

**Remarks During a Swearing-in Ceremony for Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence**

*February 12, 2025*

*The President.* Thank you very much. And today, we're delighted to swear in our next Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard. Most of you know Tulsi. She's a fantastic woman.

Tulsi, I want to just congratulate you; your husband, Abraham; your sister; and all of your friends—a lot of friends here. You have a lot of friends. I noticed that, huh?

Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. I'm grateful.

*The President.* They were all fighting—fighting for you. It worked out very well.

Tulsi Gabbard is an American of extraordinary courage and exceptional patriotism. She has devoted her entire life to public service, and I've watched her for years on different shows and everything. I said, "She's a woman of great common sense." And, you know, we like the common sense. It's a word that's being used a lot. I think we started it, in terms of politics. But it's a word that's used a lot. It's usually pretty effective too.

And you really are. I've watched you even on "Larry King." You know, you're very young. I don't know how you were on "Larry King"—[*laughter*]*—but you're very young. But you were. And you always had—you always had the situation covered properly.*

At 21 years old, Tulsi became the youngest woman ever elected to the Hawaii State Legislature. After 9/11, she joined the Hawaii Army National Guard and deployed abroad three times and highly respected by everybody. So many people writing in letters saying she was so exceptional, even then.

She continues to serve as a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. And Tulsi also served four terms in the United States House of Representatives, where she was a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

She is a former vice chair of the National Democratic Party. Can you believe that? And—and here she is. That's very nice. [*Laughter*] We have a few of them and—but she was never a Democrat. She was at—at heart, she was—[*laughter*]*—she was a Republican. I—watched her. And was a 2020 Democrat candidate for President of the United States.*

It's not easy, right?

*Director Gabbard.* No.

*The President.* It's not so easy. [*Laughter*] People think it's easy. It's not easy.

Throughout her service, Tulsi has always distinguished herself as a leader of the highest caliber. She's earned the respect and admiration, the love of Americans on both sides of the aisle, as her profound commitment to the values that keep us free—and she really does have those values as much as anybody.

In recent years, Tulsi has been a courageous and often lonely voice speaking out against radical left's attacks on free speech and the dangers of an unelected deep state.

And I have to say, she was very, very strong for me when I was going through all of the—the fake news and all of the—the problems that we had with some very sick people. She was

always out there. Before I really knew her, as well, she was out there defending me. So, I appreciated that, Tulsi.

But the threat of a warmongering military-industrial complex and the weaponization of Government and governmental people that go out and persecute—they like to persecute people that are innocent.

Tulsi herself became a target of that weaponization when she was outrageously placed on a suspected terrorist watch list by the Biden regime—it was a very evil regime—after criticizing their appalling abuses of power.

And I'm confident that as Director of the National Intelligence, Tulsi will work tirelessly to keep America safe. And she's been doing that her entire career. I think it's going to be a very natural day for you when you walk in. It's—just have to keep the way you are. Just stay the way you are.

She'll be clear-eyed, and she'll be focused on the threat of radical Islamic terrorism and—and lots of other threats, too, threats from within—and give no quarter to America's foreign enemies.

At the same time, I'm entrusting Tulsi with the responsibility of overseeing urgently needed reforms to the U.S. intelligence community to protect the rights and the civil liberties of all Americans.

She'll provide the American people with transparency, eliminate corruption, shrink the bloated bureaucracy, and restore honesty, integrity, and trust to the national security state.

There's only one thing I can say: that there's nobody like her for this job. This was a very easy one for me. She was recommended by some of the top people in that world. It's a little world. You know, it's a little, smart world. It sometimes can be an evil world when the wrong people are there, but we have the right one.

She's had so many great recommendations. I would say Pam was right up there with her—Pam Bondi. She had a lot of—a lot—she—I didn't need—I know her a little bit better, and you're doing a fantastic job after about 3 or 4 days, right?

*Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi.* Thank you—[inaudible].

*The President.* You've had—you've had a lot of experience, but you've never seen anything like this, Pam. But you're going to do fantastic as the Attorney General—fantastic. So, thank you, and congratulations.

