

Remarks at a Document Signing Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters
February 25, 2025

The President. Okay. Thank you very much. We're having some very good news today. A lot of companies are coming into our country, and they're signing deals that are going to pay a lot of money and create a lot of jobs. And they're coming in largely because, I think, they feel good about our country and maybe the tariffs, to a certain extent. But they feel very good about the country right now, and so do I. And great things are happening.

We're going to be signing some Executive orders and some other things, and we'll maybe go down the list.

And, Will, if you would, please.

White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf. Yes, sir. First, we have an Executive order for your attention. In 2019, during your previous administration, you imposed price transparency requirements on the health care industry. This was a significant driver in lowering the costs of health care during your first administration. Those requirements were largely reversed by the Biden administration. Now we're reinstating those——

The President. Or terminated, right?

Staff Secretary Scharf. Or terminated. We're strengthening them. The idea is to make price transparency a key aspect of health care policy in America.

The President. It's one of the biggest things that can happen to reducing cost in health care. It takes a little while to kick in. But Biden ended it immediately upon coming in, which was a terrible travesty, in my opinion. And we're going to start it up, and we've actually made it even stronger——

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. ——by a couple of major factors. Right?

Anybody have any question on price transparency?

Health Care Costs

Q. Well, how does it work? How does it work, sir?

The President. It allows people to go out and negotiate and price, and you're not allowed to even talk about it when you go into a hospital or see a doctor, and this allows you to go out and talk about it. And it's actually one of the biggest——there's a couple of people that——actually going back a long way that feel that are real pros in the industry feel this is the biggest thing you can do for cutting prices, and it certainly is one of them.

And it's been unpopular in some circles because people make less money, but it's great for the patient. It's great for the people in our country. Okay? It's not so good for pharmaceuticals. It's not so good for the companies that make the drugs. And I guess you could say it probably isn't so great for hospitals.

But they say that if you have a great hospital that's really——knows what they're doing, it's actually great for a hospital, because everybody wants to go there.

[At this point, the President signed an Executive order titled, "Making America Healthy Again by Empowering Patients With Clear, Accurate, and Actionable Healthcare Pricing Information."]

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

The President. Good.

Got it, Doug [Doug Mills, New York Times]?

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. Pulitzer Prize. [Laughter]

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Next, we have, for your attention, another Executive order. Copper is a critical material, and the supply of copper is vital to our national security. In recent years, we've dealt with the significant issue of the dumping of foreign copper into the American market. That significantly impacted the domestic production and manufacture of copper and copper materials.

This Executive order charges your Secretary of Commerce with starting the process to potentially impose tariffs or other trade barriers to prevent this ongoing dumping of copper and to protect the American manufacture and production of copper.

The President. It will have a big impact.

Howard, do you want to say something about that?

Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick. Yes. Do you mind if I read one of your Truths?

The President. Yes, please. Sure.

Secretary Lutnick. So this is a Truth that's about to go out: "Like our steel and aluminum industries, our great American copper industry has been decimated by global actors attacking our domestic production. To build back our copper industry, I have requested my Secretary of Commerce and USTR to study copper imports and end unfair trade putting Americans out of work. Tariffs will help rebuild back our American copper industry and strengthen our national defense. American industries depend on copper, and they should be made in America. No exemptions. No exceptions. America first creates American jobs and protects our national security. It's time for copper to 'come home.'"

If it's alright with you, if I can talk a little bit about the digital services tax—

The President. Yes, please.

Secretary Lutnick. —would that be alright?

The President. Go ahead. Do that.

Secretary Lutnick. So I'll read another Truth. This is sort of so fun to read his words. Can't be any better.

So: "Our incredible United States economy and undeniable American spirit has enabled the creation of the greatest technology companies on Earth. Our digital economy is bigger than most of the world's countries, and the market cap of our even—of even one of our companies exceeds every European country."

"Instead of empowering their workers and creating opportunities, foreign governments have instead tried to tax, fine, and hinder Americans' technology companies. Both friend and foe have been treating American tech companies harshly, as if our companies are their piggy bank. This will now end. It is my objective to level the playing field and end these attacks. We are putting these countries on notice to end their unfair treatment of American companies, large and small. Our companies are the greatest investors in the world"—so our tech companies are the greatest investors in the world—"and their investments will go only to where American companies are treated fairly. Our ingenuity, grit, drive, and perseverance have built America. If these countries want to participate in the AI industrial revolution, it's time to choose sides with America, not against us."

And we signed that on Friday, sir.

The President. Okay. Very big deal, right?

Secretary Lutnick. Huge.

The President. Thank you.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Addressing the Threat to National Security From Imports of Copper."*]

All right. And that's a very big one that Howard just read, but they're both big. They're all big. We're only doing big ones. [*Laughter*]

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Digital Services Taxes/European Union

Q. Mr. President, is that the culmination of ongoing conversations that you've had with your counterparts—this particular Executive order?

The President. Which one? Last or——

Q. The one that the Commerce Secretary read about.

The President. No, they're—the digital tax is taking place all over Europe. They're taxing us. And they're doing other things. They're suing all our companies. And if that's going to happen, we want to be the ones that sue, not them. And they use it almost as a form of running European countries. And the EU, in particular, has been very violent in its lawsuits against our companies and, frankly, very violent and very bad to our airlines.

