lot——

*The President.* I love the steelmakers. That's good.

*Q.* But what do you say——

*The President.* Of course, they——

*Q.* ——to American consumer——

*The President.* Because they want to save their businesses. U.S. Steel will now be a very valuable company. Anybody that makes steel is going to be great. Anybody that works in Big Steel is going to be very happy.

*Q.* But what do you say to consumers who are worried about prices, sir?

*The President.* Oh, I don't think you're going to—no, you're going to ultimately have a price reduction, because they're going to make their steel here. There's not going to be any tariff. These foreign companies will move to the United States, will make their steel and aluminum in the United States.

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* Ultimately, it will be cheaper.

*Q.* What are you looking at in terms of——

*The President.* But we'll also have jobs.

*Q.* What are——

*The President.* Many, many more jobs.

#### *Tariffs/U.S. Automobile Industry*

*Q.* Sir, what are you looking at in terms of tariffs on cars and chips and so forth?

*The President.* Well, we're looking at numbers, and we'll be coming up with a number. But we have—we make some of the finest cars in the world, and some companies prohibit us from selling those cars in their countries. But they sell us cars. They send cars to us. And we don't do that. We charge nothing or 2½ percent. And they'll be charging 100 percent. They'll be charging much more than that, if you look at some of them.

So I think those days are over. But we'll be announcing on other things, such as cars.

We've got some other things we'll be doing, but the biggest thing is reciprocal. We want tariffs to be fair.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

*The President.* If they charge——

*Q.* That's tomorrow, right?

*The President.* If they charge us, we charge them.

*Q.* Is that tomorrow? Tomorrow, the reciprocal tariffs?

*The President.* We'll be doing reciprocal over the next—I would say 2 days. Don't you think? Two days? Yes, maybe.

#### *Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia*

*Q.* Mr. President, the Australian Prime Minister has said that you are considering an exemption for Australia on steel. Is that correct? And why?

*The President.* I just spoke to him—very fine man. And he has a surplus. I mean, we have a surplus with Australia—one of the few. And the reason is they buy a lot of airplanes. They are rather far away, and they need lots of airplanes. And we actually have a surplus. It's one of the only countries which we do.

And I told him that that's something that we will give great consideration to.

### *United Kingdom-U.S. Trade*

*Q.* And would you consider one for the U.K. as well?

*The President.* Well, they—we have a huge deficit with the U.K. Big difference.

### *Argentina-U.S. Trade*

*Q.* You don't—you don't have a deficit with Argentina. Is that that country also going to be—[inaudible]?

*The President.* We have a deficit with—a little deficit with Argentina. Almost with every country. But Australia, because of the airplanes—they buy a lot of airplanes—there's a little bit of a surplus.

### *U.S. Trade Policy*

*Q.* Mr. President, if other countries retaliate, what is your——

*The President.* I don't mind.

### *Domestic Agriculture/Reciprocal Tariffs*

*Q.* ——what is your plan for, for example, farmers? Last term, you gave money——

*The President.* Well, the farmers are going to be helped——

*Q.* ——to the farmers.

*The President.* ——greatly.

*Q.* Would you do that again?

*The President.* Yes. The farmers are going to be helped greatly, because when—they're not going to be dumping everything into our country. This will be a great bill for farmers.

And in terms of retaliation, if they retaliate, it's—as I said, it's reciprocal. So, if they raise it a little bit, then we raise it automatically. So I don't think it helps for them to retaliate.

But also, remember this, they can't really retaliate because we're the piggy bank. We're the piggy bank. But if we don't do this, we won't be the piggy bank for long. We won't be much of a country.

*Q.* Mr. President——

### *Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* Did you see that report, sir, that Hamas was going to stop releasing its Israeli hostages? And what was your reaction to that?

*The President.* I think it's terrible. Look, I looked at the hostages that came in, and they're emaciated. It looked like something out of the 1930s. It's an absolute disgrace. And I think they saw the way the world viewed it, and they're looking for a reason not to send more, because they're all—you take a look at that, it looks like it was—it looked like it was a concentration camp, which essentially it was. It looks like they came out of the Holocaust.