We did this with Pam a few days ago. And this is, again, my honor. So, congratulations to Tulsi, and I think Pam is going to administer the—oath. And when she does that, I'll sign your new certificate.

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

*Attorney General Bondi.* Stand right there. All right.

Please place your left hand on the Constitution and raise your right hand and repeat after me.

I do solemnly swear.

*Director Gabbard.* I, Tulsi Gabbard, do solemnly swear.

*Attorney General Bondi.* That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

*Director Gabbard.* That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

*Attorney General Bondi.* Against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

*Director Gabbard.* Against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

*Attorney General Bondi.* And that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

*Director Gabbard.* And that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

*Attorney General Bondi.* That I take this obligation freely.

*Director Gabbard.* I take this obligation freely.

*Attorney General Bondi.* Without any mental reservation.

*Director Gabbard.* Without any mental reservation.

*Attorney General Bondi.* Or purpose of evasion.

*Director Gabbard.* Or purpose of evasion.

*Attorney General Bondi.* And that—and that I will well and faithfully.

*Director Gabbard.* That I will well and faithfully.

*Attorney General Bondi.* Discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter.

*Director Gabbard.* Discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter.

*Attorney General Bondi.* So help me, God.

*Director Gabbard.* So help me, God.

*Attorney General Bondi.* Congratulations.

*The President.* Okay.

How is the Oval Office looking? [*Laughter*] A little different look, right? It's the Oval Office.

*Q.* Busy.

*The President.* Okay. We'll get a good one here.

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

Okay. Not bad.

Ready? I'll stand up there. I think we'll do it right here. Come on over here, Abraham.

*Cinematographer Abraham Williams.* Yes, sir.

[*The President, Director Gabbard, and her husband Abraham Williams posed for a photograph.*]

*The President.* Okay. I'm sure there are no questions. [*Laughter*]

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

*Q.* Mr. President, when and where will you meet with Vladimir Putin?

*The President.* You know what? I'd like to have—let Tulsi say a few words first, then we can answer a couple of questions. Okay? Good.

*Director Gabbard.* Mr. President, first and foremost, I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for the trust that you have placed in me to fulfill this critical position as Director of National Intelligence—at any time, but specifically during this time.

Unfortunately, the American people have very little trust in the intelligence community, largely because they've seen the weaponization and politicization of an entity that is supposed to be purely focused on ensuring our national security.

*The President.* That's right.

*Director Gabbard.* So, I look forward to being able to help fulfill that mandate that the American people delivered to you very clearly in this election to refocus our intelligence community by empowering the great patriots who have chosen to serve our country in this way and focus on ensuring the safety, security, and freedom of the American people.

As you've said, Mr. President, this is what I've dedicated my life to, and it is truly humbling to be in this position, to serve in your administration, help to rebuild that trust, and ultimately to keep the American people safe.

Last thing I'll mention that, in your National Prayer Breakfast speech, you made a statement about your legacy of wanting to be remembered as a peacemaker. I know that I can speak for many of my fellow service members who are here today, veterans, Medal of Honor recipients, how deeply that resonates with us, for those who volunteer to put their lives on the line when duty calls, but to have a President and Commander-in-Chief who recognizes the cost of that sacrifice and ensuring that war is the last resort, not the first. So, thank you for your leadership.

On behalf of my friends here and all who wear the uniform, we're grateful.

*The President.* Thank you very much. Thank you, Tulsi.

*Director Gabbard.* Thank you.

*The President.* Congratulations.

*Director Gabbard.* Thank you.

*The President.* Thank you.

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

*Q.* President Trump, thank you. When and where do you plan on meeting with Vladimir Putin? And were there any preconditions set to agree to this meeting?

*The President.* No, we had a great call, and it lasted for a long time—over an hour this morning. I also had, with President Zelenskyy, a very good call after that, and I think we're on the way to getting peace. I think President Putin wants peace, and President Zelenskyy wants peace, and I want peace.

I just want to see people stop getting killed. We're very far away from that particular war, but that's a vicious war, probably a million and a half soldiers killed in a short period of time. I've never seen anything—I have pictures that are—you wouldn't believe it. You wouldn't believe what you have to look at: young, beautiful soldiers that are just being decimated.