Our—I've gotten calls from the heads of airlines saying they stop in Europe, and they're getting charged all sorts of taxes that they never even heard of. They stop, and they're getting fined and charged. And they do it only with American companies. They're not doing it to other countries, so we're stopping it.

And we have another thing—we have another step to go, and if they don't shape up—as an example, Apple has had to pay, like, \$17 billion in a lawsuit that nobody thought was worth anything. And I won't get into the judge or the decision or how the decision was arrived, but I'm pretty good at this stuff, and I think it's disgraceful.

And Google is being sued, Facebook is being sued, and many others are being sued by their so-called government, if you call it a government—EU. And they don't treat us right. They don't treat us right as a country. So we're going to protect our companies. We have to protect our companies or we're not going to have any companies left anymore.

I also want to thank Apple, though, for announcing they're going to invest \$500 billion in our country. That's the biggest investment anybody has probably made to this date. And they're going to do it very quickly, and that's because of tariffs. They don't want to pay the tariffs. And they feel very strongly about the country, now.

They wouldn't have done it without us. Without the Trump administration, they wouldn't have done it. But they feel very strongly about the direction of the country. The polls have shown that too. The polls are coming out showing the direction of the company is the best—the—of the country is the best they've ever seen, actually. Best they've ever seen.

So I just want to thank Tim Cook and Apple for the confidence: \$500 billion, that's the biggest investment anyone has made in a short period of time.

Federal Government Appropriations

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken today with the House Republican holdouts who——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——said they would not be supporting the budget resolution? Have you approached them?

The President. Well, I'm not involved in that. They know what I want, and the Senate knows what I want too. And the Senate's got a bill that's very strong having to do with the taxes, because the taxes is what's bringing all these companies in. So—and without it, by the way, you'd have to double your own taxes. Everybody would be doubled up, and you'd have the biggest tax increase ever.

So the House has a bill and the Senate has a bill, and I'm looking at them both, and I'll make decisions. But I don't know where they are in the vote. I know the Senate is doing very well and the House is doing very well, but each one of them has things that I like. So we'll see if we can come together.

Office of Personnel Management E-Mail to Federal Employees/Federal Workforce Reductions

Q. Mr. President, can you clarify——

Q. Is President Zelenskyy coming Friday?

Q. ——hopefully, once and for all, what your expectations are with this email to Federal employees? What are you going to use that information for? And do you see it as voluntary, like OPM has said, or mandatory?

The President. It—yes, well, it's somewhat voluntary. But it's also, if you don't answer, I guess you get fired. [*Laughter*]

What it really is——

Q. I'm still lost on that.

The President. What it is, is: Do people exist? We have this massive Government with millions of people, and nobody knows who's working for the Government, who's not. So, what they're doing is they're sending out a letter to everybody, and they're saying, "What were the things you did last week?"

Q. Mm-hmm.

The President. I guess they asked for five. And if people are working, it's easy. I could tell you five things I did last week—[*laughter*—I could tell you five things I did 6 weeks ago, right?

If they're there and they're working, they're able to say they did five things during work, and that means they're working and they're with us, and they have no further obligation.

If they're not, it could be there's no such person. It could be that the person is no longer working, they're no longer living at that address, they maybe moved—maybe they moved to a different country, or maybe the person doesn't exist. And we then take that payroll—that person off the payroll, and we save a lot of money by doing that.

But that's one of the only ways—I think it's a very smart thing. And it says, if you don't answer, essentially, you know, there's a penalty to pay, like that's the end of the job.

White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk/U.S. DOGE Service

Q. Well, Musk has said that. The order itself doesn't say that. I think that's part of the confusion. Is he speaking for you when he says——

The President. Yes. Yes.

Q. ——"You'll be terminated"?

The President. Everybody speaks for me. I'm the one—I'll take responsibility. You know the old statement "the buck stops here," right?

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. Famous statement. Well, I can say the same thing. The buck stops here.

No, we have to find out if people are getting paid and they're not working. And, you know, they have a problem. Let's say they have another job, and then they write in false statements. It's a big problem if they write in false statements. They may be working for somebody else but getting paid by the U.S. Government, and that would mean that—they're not allowed to be doing that. You know, they're not allowed to be working for us and be working for somebody else. We're paying them. A lot of money that we're paying them. So we'll see.

That solves that problem. Most people aren't willing to say that, you know, we're doing this, this, this, and this and this for the U.S. Government, and yet they're at another job, because that's a big problem for them if they do that, so——

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

So, in some cases, they're not writing back. And if they don't write back, they end up eventually losing their job. We give them extensions, but you know, that was something we thought about a long time ago. We give them extensions. But we'll see.

We have to make sure, number one, that we have people; number two, that they're working—and number two, they're working for us, not for another company.

Q. Mr. President——

Ukraine/Russia/Critical Minerals Supply

Q. Is it true that President Zelenskyy is coming on Friday to meet with you? And is the mineral deal sorted out? Is it done?

The President. Yes, I hear that. I hear that he's coming on Friday. Certainly, it's okay with me if he'd like to. And he would like to sign it together with me. And I understand that it's a big deal, a very big deal. And I think the American people, even if you look at polling, they're very happy because, you know, Biden was throwing money around like it's cotton candy, and it's a very big deal. It could so—it could be a trillion-dollar deal. It could be whatever. But it's rare earths and other things.