And what a sad thing. One of them was a young man, good-looking guy—little bit—a little bit heavier than perhaps he could have been, and now he looks like—he's not even recognizable. Not even recognizable.

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

*Q.* Is the cease-fire deal at risk of falling apart, sir?

*The President.* Look, I can tell you that those people have been badly hurt, both mentally and physically. I'm talking about the young women that came out, also, previously. And I think one of the reasons they're doing this is because they're probably sending the best. What you see is probably the best, because they want to send people that look at least healthy, and that's not healthy.

These people have been badly hurt. They've been interviewed by our representatives. They've been interviewed by Israeli representatives. And they're really hurting. They are really hurting mentally and physically.

And I think Hamas is looking at that and saying, "Well, it's not going to get much better than that," because they probably send out their best as a representative, and they've got more to send out. And they probably feel that they can't do that, because it's not going to make them look very good.

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

*Q. [Inaudible]*—they delay that, sir, should the cease-fire then be off?

*The President.* Well, I would say this—and I'm going to let that, because that's Israel's decision—but as far as I'm concerned, if all of the hostages aren't returned by Saturday at 12 o'clock—I think it's an appropriate time—I would say cancel it and all bets are off and let hell break out.

I'd say they ought to be returned by 12 o'clock on Saturday. And if they're not returned—all of them, not in drips and drabs, not two and one and three and four and two.

*Q. Mr. President*——

*The President.* Saturday at 12 o'clock. And after that, I would say all hell is going to break out.

And I don't think they're going to do it. I think a lot of them are dead. I think a lot of the hostages are dead. I think it's a great human tragedy what's—what's happened, how people can be that mean to do.

I mean, the one guy was laughing when a hostage is—he thought his family was alive, found out the family was dead, and the—his captor, so to speak—his captor started laughing because he thought it was so funny.

You know, this is a different group of people.

No, I would say Saturday at 12:00, we want them all back. I'm speaking for myself. Israel can override it. But from myself, Saturday at 12 o'clock, and if they're not—if they're not here, all hell is going to break out.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

### *Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees*

*Q. Mr. President,* in an interview this weekend—Mr. President, in an interview this weekend, you said that Palestinians would not be guaranteed the right to return to Gaza if the U.S. were to develop it. What did you mean by that and under what authority?

*The President.* We've spoken to a lot of Palestinians. They would love to leave Gaza if they could find a place to be. And I've spoken to various leaders of various countries in the not so, you know, distant area from where we're talking about—the Gaza Strip—and I think they were very positive about providing land. What we need this land.



*Q.* Which leaders?

*The President.* And if we could build a nice place for people to live safely, everybody in Gaza would do it. They've been persecuted, they've been—they've been spit on, they've been treated like trash. And they would love to get out of Gaza. But until now, they never had an alternative. Now they have an alternative.

And as far as Hamas is concerned, you're seeing the real Hamas now with the hostages.

*Q.* But what if—what if they don't leave?

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* On Gaza. You have the—the——

*The President.* Who are you? From where?

*Q.* The Wall Street Journal, sir.

*The President.* Yes, that's what I thought.

#### *King Abdullah II of Jordan*

*Q.* The Jordanian leader is coming in to see you.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* Folks in Jordan have expressed——

*The President.* Tomorrow.

*Q.* ——opposition to taking in more Gazans, more Palestinians. How do you—how are you going to convince him to do otherwise?

*The President.* I think he'll take. I mean, I do think he'll take, and I think other countries will take also. They have good hearts. I think they'll take.

#### *Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees*

*Q.* But what about the Palestinians who just won't leave? We've spoken—our team has spoken to many in Gaza that say it's their home.

*The President.* They're all going when they have a place that's a better alternative. When they have a nice place that's safe, they're all going to leave. It's a hellhole right now.

*Q.* But how are you so sure? Would the U.S. force them to leave?

*The President.* You're going to see that they're all going to want to leave.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

*Q.* Mr. President, would you say——

#### *Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* Mr. President, when it comes to Saturday at noon, are you—there's an American hostage who's still being held by Hamas right now. Are you worried about his life?