And it would be nice to end it immediately. But we had a very good talk with—people didn't really know what President Putin's thoughts were, but I think I can say with great confidence he wants to see it ended also. That's—good. And we're going to work toward getting it ended and as fast as possible.

It's—a horrible situation going over—it's flat land, and the bullet goes off, and the only thing it can hit is a body—a human body—a young human body. And they're losing just tremendous numbers of mostly soldiers. The—cities and towns have been largely demolished.

It's a shame what's happened to that country. It would have never happened if I were President. That, I can tell you. It would have never happened. It's—to look at that—and October 7th would have never happened, either, by the way. Middle East.

But we'll get it—I think we'll get it—we'll get something done. We're going to be meeting—actually, tomorrow, they're meeting in Munich, as you know, and we're going to have some other meetings.

And we'll be—I'll be dealing with President Putin, largely on the phone, and we ultimately expect to meet. In fact, we expect that he'll come here, and I'll go there, and we're going to meet——

#### *Ukraine/Russia/U.S. Diplomatic Efforts*

*Q.* When?

*The President.* ——also, probably in Saudi Arabia. The first time, we'll meet in Saudi Arabia, see if we get something done.

But we want to end that war. That war is a disaster. It's a really bloody, horrible war.

*Q.* Mr. President, did you—[inaudible]——

*Q.* Just to check, you said you'd make Saudi Arabia your—the first meeting will happen. Is that——

*The President.* I think so.

*Q.* When?

*The President.* We think we're going to probably meet in Saudi Arabia, the first meeting.

*Q.* When?

*Q.* Any idea when?

*The President.* Hasn't been set, but not-too-distant future.

*Q.* Did you also commit——

#### *Ukraine/Russia*

*Q.* And will Zelenskyy be part of that meeting or——

*The President.* We both understand—you know, we—we know the Crown Prince, and I think it'd be a—it'd be a very good place to meet.

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

*Q.* So, it sounds like that would just be a meeting between you and Putin and perhaps the Crown Prince, but not President Zelenskyy. Is that right?

*The President.* Probably we'll have a first meeting, and then we'll see what we can do about the second meeting.

#### *The President's Travel Schedule*

*Q.* Did you also commit to go to Ukraine?

*The President.* What about Ukraine?

*Q.* Did you commit to go to Ukraine as well?

*The President.* No, I haven't. I haven't committed to go to Ukraine.

*Q.* Would you go?

*The President.* I would think about going, yes. I'd think about it. No problem.

*Ukraine/Russia*

*Q.* President Zelenskyy said today, Mr. President, that—they received your vision. What is your plan for—to end this war? Like, today, Secretary Hegseth——

*The President.* Well, I'm not going to tell you my plan. I can just tell you we've made a lot of progress. This should have been done by Biden, not by me, because this has been going on for now a long time—years—and it should have been done by Biden, just like the young gentleman that I brought home—yesterday, after 2 weeks. We worked on it for 2 weeks.

He was a—a fine man, and he was in there for 3½, almost 4 years, and they weren't able to do a thing, and I got him out. And as you know, I didn't pay \$6 billion. I didn't pay anything. I—we did a trade, and we did a good job. We got him out in 2 weeks. He should have been out years ago. Really should have been out years ago.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

*Q.* Sir, do you oppose NATO membership for Ukraine?

*The President.* I don't think it's practical to have it, personally. I know that our new Secretary of Defense, who is excellent, Pete, made a statement today saying that he thinks it's unlikely or impractical. I think probably that's true.

I think long before President Putin, they said there's no way they'd allow that. This has been going on for many, many years. They—they've been saying that for a long time that Ukraine cannot go into NATO. And——

*Q.* Was the call with——

*Q.* Do you also think it's unrealistic for——

*The President.* And I'm—and I'm okay with that. I just want the war—whether they are or they're not—but I—it certainly would seem to be that most people have said that that is something that's not going to happen.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Ukraine/Russia*

*Q.* Are you freezing out President Zelenskyy of this process a bit? Isn't there a danger of that?

*The President.* No, I don't think so, as long as he's there. But, you know, at some point you're going to have to have elections too. You're going to have to have an election.