And, look, we're spending hundreds of billions of dollars on Ukraine and Russia fighting a war that should have never, ever happened. That's a war that should—would have never happened if I were President, and it didn't happen for 4 years. People say, "How do we know that?" It didn't happen for 4 years.

Q. So——

The President. It would have never happened. And nevertheless, this guy went into this situation, and he spent money like nobody has ever seen: \$350 billion.

The other thing that we don't like is that Europe has spent \$100 billion. We've spent \$350 billion. Europe gets their money back because they spent it in the form of a loan, and we just gave them—whether it's \$300 or \$350 billion, nobody really knows. They can't even tell me the answer to that. Probably—means it's probably more than that.

So what we're doing is, now we're saying: "Look, we want to be secured. We want to get that money back."

We're helping the country through a very, very big problem—a problem like very few people have had. Shouldn't have had this problem, because it shouldn't have happened. But it did happen, so we have to straighten it out. But the American taxpayer now is going to get their money back, plus.

Ukraine/European Security Assistance/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Mr. President, yesterday with Emmanuel Macron, you said you had spoken to Putin about the idea of peacekeepers in Ukraine, that Putin was fine with it. The Kremlin, I guess, has said that that's actually unacceptable to them. What's real here?

The President. Well, that's not what I was told. But you're going to need some form of peacekeeping. So something will be done that's going to be satisfactory to everybody. We need peacekeeping too.

Q. Any situation where there's——

The President. It's actually——

Q. ——American troops involved?

The President. It's actually something I did discuss, but a form of peacekeeping that's acceptable to everybody. Ultimately, we'll be able to agree on something, I'm sure.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Ukraine/Critical Minerals Supply

Q. With Ukraine and this mineral deal, what does Ukraine get in return, Mr. President?

The President. Three hundred and fifty billion dollars and lots of equipment and military equipment and the right to fight on and, originally, the right to fight.

Look, Ukraine, I will say, they're very brave and they're good soldiers, but without the United States and its money and its military equipment, this war would have been over in a very short period of time. In fact, I was the one that gave the Javelins. You remember the famous Javelins? That was me. That wasn't Obama. It wasn't Biden. It wasn't anybody else. It was me. And they wiped out a lot of tanks with those Javelins. And the expression was that Obama gave sheets and I gave the Javelins. That was a big deal at the time. It wiped out—that was the beginning, where people said, "Wow, that's something."

Well, that was American equipment. Without American equipment, this war would have been over very quickly. And American money too. I mean, a lot of money.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. So you said that war-fighting equipment and the ammunition—that's sustained going forward for Ukraine? And how long is it sustained?

The President. Well, it could go forward for a while, and maybe until we have a deal with Russia. Look, if we're going to—we need to have a deal with Russia. Otherwise, it's going to continue.

But now, when Americans put up their money, the taxpayer money, and the President approves it, we're getting our money back in some form. But it could go on for a while, or it could be settled quickly. I think it's going to be settled quickly.

I spoke with President Putin. I think he wants to settle it and wants to get on with life. It's horrible. What's happening: horrible. Thousands of soldiers a week are being killed, and others too, but especially on the battlefield. Thousands a week are being killed. And we want that to end.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

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

White House Press Access/Associated Press

Q. Yes. Okay. Real quickly. Karoline Leavitt, your Press Secretary——

The President. Right.

Q. ——sent an earthquake through that briefing room earlier today, announcing that the WHCA would not have any control over placing media in the seats in the briefing room. Just want to get your thoughts on that. And also on Air Force One. It's really—it's trending on X, people are talking about it. Get your thoughts.

The President. Well, we're going to be now calling those shots. As you know, we won that lawsuit right there—see the Gulf of America, which is a beautiful name. *[Laughter]* Most people agree. I don't know, it's—you know, AP has been terrible. Look, I think they're radical left. I think they're third-rate reporters. I know the person—the specific young lady that works on the account is terrible. She's a radical-left lunatic, as far as I'm concerned. She—they don't treat us fairly. That's number one.

And number two, they had no right to do that. This is the Gulf of America. And if you look at that shoreline—look at that shoreline. Look, from Florida—well, most of it is—it's called America, and the vast majority—like big numbers. So I'm just admiring it, as I look at it. *[Laughter]* I'm getting teary-eyed, but I don't want you to say, "Trump broke down and started crying when he"—*[laughter]*—

No, how beautiful is that? Look at the shoreline. Look at that. That's America.

Canada/U.S. Timber Resources/California Water Access

Q. Well, can I shift our attention to Canada real quick?

The President. Yes. Please.

Q. Last week, I spent some time with two government officials for Canada——

The President. Yes.

Q. —and I was asking them how realistic is it that Canada would be the 51st State.

The President. Yes.

Q. And they told me there is a path. Alberta is first, and if they sign on, Saskatchewan would follow, and then you go west to British Columbia. There is a movement in Canada to join us. Want to get your thoughts on that and how that's proceeding right now.

The President. So it's true. Thank you, Brian. It's true. A lot of people in Canada are liking becoming our beautiful, cherished 51st State. They'll have to pay much lower taxes. They'll have the ultimate security. You know, they don't pay very much for security right now because they rely on us, which is really unfair to us.