*The President.* Look, you know, who knows—are they alive? Are they not alive? But I saw the condition—when I saw the condition of the last ones that came out—and the women, too—everybody—the one woman had her hand blown off because she was trying to stop a bullet being fired at her, okay? What kind of a situation is that? You saw her.

I just think it's time to either you release everybody—they're not going to be alive right now—based on what I saw over the last 2 days, they're not going to be alive for long.

Saturday at 12 o'clock. And after that, it's going to be a different ball game.

*Q.* Mr. President, when you say all hell is going to break loose, are you speaking in—about retaliation from Israel?

*The President.* You'll find out.

*Q.* Okay.

*The President.* And they'll find out too. Hamas will find out what I mean.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

They're going to find out what I mean. These are sick people, and they'll find out what I mean Saturday at 12 o'clock.

*Q.* But no involvement from U.S.—

#### *Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees/West Bank, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* How about the Palestinians from the West Bank? Are they going to be relocated too? What's your position right now?

*The President.* Well, right now—no, right now they're there, and I assume they want to remain there. That's different. They're there. It's never been like what we're talking about with the Gaza Strip.

*Q.* So they're—[inaudible]—

*The President.* No, no. No plans there.

#### *Consumer Financial Protection Bureau/Senator Elizabeth A. Warren*

*Q.* Mr. President, regarding the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Democrats, including Elizabeth Warren, have said that by freezing it, it's giving big banks and giant corporations the green light to scam families.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* Your response?

*The President.* Pocahontas. Pocahontas, the fake—the faker. You know, that was set up to destroy people. She used that as her little personal agency to go around and destroy people, and she's a fake. Just like she said she was an Indian, and she wasn't an Indian. You have more Indian blood in you than she has.

She went to college based on the fact that she was an Indian. She got jobs based on the fact that she was an Indian. She's a fake.

That was a—that was set up to destroy some very good people. And it worked. I mean, it worked. A lot of—a lot of great people.

I'll tell you, before I ever heard the term, people would come up to me in the Midwest and areas. They'd say, "Sir, I'm being destroyed by them." They use that to destroy people. She's a nasty woman. She's a really nasty woman, despite her phony beer commercial. [Laughter]

No, we did the right thing. That was a very important thing to get rid of.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And it was also a waste. I mean, number one, it was a bad group of people running it, but it was also a waste. If you looked at when she really ran it—wow, that was a vicious group of people. They really destroyed a lot of people.

*Q.* And you can confirm it's—your goal is to have it totally eliminated, the agency?

*The President.* I would say yes, because we're—we're trying to get rid of waste, fraud, and abuse.

*Q.* What's next, sir?

*The President.* And didn't I hear that somebody made, like, \$38 million or something running a little agency? What was her name?

*Q.* Can we talk about Gaza for a second?

*The President.* What was her name and what did she do? And what was that all about, all the money that she made? Does anybody know?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Okay. Yes, Brian [Brian Glenn, Real America's Voice]. Go ahead.

### *The President's Approval Ratings/Illegal Immigration*

*Q.* Good to see you. The latest CBS poll has your approval ratings at an all-time high, despite all these controversial subjects and Executive Orders that you're doing. I want to get your thoughts on that—how you've really connected to mainstream America.

*The President.* Yes, I have high approval ratings because I'm—you know, I'm using common sense, whether it's getting men out of women's sports—I mean, have you seen what goes on with the boxers and with the weightlifters and with the swimmers and everything—that's so ridiculous.

And I think it's a 90-percent issue. And you know, the amazing thing: The Democrats are still fighting for it, and it's crazy. It's crazy. I think we should go to Congress also, have that cemented and, you know, make it indelible.

But we—you know, it's—to me, it's all common sense. Who wants an open border where—where prisons are dumped into our country, where prisoners are let into our country, many of whom are murderers. They—many of whom murdered far more than one person, and they're now roaming our country. Who wants that? I mean, it's—it's terrible.

Steve, I'd like you to say a couple of words about it.