*Q.* Zelenskyy says he wants security assurances, Mr. President. What does that look like?

*The President.* In terms of what?

*Q.* He—if the war were to end, he says he wants guarantees of security.

*The President.* We'll see what that means. We have—I think when the war ends—one thing he was very strong about, he wants—if it ends, he wants it to end. And that's—President Putin said that. He wants it to end. He doesn't want to end it and then go back to fighting 6 months later.

We talked about the possibility—I mentioned it—of a ceasefire so we can stop the killing. And I think we'll probably end up, at some point, getting a ceasefire in the not-too-distant future.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Q.* Do you view Ukraine as an equal member of the peace process?

*The President.* Say it. What?

*Ukraine*

*Q.* Do you view Ukraine as an equal member of this peace process?

*The President.* That's an interesting question.

I think they have to make peace. Their people are being killed, and I think they have to make peace.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

I said that was not a good war to go into, and I think they have to make peace. That's what I think.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance*

*Q.* Would you support Zelenskyy ceding territory or exchanging territory in any agreement to end the war?

*The President.* Well, he's going to have to do what he has to do, but, you know, his poll numbers aren't particularly great, to put it mildly.

He's got a country where, you know, it's been savaged and attacked. And he's got an army that's been very, very brave, actually, despite the fact that—you know, we've given them, in my opinion, \$350 billion—that's what the real number is. You don't hear that number. And Europe has given, in my opinion, a hundred billion dollars, and they've done it in the form of a loan.

And I have a Secretary of Treasury right now who's actually quite brave. He's over in Ukraine on a train, and there's a lot of things happening around that train that aren't so good. And he's going there to get a document done where we're going to be in—assured that we're going to, in some form, get this money back, because we're putting up far more money than Europe, and Europe is in far more danger than we are. We have an ocean in between. Europe has nothing in between.

*Q.* So, does that mean——

*The President.* You what they have in between? They have Ukraine in between.

*Q.* Does that mean——

*The President.* So—wait a minute. So, as you know, Europe is putting up money, and they're getting it in the form of a loan. And the United States, under Biden, didn't do loans. They just handed money. Every time somebody walked in from Ukraine, they just handed them money foolishly. This should have never happened.

It should have never started, and once it did, other things should have happened, other things should have taken place.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

So, we're—getting security on our money. We're going to have it secured by—they have rare earth, and they have oil and gas, and they have a lot of other things. And we're asking for security on our money.

*Q.* So, does that mean you are not sending——

*Q.* How long does Zelenskyy have?

*Q.* —any more aid to Ukraine?

*The President.* They've agreed to it.

*Q.* How long——

*Q.* Does that mean——

*The President.* Ukraine has agreed to it.

#### *Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance*

*Q.* Does that mean you are not sending any more aid to Ukraine?

*The President.* No, we are, but we want it secured, and the money is going to be secured.

*Q.* Mr. President, I mean, Russia did invade Ukraine——

*Q.* When would the U.S. stop Ukraine funding?

*Q.* —in 2022.

#### *Russia/Ukraine*

*Q.* When would the U.S. stop sending funding?

*The President.* Because if we didn't do that, then Putin would say he won. We're the thing that's holding it back, and, frankly, we'll go as long as we have to go, because we're not going to let the other happen.

But President Putin wants to have peace now, and that's good. And he didn't want to have peace with Biden.

*Q.* Was that conversation with Putin part of——

*Q.* Just—sir, just to be clear——

*The President.* And you tell me why that is. Okay?

#### *President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Release of Marc Fogel*

*Q.* Was that conversation with Putin to start these negotiations part of the deal to bring Fogel home?

*The President.* No, but it was a—a nice thing that he allowed Marc Fogel to leave.

In fact, Marc is—wasn't feeling well, but he was—all of a sudden, about 2 weeks ago, he started being treated very nicely. He said they took him out for haircuts. They took him out—they—they helped him out a little bit and made him feel better, made him look better, and they were nice to him. And he said, "I saw—something happening." And it had to—it coincided with when I came into office.

*Q.* Well——

*Q.* Sir——

*Q.* Sir——



*The President.* So, that was nice.

And—he was—he's a fine person. He was so happy to be out.