They make cars that we could make, and they send them back into the United States. They make a lot of things, including the sending of oil and everything. We don't need their oil. We don't need their lumber.

In fact, we're going to be freeing up—and I've asked Howard Lutnick to get that done, with Lee and everybody—Lee Zeldin, environmental. We're freeing up our forests. We're going to be able to take down trees. Right now, you know, we're so restricted environmentally. We're going to be freeing it up with an emergency order. We have an emergency order, and we're going to be freeing up our forest.

We have more forests than almost anybody and great lumber, great trees. We don't need anybody's trees. We don't need trees from Canada or anybody else. In fact, we have to put the slits, as they call them—the area—you know, a 50-, 60-yard area in between areas of trees. It stops the fires. And frankly, California should have been doing that for years. It's almost getting late. They're going to run out of forests, the way they're going. What a shame.

And by the way, the water is flowing in California. I hope you people have seen it. But the water is flowing. Do you have a picture of that? I'd—hold it up. Do you have a picture that? Get a picture of it, please.

You know, we had a little skirmish in California. I can't believe we had to do that. But we opened up the water in California. The water was flowing into a place called the Pacific Ocean—which, for the Pacific Ocean, is only a drop, but for us, it's more water than we can use in California. So I'll get you some photographs, but it's a beautiful sight.

The water is flowing in California. Beautiful water from the Pacific Northwest and beyond. And it flows down, and instead of being routed out to the Pacific Ocean—and this has been going on for 20 years—more—in order to take care of certain species of fish, which wasn't doing very well without water, I can tell you. So that's a big deal.

It's, like, not reported. It's incredible. But California has a lot of water. That's going to take care of farmers. It's going to wetten up the land, and it's going to take—go all the way down to Los Angeles, where they have curfews on water, where they have all sorts of blocks on water. You can only use so much. And we're going to put a—until just recently, they were going to put a number of gallons per person living in a house in Beverly Hills on water. You're not going to have that problem anymore.

Do you have a picture? Let me just see what that looks like. How beautiful is that? Look at that beautiful water flowing.

[The President held up a printout of a Truth Social post.]

Look at that. That's coming in the dikes and other means of transportation— isn't that beautiful? Who would believe that?

That's all water they could have had. I went to the Governor during my first term and I said, "Why don't you do this?" And they said, "Environmental." They have an environmental problem with clean water.

If this water were there, you wouldn't have had those fires. You had sprinklers—they make people put sprinklers in the ceiling of a home, and they had no water in them. With this, they would have had a lot of water in them. They would have all been full.

That would have had a whole—you would have a whole different deal down there. You probably wouldn't have had a fire, but if it was, it would have been small, would have been put out. You had the fire hydrants not working in California.

So it's a beautiful sight. These are canals that were built. These were all built, and you saw them: For years, they were empty concrete. They call them the V shapes or the pipe—half pipes. And they're shaped different forms, but they're shaped, and they're—they rush down through the farm areas, where the farmers can take it, and down to Los Angeles. And they were sitting empty for years.

And now look at that. Look at that—way it looked.

It wasn't easy. We had to be very unfriendly to get into those areas. We opened it up.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President——

The President. I essentially attacked California. Can you believe it? [*Laughter*] I attacked.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. I attacked California.

Staff Secretary Scharf. You have one more, sir.

The President. Let's go.

Staff Secretary Scharf. At the outset of your administration, sir, you committed to ending the weaponization of Government, to holding those accountable who'd participated in the weaponization of Government. One——

The President. Hold it. This is a good one. Is everybody listening?

"Deranged Jack Smith." We're going to call it the "Deranged Jack Smith" signing or bill. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

Staff Secretary Scharf. One law firm that provided pro bono legal services to the Special Counsel's office under Jack Smith's leadership was Covington & Burling. As a result of those actions, we're now going to be suspending and putting under review the security clearances for the attorneys and employees at that firm who worked with Jack Smith's team.

And we're going to continue holding the people who were responsible for the weaponization of Government and who supported it accountable for what they did.

The President. And you'll be doing this with other firms as time goes by, right? You——

Staff Secretary Scharf. We're looking at sort of the whole panoply of options there, sir.

The President. The weaponization of our system by law firms—even pro bono work, they're doing just in order to clog up Government, stop Government. And nobody knows about it more than me, and hopefully that'll never happen again.

Q. Sir, the—Covington & Burlington? Is that the——

Staff Secretary Scharf. Covington & Burling.

Q. Okay.

[*The President signed a memorandum titled, "Suspension of Security Clearances and Evaluation of Government Contracts."*]

Q. Mr. President, may I ask you a question about Europe? So, long term, do you plan to maintain the number of U.S. troops stationed——

The President. Wait. I just want to savor this one, please. [*Laughter*]

Who would like this pen?

Q. I'll take it. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Here. Why don't you send it to Jack Smith? [*Laughter*] He's a deranged person.

Executive Actions Targeting Prominent Law Firms

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to people who worry that targeting an individual firm or individuals who, you know, aren't Jack Smith——

The President. Excuse me.