*White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Stephen Miller.* Yes. Well, as you know, Mr. President, since you issued your day-one Executive orders, border crossings are down approximately 95 percent. You talk to agents on the line, in their entire careers, they never seen crossing days as low as what they experiencing right now.

The cartels, in fact, are enormously frustrated because they've never seen a clampdown like this before in American history. There are people who were working at Border Patrol back when it was INS in the eighties and nineties, they've never seen a day like this.

That's because you've mobilized the 10th Mountain Division, the Marines, the entire U.S. military. They're erecting physical miles of barrier—temporary and ultimately permanent—every single day. You have all of your border agents pushed to the front line. They're not doing the "humanitarian processing"—quote, unquote—that Biden was doing. They're doing law enforcement and national security. They're interdicting weapons and drugs. They're interdicting violent, high-threat criminals.

And the U.S. military is repatriating illegal immigrants at a pace and a skill that has never occurred before in American history. And those who are committing human trafficking and child trafficking are being prosecuted for felony offenses, and they'll be doing hard time in jail.

There's never been a lockdown like what you have implemented through your orders and vision since you took the oath of office.

*Q.* What's your thoughts on DOGE? Wednesday at 10 a.m., they're having their first subcommittee. Going to focus on the fraud in Medicare.

*The President.* Yes. Yes. Before I discuss that——

*Q.* Okay.

*The President.* I just want to add to what Steve said. And we want people to come into our country, but we want them to come in legally. They have to go through a process, and we have to know that they haven't killed 9 people or they didn't—haven't killed, like in one case, 5—5 people, and they're out on the loose. And we're all looking for that particular individual.

This was all let in by Biden and the group of stupid people—bad people and stupid people. Some are bad, some are stupid, some are both.

But I'll tell you what, what they've done to this country—but we're cleaning it up. And hard to believe—I can say it will be better than ever before. But we have a lot of bad people we have to get out.

We're searching out for a lot of them. I think Tom Homan and Kristi are doing an unbelievable job—Kristi Noem. They're doing an unbelievable job. They're taking out massive numbers of people. And you notice every country is accepting those people back.

Remember, everyone said, "Oh, they'll never accept them"? They're all taking them back. They have to. They're all taking them back. Every single country is taking them back.

I don't know if they want them or not. I don't imagine they do, but they're taking them back.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

*Q.* [Inaudible]—talk to Zelenskyy this week?

### *Resettlement of Palestinian Refugees*

*Q.* Mr. President, back on Gaza. You talked with Fox News about the billions of dollars we pay for Jordan and Egypt every year. Would you withhold aid to these countries if they don't agree to take in the Palestinians?

*The President.* Yes, maybe. Sure. Why not? You mean if they don't agree?

*Q.* Is that part of the deal that you mentioned?

*The President.* If they don't agree, I would—I would conceivably withhold aid, yes.

### *Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories/Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel*

*Q.* Are you going to talk to Prime Minister Netanyahu about this Saturday deadline?

*The President.* Sure. I mean, it's just my deadline, but——

*Q.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* —they may change it. But I think it's—I've seen too many people come out. They look like Holocaust victims from—from many years ago. I've never seen anything like it. I didn't think this could happen in this world today.

You know, we think we have a civilized world. It's not civil. These are—these are bad people we're dealing with. So I would—that would be my suggestion.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And he can open it up or not open it up, but that would be my—do you have anything to say about that? You're Commerce, but you have a lot to say from the standpoint of your faith and your religion.

Go ahead.

*Secretary Lutnick.* So it's amazing that 4 years of nothing, and then you come in and you immediately start to move the needle. You have hostages coming out. You send Steve Witkoff who has done an amazing job for you. You're changing the Middle East. You're supporting your ally, Israel.

And I, for one, can't be more impressed with the outcomes that you have driven. And choosing this Saturday to save people's lives or just be done with it seems like just the right choice.

*The President.* But I think it's time to come up with a date. It's——

*Secretary Lutnick.* Totally.

*The President.* What are we going to do? Keep every—every week: 2 people, 3 people. No, I don't think you can do that anymore.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

This is—these are very seriously endangered people. These are endangered people. I don't think they're going to last very long.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

You know, the people that came out yesterday, they wouldn't last very long.