*Q.* Are you——

*Q.* What does make you——

*The President.* He was there—he was there for 3½ years plus, and he shouldn't have been there at all. He should have—they should have had him out much faster than that.

*Q.* What does make you believe that Zelenskyy will agree with that?

*Q.* Sir, just to be clear, do you see any future in which——

*The President.* Wait.

Go ahead, please.

*Ukraine*

*Q.* Sorry. Sir, just to be clear, do you see any future in which Ukraine returns to its pre—2014 borders?

*The President.* Well—well, I think Pete said today that that's unlikely, right? It certainly would seem to be unlikely. They took a lot of land, and they fought for that land, and they lost a lot of—they lost a lot of soldiers. But it would just seem to me—and I'm not—I'm not making an opinion on it, but I've read a lot on it, and a lot of people think that that's unlikely.

Some of it will come back. I think some of it will come back. Yes, some of that land will come back.

*Q.* Because these—Mr. President, these are——

*Q.* So, what does make you believe Zelenskyy will agree to your vision?

*Q.* Ultimately, these are both Russia's key——

*The President.* Who—who are you with?

*Q.* Sorry, me?

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* AFP, sir.

*The President.* You're who?

*Q.* AFP, Agence France-Presse.

*The President.* Okay.

*Q.* I just wanted to ask you, you—the—things that the Secretary of Defense was talking about, the 2014 borders and the lack of NATO membership—ultimately, these are both demands that Russia has made in the past. Is there not a danger of handing Russia a, kind of, win on this?

*The President.* Well——

*Q.* And what does make you believe Zelenskyy will agree with that?

*The President.* Well, I think that if you look at the war—the way the war is going, you'll have to make your own determination.

I'm just here to try and get peace. I don't care so much about anything other than I want to stop having millions of people killed—killed.

Last night, you know, Kyiv got hit very, very hard.

I want to see people stop getting killed. That war is ridiculous. It should have never happened, and it would have never happened.

Yes, a couple of more questions.

#### *U.S. Trade Policy/Tariffs*

*Q.* Mr. President, are you planning to—sign?

*Q.* Sir, what Executive orders do you plan to sign today?

*Q.* Are you planning to sign an Executive order on reciprocal tariffs, sir—

*The President.* Yes, I am.

*Q.* —later today?

*The President.* In fact—

*Q.* Today?

*The President.* —I may do it today. And if I do it today, I could almost do it right now. Would you like me to talk about it? [*Laughter*]

*Q.* Yes, please.

*Q.* Yes, please.

*The President.* No, I don't want to take anything away from this young lady's day—  
[*laughter*]—because this is her day.

And I may do it later on or I may do it tomorrow morning, but we'll be signing—reciprocal tariffs. The world has taken advantage of the United States for many years. They've charged us massive tariffs that we haven't charged them.

And, as you know, I just did something on steel and aluminum: 25 percent—that will go up at some point—but 25 percent, which will level the playing field quite a bit.

I did it, previously, 50 percent. And Obama was—Obama was very weak, and Biden was even weaker on steel. The steel was just absolutely—it really started with Obama. The world really took advantage of us, and then that morphed into Biden. And what they did was—he was so worried about trying to attack his political opponent that he didn't know what he was doing with respect to countries taking advantage. He should have looked at the countries, both friend and foe, taking advantage of us.

So, we're going to be doing reciprocal tariffs, which is whatever they charge, we charge, very simply. But we're going to be—

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

*Q.* On fraud, sir. On fraud, sir.

*Q.* Mr. President, are you considering exemptions—

#### *Government Spending Reductions/Government Contracts*

*Q.* You continue to talk about widespread fraud and abuse. When will Attorney General—

*The President.* Oh, yes, there were tremendous fraud.

*Q.* When will—

*The President.* There's tremendous fraud, and it's hard to believe that you can have that kind of fraud. You're talking about, like—are you talking about—what?

*Q.* I'm asking when the Attorney General——

*The President.* Wait, wait, wait.