Q. ——for his actions——

The President. I've been targeted for 4 years. Longer than that.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

The President. So you don't tell me about targeting. I was the target of corrupt politicians for 4 years and then 4 years after that. So don't talk to me about targeting.

Yes. Go ahead.

Federal Workforce Reduction Efforts/Special Immigration Program

Q. Mr. President, there are approximately 2 million Federal employees right now. By the end of your term, what do you expect that number to be? What would you like that number to be?

The President. Well, it will be lower, but I can't tell you. We——everybody knows, I ran on downsizing Government, but making Government better. I ran on tariffs and making our country rich, and that's what's going to do.

We're going to be doing something else that's going to be very, very good. We're going to be selling a gold card. You have a green card. This is a gold card. We're going to be putting a price on that card of about \$5 million, and that's going to give you green card privileges plus. It's going to be a route to citizenship, and wealthy people will be coming into our country by buying this card. They'll be wealthy, and they'll be successful, and they'll be spending a lot of money, and paying a lot of taxes and employing a lot of people.

And we think it's going to be extremely successful. Never been done before, anything like this, but it's something that we're going to be putting out over the next——would you say 2 weeks, Howard?

Secretary Lutnick. Two weeks.

The President. Do you want to say a couple of words about it?

Secretary Lutnick. Sure.

Special Immigration Program

Q. Mr. President, are there any requirements——

The President. Wait a minute. We're——

Q. ——for that gold card?

Secretary Lutnick. Hang on a second.

Q. Do you have to invest a certain amount of money in this country in order to qualify for that gold card?

The President. Yes. Exactly.

Go ahead.

Secretary Lutnick. So the EB-5 program was, really, you lend some money, but it was all—it was full of nonsense, make-believe, and fraud, and it was a way to get a green card that was low price. So the President said, rather than having this sort of ridiculous EB-5 program, we're going to end the EB-5 program, and we're going to replace it with the "Trump gold card," which is really a green card gold.

So they'll be able to pay \$5 million to the U.S. Government. They'll have to go through vetting, of course. We're going to make sure they're wonderful, world-class global citizens. They can come to America, the President can give them a green card, and they can invest in America. And we can use that money to reduce our deficit.

Why do we give out lotteries of green cards? Why do we give out EB-5 for green cards? The President of the United States understands that the right answer is, why don't we eliminate the deficit of the United States of America instead.

Special Immigration Program

Q. And how many——

The President. The gold card——

Q. ——of those cards?

The President. The gold card—well, millions. But the gold card will bring in with it people that create jobs, very high-level people. I think companies will pay to get people in.

For instance, you today graduate from the Wharton School of Finance or Harvard or Sanford—Stanford or any college, and nobody knows if you can even go to work for a company. So Apple and all these companies—you know, companies that want to get people to be working for them will be able to buy a card, and for the people that are number one in their class at top schools, you know, I see that as one of the things. But generally speaking, it will be people with money and people that create jobs.

And they won't have to pay any tax on income outside of the United States, which they're not paying right now. They're not citizens. But they'll have to pay—if they create jobs in the United States, they'll pay full taxes like everybody else.

So you're getting big taxpayers, big job producers. And we'll be able to sell maybe a million of these cards, maybe more than that. And if you add up the numbers, they're pretty good.

As an example, a million cards would be worth \$5 trillion—\$5 trillion. [*Laughter*]

Secretary Lutnick. Wow.

The President. And if you sell 10 million of the cards, that's a total of \$50 trillion. Well, we have \$35 trillion in debt. That would be nice.

So we'll see. But it could be great. Maybe it will be fantastic. We have it all worked out from the legal standpoint. It's totally legal to do. Hasn't been done before.

It's been done in many different forms. We give them away. Why should we give them away? We shouldn't give them away. And I think it's something very exciting. I think it's potentially—just something that we're all very excited about.

So it's a gold card. It's somewhat like a green card, but at a higher level of sophistication. It's a road to citizenship for people. And essentially, people of wealth or people of great talent, where people of wealth pay for those people of talent to get in, meaning companies will pay for people to get in and to have long-term status in the country.

And I think it's something we're very, very happy about.

Will, do you have anything to say about that?

Staff Secretary Scharf. [Inaudible]

Secretary Lutnick. Well, many other countries, by the way, do this, including, of course, your 51st State does that.

Special Immigration Program

Q. And the money is earmarked for deficit reduction?

The President. It may be earmarked for deficit, but it actually could be more money than that. I mean, if it—if you did 10 million, it would be—you'd have \$15 trillion left over. But generally, what—it's going to be pay down debt, yes.

Special Immigration Program

Q. Do you need Congress for this? Do you think you need them to pass a law?

The President. No. We don't need Congress, no, because we're not doing citizenship. We're doing the card.

Q. I see.

Q. And would all——

The President. It's a path to citizenship, a very strong path to citizenship, but we're not doing the citizenship. For that, I'd have to get Congress.

Q. And would all countries be eligible for this gold card?

The President. Depends. The countries, largely—the people will be vetted very carefully.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Mr. President, on Ukraine, would you provide military support for Ukraine in the future under a peace agree—agreement?

The President. Say it again louder.

Q. Would you provide military support for Ukraine in the future as part——

The President. You mean like security?

Q. —of a peace agreement? Yes.

The President. Well, people are going to do it.

Q. Security guarantees.

The President. I think Europe will largely be responsible for that.