#### *Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* Were you ruling out any U.S. involvement in whatever happens after this deadline?

*The President.* We'll see what happens. We'll just see what happens.

#### *President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine*

*Q.* Will you talk with Zelenskyy this week, sir?

*The President.* Yes, probably.

*Q.* And what—by telephone? What—what's your message for——

*The President.* He wants to make a deal. We'll see. We'll see——

#### *President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia*

*Q.* And have you talked to Putin—[inaudible]?

*The President.* We're dealing with him, and I think they both want to make a deal, but we'll have to see. It's got to be done.

#### *Ukraine/Russia*

*Q.* What is Zelenskyy going to have to do——

*The President.* It would have never happened if I were President. This would never have happened. Millions of people are dead.

*Q.* What will Zelenskyy have to give up, if anything?

*The President.* We'll talk about that later because——

### *Federal Workforce Reduction Efforts*

*Q.* And your reaction to a judge today continuing a pause on the buyout program for Federal workers?

*The President.* Well, I don't know how you can lose a case like that. We're talking about people—you know, everybody—I got elected on making government better, more efficient, and smaller. And that's what we're doing. And I think it was a very generous buyout, actually.

Also, if people don't show up to work, we have a right to fire them. And they have an option: They can show up to work or not. If they don't want to show up to work, then let them work—because then the next step is: Have you worked before or have you worked during this time that you're supposed to be working?

You'll find many of those people, in my opinion, have had other jobs, even though they're collecting money from the Federal Government. Many have had, in my opinion, other jobs.

*Q.* If the buyouts are——

*The President.* And if they did—if they did, that's a big problem.

*Q.* If the buyouts are blocked in court, will you instead pursue layoffs in Federal departments?

*The President.* I don't know how they can do—this is free will. This is a buyout where people—you know, they—they were offered a good deal. Many people have taken that, as you know.

*Q.* Yes.

*The President.* But you know, many of those people—and we talk about reporting to work, right? I happen to be a believer that you have to go to work. I don't think you can work from a home. I don't—I don't know. It's like—there's a whole big, "Oh, you can work from home." Nobody is going to work from home. They're going to be going out. They're going to play tennis. They're going to play golf. They're going to do a lot of things. They're not working.

It's a rare person that's going to work. You might work 10 percent of the time, maybe 20 percent. I don't think you're going to work a lot more than that.

And I think we—they have an obligation to work, and they have an obligation not to have a second job when they're supposed to be working for the Federal Government. You're going to find that a lot of these people have second jobs, instead of working for—they'll be collecting a Federal Government check, and they'll be working two jobs, and that's—that's big trouble for them.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

*Q.* ——bypass Congress?

### *South Africa Land Reform Policies*

*Q.* You've said a lot about South Africa in the last 2 weeks.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* It's hosting the G-20 summit this year. Are you planning to attend this, or are you skipping it and telling your Cabinet to not go to any—

*The President.* Well, we'll see what happens. But the South African situation is very, very dangerous and very bad for a lot of people. There's tremendously bad things going on—and including the confiscation of property. And worse—much worse than that. You know what I'm talking about.

And we're not making any payment until we find out what's going on in South Africa.

Yes, please.

*Q.* What's next for DOGE?

*U.S. Special Envoy for Ukraine and Russia Keith J. Kellogg's Visit to Ukraine*

*Q.* Is General Kellogg going to Ukraine this week, sir, or soon?

*The President.* Yes, he is. Keith Kellogg—General Kellogg is an excellent guy, and he's spending time doing various things. We have numerous people working on numerous different problems.

You know, when I left office—wasn't long ago, a little more than 4 years ago—we had no wars. We had no—we didn't have problems. Now we've got the whole world is blowing up, but we'll put out the fires.

*Russia/European Union*

*Q.* And you've been talking to Vladimir Putin. Are you trying to set up a meeting with him?

*The President.* Well, I can't tell you what I'm talking about, but we are talking as a group also. I think he'd like to make a deal, but it takes two to tango.