*Q.* ——is going to——

*The President.* Are—which are you talking? You're talking about with regard to all of the investigations that are going on about this stupidity. What we're going to do is, tomorrow, I'm having a news conference. I'm going to read to you some of the names that hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars have been given to. And if you tell me that we should be giving money to those things, those entities, I think you'll probably have to leave as a reporter because you're not very talented.

When you look at the kind of money—billions and billions of dollars being thrown away illegally, and there's no—there's no chance—I mean, I say it in front of our—our Attorney General—there's no chance that there's not kickbacks or something going on. When you give millions and millions of dollars to somebody that stands to look at something for 15 minutes and walks away with millions of dollars, that money is coming back in some form, and that's only one form of corruption.

The biggest thing is what they do to our country. They're taking massive amounts of money and spending it on items—I went through a list of 200 expenditures that were made, and I found three that looked like they were reasonable. Okay? Three. And we'll be talking about that tomorrow. We have a lot of stuff.

And I want to commend Elon, because he's done a—he doesn't need this. You know, he's abused by you people every day. He's found more things than anybody could find. I think he's got the credibility to do it. I know he does. And it's—his group of people—you know, they started off with 12. I call them 12 geniuses. They started off with 12, and they went to 20 and 25, and now they're up to almost 100. People are joining to help them because there's a massive fraud that's taken place.

And then you have judges that are activists, and they sit there and they say, "Oh"—as an example, \$59 million going to a little, small group in New York City. You get nothing going to North Carolina to help the—nothing. They say, "We don't have any money," because they've given it away on the border. But you have nothing. What they did to North Carolina is a shame. And then they send \$59 million to New York City for a hotel for a little—a little bit of nothing—what they've done—a hotel that was not luxury that's getting luxury rates for migrants, where they're making a fortune.

And we catch them. We catch them. And—but a judge says, "Well, even though it may be a fraud, you have to send the money in anyway. Send the money." I said, "Wait a minute. We have money that shouldn't go, because we caught it before it was sent out," but they want the money to go anyway.

And I think you're going to have a lot of things to look at, Pam—I really do—what's going on with this whole thing. And this is just one group. We haven't talked about Department of Education. We haven't talked about the military. We haven't talked about a lot of things that are very big.

And what's happened is, as an example, you'll have cases where you have a 3-month contract, and maybe the guy that signs a contract leaves. Maybe he gets rich all of a sudden; he leaves for that reason. But you have a 3-month contract, and maybe he leaves. So, the contract is sitting there, and the people signing the checks don't know it's 3 months, and it goes on for years.

The 3 months turns out to be 3 years, 5 years, 10 years. Just goes on forever. And the guy on the other side of the contract just keeps getting check after check after check, because—Elon had an expression yesterday: because nobody cares. It's a great expression. Nobody cares.

The guy that signed the contract didn't care. May be there. May not be there. May be crooked. Who knows?

But you have to care; otherwise, you can't really run a thing like that, or you can't run a country, really, because there's so many transactions—thousands and thousands of transactions. And if you don't have people that care, you're going to lose control. And that's what's happened. And we've caught it.

Now, what we caught is billions and billions of dollars, but it's a tiny fraction of the real number, because you can never catch the real number because people have gotten away with tremendous amounts of money. But I said we have to make our Government smaller, more efficient, more effective, and a lot less expensive.

And we could find a trillion dollars, but we're being hindered by courts, where they file in certain courts where it's very hard to win, and a judge will stop us, and a judge will say that, "It doesn't make any difference what you find. You just keep paying the money." That's a hell of a way to be.

And I follow the courts. I have to follow the law. All it means is that we appeal. But that gives people time to cover their tracks, and that's what they do. So, it's a very bad—it's a very bad thing that's taking place.

But hopefully, if the courts—hopefully, the courts will be fair. They don't have to be very fair. They just have to be a little bit fair, because this is so egregious, what's taken place. Nobody has ever seen anything like it. Nobody has seen numbers like this. These are massive numbers: \$9 million for somebody to go and stand in a store and see how people shop. Okay?

*Q.* Is that waste or is that fraud?

*The President.* I mean, you take a look at—you take a look at these things, it's a disgrace. And then you have a country that—we want to make America great again. And very hard to make America great again when you have things like this.