Q. But Macron——

The President. European countries will be responsible.

Q. But Macron asked for a U.S. backup. Will you be——

The President. Well, we'll see. I mean, right now, we're just in the process of negotiating. We've pretty much negotiated our deal on raw earth and various other things. We'll be looking at that. Security—you're talking about general security for Ukraine later on. I don't think that's going to be a problem.

Q. Air defense? Aircraft?

The President. There are a lot of people that want to do it. And I spoke with Russia about it. They didn't seem to have a problem with it, so I think they understand. They're not going back in. Once we do this, they're not going back in.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. So not even air defense or aircraft?

Q. Mr. President, on the gold card——

Ukraine/European Security Assistance

Q. Would the U.S. provide, for instance, air defense for Ukraine?

The President. Well, I just told you. We're—right now we're not providing anything. You know, it's about Europe too. Europe put in \$100 billion, and we put in \$350 billion. It's not a fair thing.

You know, we would normally say, and we—I say it now anyway, but we want equalization. They should put up, actually, more money than us, because they're right there. We have an ocean in between.

But we've had very good talks with Russia. We've had very good talks with Ukraine. And we think it maybe will come to an end and we'll stop killing young people all over the battlefield—and elsewhere.

U.S. Military Presence in Europe/European Union/Tariffs

Q. Mr. President, on Europe. So do you plan to maintain heavy military presence in Europe in the long term, like tens of thousands of troops?

The President. We'll be involved, yes.

Q. Or do you want to withdraw some?

The President. Yes, we'll be involved in Europe. We're involved in Europe now. Europe is our friend. They take advantage of us on trade. We don't like that, what the EU does. We don't like that. But we'll solve that the old-fashioned way. We'll give them the same reciprocal numbers.

You know, we're talking about a reciprocal tax. You know that. And if they charge us, we charge them. Right now, they charge us much, much more than we charge them, and they have nonmonetary taxes also on tariffs. And we're going to change that.

It's all changing. It's all changing. We're not going to be the people that we were. We had people in this office, sitting right at this desk, or another model of this desk—because, as you know, the other desk is, right now, being refurbished.

Gaza Conflict/U.S. Diplomatic Efforts

Q. Is Steve Witkoff delaying his trip to the Middle East? And what do you——

The President. No. No, not that I know of. No, Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Q. Is there an update on the phase two negotiations?

The President. And the Middle East has been great. Saudi Arabia has treated us really well. They really have. And I think Qatar has treated us very well too. They want to get that whole mess ended in the Middle East.

You know, we don't even talk about that anymore. You guys haven't asked one question about the Middle East. But the Middle East seems to be doing relatively well.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. May I ask about the Middle East, sir? About the Middle East. For months, even before you were elected in November, you've spoken about your desire to free all of those hostages that have been held by Hamas——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——since October the 7th, a year and a half ago. And just a few weeks ago, you gave an ultimatum. You said, if they're not all released by noon on February the 15, there would be "hell to pay." Is Hamas thumbing their nose at you, Mr. President?

The President. No, I think the opposite. So, as you know, they weren't going to release any more hostages, and I said there's going to be hell to pay, and then they agreed to—they were going to release the hostages that they had agreed to release, plus an extra one. And so that—you could say that was a big difference.

But I said it—from that point, it's up to Bibi Netanyahu and Israel. I may have taken a different stance, but they did release—they went back to releasing the hostages. But if you remember, they said, "We weren't going to release any." They—they've totally ended it. And I said, "Well, if they're not going to release any, there will hell to pay."

And—but the rest is really up to him. What—I may have done it differently than him. It's not my decision. It's his decision. But they did release all of those hostages. So——

Q. Mr. President——

Russia/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Critical Minerals Supply

Q. Mr. President, when you spoke to Vladimir Putin, did he raise or did you discuss at all the possibility of a minerals deal on the Ukrainian land that Russia now controls——

The President. I didn't discuss——

Q. ——that—striking a deal with Russia?

The President. No. I'd like to buy minerals on Russian land too, if we can. The rare earth. They have very good rare earth also—they both do, I would say that—and oil and gas. Look, it's a great thing. If we settle this, it's great for Russia too——

Q. Does——

The President. ——because we can do deals there. They have very valuable land that isn't utilized. So something like that could take place, yes.

Russia/U.S. Sanctions

Q. Have you put raising—or lifting sanctions against Russia on the table as you're negotiating the—[inaudible]—

The President. No, we haven't lifted any sanctions on anybody.

Q. Is it on the table as part of any negotiations?

The President. I guess it will be at some point. But right now, we haven't agreed to lift sanctions on anybody.

Special Immigration Program

Q. On that gold card, getting back to that. I'm fascinated by this, Mr. President and——

The President. You should be fascinated by it.

Q. ——and Secretary Lutnick. Would——

The President. Your taxes will go down to nothing.

Q. Would a Russian oligarch be eligible for a gold card?

The President. Yes, possibly. Hey, I know some Russian oligarchs that are very nice people. [Laughter] It's possible.

Q. Care to elaborate?

The President. They're not quite as wealthy as they used to be. [Laughter] They're not as wealthy as they used to be. I think they could afford \$5 million.