*President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Ukraine*

*Q.* And so, I mean, you can't give us any more clarity on when—whether you personally have spoken to Vladimir Putin?

*The President.* I don't want to talk about it, no. I don't want to talk about it because it's not going to help you to know. But we would like to get a deal done, if possible, only because, in my case—save lives, you know.

You know, we're much further away. Remember, we have an ocean separating. They don't. Europe should be paying what we're paying, and Europe has done it more in the form of a loan than with us. We just give it. You know, Biden gives it because he's not a smart individual. He's not a very smart individual.

We have people over there today who are making a deal that as we give money, we get minerals and we get oil and we get all sorts of things, because why are we doing this? And all this money—we're in for maybe \$350 billion, and Europe is in for \$100 billion.

And Europe is in, really, as a form of a loan. In theory, they get that money back. In theory, they get interest on their money. It's a whole different ball game.

And Biden is the one that started doing this. Every time Zelenskyy came here, he walked away with \$60- to \$100 billion. I think he's one of the greatest salesmen who ever—who have ever lived, by the way.

*John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts*

*Q.* Can you discuss your intentions with the Kennedy Center, which you're now the Board Chair of?

*The President.* Yes. So we took over the Kennedy Center. We didn't like what they were showing and various other things. And—and I had a lot of the Board members already, as you know, and we have some that will be replaced. But we have, I guess, a whole new group of people going in.

I have Ric Grenell, who's got some experience in that world. Going to be—he's very good. Going to be handling it on a temporary basis. I think he'll do a great job.

But we're going to get some great professionals. I'm going to be Chairman of it, and we're going to make sure that it's good, and it's not going to be woke. There's no more woke in this country. This woke has cost us a fortune and cost us our reputation, but the reputation is coming back very, very rapidly.

Thank you very much, everybody.

#### *Discontinued Minting of New Pennies*

*Q.* With regards to the penny, sir—the penny.

*The President.* The penny is gone.

*Q.* The penny is gone. Is the nickel next? [*Laughter*]

*Q.* What about the dime?

*The President.* What about—what about anything. Good luck. The penny is—the penny is gone.

The penny—the penny cost this Government a lot of money. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:29 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Patricia Blagojevich, wife of former Gov. Blagojevich; Israeli hostages Or Levy, Eli Sharabi, and Ohad Ben Ami, who were released from Hamas captivity in Gaza, Palestinian Territories, into Red Cross custody on February 8; Emily Damari, who was shot in the hand as she was dragged from her home in southern Israel during the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; and U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Special Missions Richard A. Grenell, in his capacity as interim Executive Director of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Secretary Lutnick referred to U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff. A reporter referred to George A. O'Toole, Jr., judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on February 11.

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

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Abdullah, King; Albanese, Anthony; Ben Ami, Ohad; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blagojevich, Patricia; Blagojevich, Rod R.; Collins, Douglas A.; Damari, Emily; Grenell, Richard A.; Homan, Thomas D.; Kellogg, Keith J.; Levy, Or; Lutnick, Howard W.; Miller, Stephen; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Noem, Kristi L.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Scharf, William O.; Sharabi, Eli; Warren, Elizabeth A.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.



*Subjects:* Argentina, trade with U.S.; Australia, Prime Minister; Australia, trade with U.S.; Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; Canada, trade with U.S.; China, trade with U.S.; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; Corruption, efforts to combat; Egypt, U.S. assistance; Federal workforce, reduction efforts; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Illegal immigration; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Israel, Prime Minister; Job creation and growth; John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Jordan, King; Jordan, U.S. assistance; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Paper straws, procurement and use; Pardons and commutations; Pennies, discontinued minting; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of Veterans Affairs; South Africa, land reform policies; Transgender athletes, efforts to restrict participation; U.S. Special Envoy for Ukraine and Russia; U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Special Missions; U.S. steel and aluminum industry, strengthening efforts; U.S. Steel Corp.; U.S. tariffs on imports, adjustment; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; United Kingdom, trade with U.S.; West Bank, political status; White House Border Czar; White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy; White House Staff Secretary.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202500246.