And you're going to see the same thing. Department of Education is going to be a disaster. The military—I mean, I see it. Look, I bought—I came in, they had a contract done, as you know, for \$5.7 billion for airplanes—it was Air Force One—with Boeing—5.7. I got it down to \$4 billion—a little less than that—one penny less than that—\$3 billion nine ninety-nine, nine, nine, nine, and ninety-nine cents. They said—I said, "It has to have a three in front of it," because I wouldn't sign the contract for \$5.7 billion. I was able to cut \$1.7 billion off the price, and it didn't take me long—\$1.7 billion.

If people would care, they'd be able to do that with every single contract that's put before them, and we wouldn't have deficits. We'd have nothing but a—a tremendously low-taxed, wonderful country. But they have to care.

And speaking of that, you know, Boeing, we're not happy with the—the service we're getting in terms of those planes. They would like to get more money. We're not happy about that whole thing. We signed a very strong contract. I signed a guaranteed maximum contract, which they haven't seen in a long time, and they—they're saying they're getting hurt by it. But they have to produce the product, and we expect them to produce the product. They have—they have to produce the product. They agreed to build planes at a certain price. They're not used to that. They're used to having time and material contracts, where it's whatever it costs, time and material, no dates, no anything, and it ends up costing five times more.

You look at some of the ships that have been built. Look at—take a look at the Gerald Ford—the aircraft carrier, the Ford. I—it came—it was supposed to cost \$3 billion; it ends up costing, like, \$18 billion. And they make, of course, all-electric catapults, which don't work, and they have all-magnetic elevators to lift up 25 planes at a time, 20 planes at a time. And instead of using hydraulic, like on tractors, that can handle anything from hurricanes to—to lightning to anything, they use magnets. It's a new theory, "Magnets are going to lift the planes up," and it doesn't work. And they had billions and billions of dollars of cost overruns.

I met the architect. I said, "Have you designed a ship before?" This is one of the biggest ships in the world. It's like landing at LaGuardia Airport.

But you look at the kind of waste, fraud, and abuse that this country is going through, and we have to straighten it out. We have great people going into the military, in terms of new—we need ships, we need a lot of things, and we have great people go—we have business people going in.

But when you look at what's happened to our purchasing—the purchasing and when you look at the USAID, when you look at the things that they're giving to them, the billions—the billions of dollars that they're giving to them, and it doesn't make sense.

It—it is interesting that when you're looking for fraud, you look at items, hundreds of items, and you'll find one or two, maybe, if you're lucky. Here is something where you look at data, and they're all fraudulent—you know by just looking at the topic they're all fraudulent—except it's the opposite: You'll find one or two that's, like, a legitimate reason.

So, I just want to thank Elon for going through it. I want to thank all the people that are working with him. You know, we have a big group of people. All—I think the lowest IQ is about 160. That's very high.

*Q.* But the DOJ says——

*The President.* I think you have a couple of—you have a couple of 182s in there.

But—they're doing a fantastic job. They don't—he doesn't need it, and they don't need it. But we're showing things, and it's going to be a—it's a big—people have no idea how important it is.

Yes.

#### *Department of Education/U.S. DOGE Service*

*Q.* Sir, how soon do you want the Department of Education to be closed?

*The President.* Oh, I'd like it to be closed immediately. Look, the Department of Education is a big con job. We're ranked—so, they rank the top 40 countries in the world. We're ranked number 40th. But we're ranked number one in one department: costs per pupil.

So, we spend more per pupil than any other country in the world, but we're ranked number 40. We've been between 38 and 40. The last time I looked, it was 38, and then I looked 2 days ago, it came out—the new list—it came out at number 40. So, we're ranked 40.

Norway, Denmark, Sweden—I hate to say it: China, as big as it is, it's ranked in the top five, and that's our—that's a primary competitor. We're ranked number 40.

So, if we're ranked number 40, that means something is really wrong, right? And I say, send it back to Iowa, to Idaho, to Colorado. Send it back to places that—and there are a lot of—Indiana: You have a great new Governor; you have a great Senator that—Jim Banks just got elected; you got great people.