Q. So they have sanctions on them——

The President. No, a lot of people are going to want to—a——

Q. ——and yet they would be eligible for a gold card?

The President. A lot of people are going to want to be in this country. And they'll be able to work and provide jobs and build companies and pay taxes, all of those things. It's an incredible thing.

I mean, you're—this is the group that is the first to hear it. Nobody's heard about it. Nobody ever thought about it. But we've been thinking about it very, very strongly over the last week.

And I was going to announce it sometime next week, and I figured: "Why not? We have a lot of cameras blazing right now." [Laughter] "Might as well—we might as well do it now." We'll have Karoline announce it the next time.

No, it's a great thing, the gold card. Remember the words: the gold card. Somebody said, "Can we call it the Trump gold card?" I said: "If it helps, use the name Trump. I'll give it to you for free." [Laughter]

Secretary Lutnick. I like it, sir.

Q. Mr. President, you probably just launched 10,000 stories. Do you want to elaborate a little bit more on what Russian oligarchs you know or don't know?

The President. I know. Isn't it interesting how many stories we do tell? [*Laughter*] And they all turn out to be true. And they all turn out to be ultimately correct, huh? You know, "Trump was right about everything."

Do you have one of those "Trump was right about everything" hats? I'm going to give it to this gentleman. [*Laughter*]

Get me one of those hats. Get me—get me one of them—[*inaudible*].

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Secretary Lutnick. But they're all going to be vetted.

Q. Sir, when would it—when would it start, the gold card program?

Secretary Lutnick. Everybody who comes in gets vetted.

Q. When would it start?

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Secretary Lutnick. Okay? They get vetted. So you've got to—you know—

Q. When does it begin?

Q. Yes, when does it begin?

Secretary Lutnick. We're going to begin in 2 weeks.

The President. About 2 weeks. The sale will start in about 2 weeks. [*Laughter*]

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, do you see a more active role for Zelenskyy now, given the status with the——

The President. I hope so. I mean, look, I think that we want to get that country back on its feet, and right now, it's been destroyed. It's so——

Here, give me this. Here. Give me all of them.

White House aide. Sure.

[*The President was handed a stack of hats.*]

The President. Look. See that? [*Laughter*] "Trump was right about everything." It just came in.

Somebody said that. I said—these were sent in by a fan. I said, "I think we should make some of them," right? But we were, pretty much.

You want one?

Q. I'm—I'll pass for now.

The President. Are you allowed to take one?

Q. Probably not.

The President. Because he'll consider it. I know him well.

Q. Mr. President, I'll take one.

The President. You're sort of a stiff.

Q. I said you were right from day one.

The President. Yes, Brian, you're not a stiff.

[*The President tossed a hat to a reporter.*]

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. He's sort of a stiff guy.

Q. Appreciate it.

The President. He'll take other things, but not a free hat. [*Laughter*]

Secretary Lutnick. Always say yes to the President. Always say yes to the President.

Q. Mr. President. Mr. President.

The President. Would anybody like one?

Q. Mr. President, an easy question, perhaps, for you. Maybe it's difficult. I'm going to ask you this question about the Super Bowl.

The President. Who do you work for?

Q. I work for two news organizations.

The President. Who?

Q. I work for two news organizations.

The President. Yes, who are they?

Q. I work for Gray Television, America's second largest broadcaster. And I work for iHeartRadio. So there you go.

The President. Okay. All right.

National Football League's Philadelphia Eagles

Q. But let me ask you the easier tough question, Mr. President. The Philadelphia Eagles won the Super Bowl. Are they being extended an invitation to meet with you?

The President. They will be. We haven't yet, but we will be. I will—I thought it was a great performance by them. And absolutely, they'll be extended that invitation.

Would you do that right away, by the way?

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. Yes, sir.

The President. We'll do it right away. We're going to do it sometime today. And they deserve to be down here, and we hope to see them.

We have a lot of teams—we just had the great hockey team, as you know, Florida, come here. We have many of the great athletes come that win things.

Professional Golf

Q. What's the main obstacle holding up this PGA Tour-LIV Golf deal?

The President. Well, they have to get together. You know, they've had a lot of discussion back and forth. They both are meaning well, and a deal will ultimately happen. I think it will happen pretty quickly.

Q. What's your role——

The President. It will be nice to see the golfers—the best golfers be able to play against each other.

Q. What's your role been in this whole process?

The President. Just to help expedite it. Tiger was here. Adam Scott was here. Jay Monahan was here the other day. Just to really help expedite it. We had Yasir here from Saudi Arabia. Great guy. These are all great people, and they want to work it out, so if I can help them work it out.

I don't get anything out of it. If I can help them work it out—I just think golf, it's very much of an individual sport, and you want to see the best players playing against each other, not playing in two different locations, right?

Q. What's going to be more challenging: a PGA-LIV deal or a Russia-Ukraine deal?

The President. I think the PGA deal is much more complicated. *[Laughter]*

Israel/West Bank Settlements/Joint Chiefs of Staff/Russia/Ukraine

Q. Sir, may I ask another Middle East question, if I may? What's your take on what's happening in the West Bank and what Israel is doing there?

The President. Well, it's a—there's some movement up there that a lot of people are concerned about, and there's been a lot of Israeli movement. They're up there for a reason all of a sudden. Maybe they're not feeling so good about that. So that would be terrible. I hope that doesn't happen. But there is movement up there that nobody knew about. Right? You know that, right?

Q. Yes. And when you say—are you concerned about it as well?

The President. I'm concerned about everything. I want the world to be peaceful.

You know, when I left here, we had no war. We had defeated ISIS in less than 4 weeks. In fact, I took the general that defeated ISIS, and I put him in charge of the whole ball game, because that's what we want. We want winners. "Razin" Caine. You know "Razin"? When I heard that name, I said: "I like that name. That's the kind of general I like." So we'll see.

But he was great. He was a great soldier. Not a politician, a soldier—a real soldier. You know that, Brian.

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. This guy was for real.

Q. I do.

The President. This guy's the real——

Q. I've heard that story a million times.

The President. Yes. This guy is the real deal.

Q. He is.

The President. And I think he's going to do a great job.

But think of it. We had no wars. We had no problems. We had no inflation. We had no problems. And then, all of a sudden, you have October 7 in Israel, which was horrible. And then you see what happened with—Ukraine would have never—Russia would have never gone in if the election weren't rigged.

It was a rigged election. The 2020 election was rigged. And we got out of it, and you see what happened. You see what happened to our country: inflation, Afghanistan—that horrible withdraw from Afghanistan. I think when Russia saw what happened in Afghanistan, they said, "Wow, that's a paper tiger." We're not a paper tiger. We are the strongest military force in the world.

And by the way, Pete Hegseth is doing a great job.

But we didn't have wars. We didn't have inflation. We had a strong border. We had everything going good. And then Biden got in, and he's, my opinion, the worst President in the history of our country. I think Jimmy Carter was a very happy man when he passed away——

Q. So what are you——

The President. ——2 weeks [months; White House correction] ago.

The President's Cabinet

Q. What are you expecting at the Cabinet meeting tomorrow?

The President. It will be a Cabinet meeting, and I'll preside. Unlike Biden, I'll preside over my own Cabinet meeting. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, how would you compare——

Q. Mr. President, on the C.Q. Brown. On the Dan——

Experimental Medications and Therapies/U.S. Space Force

Q. Mr. President, how would you compare your Cabinet in your second term to your Cabinet that you had in your first term?

The President. Well, I had some great people my second [first; White House correction] term. I think this is deeper. I think it's better because it's deeper. I had some people that I didn't really like too much in my Cabinet, but I didn't know Washington then. I was a New York person. I knew New York intimately.

But I had to rely on people. I had great people. Look, we got the biggest tax cuts in history. I rebuilt the military. I mean, we did so much. We did unbelievable—even "right to try." Somebody was saying today they were saved by "right to try." We did "right to try" medically. We did transparency medically. That was a big thing, but Biden canceled that one. He didn't cancel "right to try," which is interesting.

He didn't cancel Space Force. He was going to cancel Space Force. Space Force is turning out to be invaluable. Amazing. We created Space Force.

But think of it. We rebuilt our entire military, and now we're going to have to patch it up a little bit again because of the—what's happened.

No, this was a grossly incompetent administration. The only thing they were good at was cheating in elections and the weaponization of Government.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:59 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Timothy P. Cook, chief executive officer, Apple Inc.; former President Barack Obama; Darlene Superville, White House reporter, Associated Press; former Department of Justice Special Counsel John L. Smith; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; professional golfers Eldrick T. "Tiger" Woods and Adam D. Scott; Joseph W. "Jay" Monahan, commissioner, Professional Golfers' Association; Yasir O. Al-Rumayyan, governor of Saudia

Arabia's Public Investment Fund; and Lt. Gen. J. Daniel Caine, USAF (Ret.), the President's nominee to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He also referred to Executive orders 14221 and 14220. Reporters referred to President Emmanuel Macron of France; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff; and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Charles Q. "C.Q." Brown, Jr., USAF. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on February 26.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Al-Rumayyan, Yasir O.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Caine, J. Daniel; Cook, Timothy D.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Leavitt, Karoline; Lutnick, Howard W.; Monahan, Joseph W. "Jay"; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Scharf, William O.; Scott, Adam; Smith, John L.; Superville, Darlene; Woods, Eldrick T. "Tiger"; Zeldin, Lee M.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Associated Press; Cabinet meeting; California, wildfires in Los Angeles area; Canada, trade with U.S.; Covington & Burling LLP law firm, suspension of security clearances and evaluation of Government contracts; Digital services taxes; Environmental Protection Agency; Europe, defense relationship with U.S.; European Union, trade with U.S.; Experimental medications and therapies; Federal deficit and debt; Federal Government, appropriations legislation; Federal workforce, reduction efforts; Football; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Geographic names, efforts to restore American greatness; Golf; Health care costs and affordability; Immigration reform; Inflation; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; Israel, Prime Minister; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; News media, fairness and accuracy; Qatar, relations with U.S.; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, critical minerals supply; Russia, President; Russia, U.S. and international sanctions; Saudi Arabia, relations with U.S.; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of Defense; Tariffs; Timber resources, expansion efforts; U.S. DOGE Service; U.S. Space Force; Ukraine, critical minerals supply; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Water management policy, improvement efforts; West Bank, Jewish settlements; White House Press Secretary; White House Staff Secretary.

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