I—you know, I'll tell you what, Indiana is going to be fantastic—we probably have 35, maybe 37, States that will do as well as Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden. They'll be just as

good. Then you have—then you have the ones that we all know about, it will be the same story. But you know what? Even they will be good.

Because you look at New York: You give it to Westchester County, you give it to Long Island, you give it to Nassau County, you give it to Suffolk County—same thing, you go out to—and you give it to Upstate New York. So, you'd have four or five sections. You give it to Manhattan. Manhattan is a little bit tougher, for some reason. I don't know why it would be tougher, but it is.

You give to California, and you go to various areas outside of Los Angeles, and you might have six or seven different subgroups. But generally, like in—if you go to Iowa, you give it to Iowa. You don't have subgroups. You have Iowa. And other places that do a good job.

If they do a good job, they're going to do a great job in education.

Those places will be every good—every bit as good as the various countries that do so well. All the time, it's the same countries that are doing well.

And so, we have a Department of Education where people from Washington, D.C., who, many—in many cases, don't care about the kids out in the country. They don't care about the farms and the farmer's daughter and the father's—farmer's sons. We have a massive bureaucracy in Washington, D.C. We have buildings that are all over the city—Department of Education.

I never—"Department of Education" is on all these buildings. By the way, nobody shows up to work because they're all working at home—you know, quote, "working" at home. They're not working at home. And a lot of them have second jobs.

And that's the other thing that Elon Musk is looking at: How many of these people are getting checks, working at home, but they're not working because they have second jobs and even third jobs? You're going to find a lot of them. And those people are going to be fired because we have to make our Government smaller.

All right. One more question.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

Yes, Jennifer [Jennifer Jacobs CBS News]. Go ahead.

*Q.* If——

*The President.* Nice to see you.

*Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance*

*Q.* Oh, thank you, sir. Two questions. One on Ukraine again, and then another one on the Kennedy Center. Do you think that by—as far as your negotiating tactics go, did Pete Hegseth take away some of your negotiating abilities with Putin by taking Ukraine sovereign integrity off the table, by taking membership in Ukraine off the table?

*The President.* No, I haven't done that. I'm backing Ukraine. I'm—I'm backing Ukraine. Don't say that. I'm approving. But I do want security for our money.

You know, Europe is getting security. You know that, right? They're giving their money in the form of a loan. Nobody knows that. And why are we at \$350 billion and Europe, which doesn't separate with an ocean like we do—we have a little thing called an ocean in between—why is it that Europe is paying \$200 billion less than us to help Ukraine? Very similar size.

If you add up all the European countries, it's a little bit smaller than the U.S. in terms of the economy. Why is it that they're not paying the kind of numbers that they should be paying?

And then on top of it, and I've been saying this to Biden—I told Biden, I said, "You ought to be asking for either a loan or some kind of a security, like their oil and gas or something, for the money, because you're putting up much more money than Europe and you have no security." Europe's putting up a much smaller amount, and it's in the form of a loan, because we have people that were incompetent in the last administration—grossly incompetent. And we're changing it, but we change it, and we—all we do is we get hit by lawsuits from the radical left all the time.

But here we are. We stand. And I guess we've done okay.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Vrindivan Gabbard Bellord, sister of Ms. Gabbard; former President's Joseph R. Biden and Barack Obama; Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Marc H. Fogel, a U.S. citizen who was arrested in August 2021 by Russian authorities, charged with carrying a small amount of medical marijuana, and released into U.S. custody on February 11; Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent; White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk; and Gov. Michael K. Braun of Indiana. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on February 13. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard swearing-in ceremony.

*Locations:* Washington, DC

*Names:* Banks, James E.; Bellore, Vrindivan Gabbard; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela J.; Braun, Michael K.; Fogel, Marc H.; Gabbard, Tulsi; Hegseth, Peter B.; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud; Musk, Elon R.; Obama, Barack; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Williams, Abraham; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

*Subjects:* Attorney General; Director of National Intelligence; Education, global competitiveness; Government spending, reduction efforts; Indiana, Governor; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Russia, relations with U.S; Russia, release of detained U.S. citizen; Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince; Secretary of Defense; Secretary of the Treasury; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; U.S. tariffs on imports, adjustment; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; White House Senior Adviser.

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