

Remarks at a Document Signing Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters

March 6, 2025

The President. Thank you very much. Today we're delighted to be joined by Rodolphe Saadé, the chairman and CEO of CMA CGM, one of the largest shipping companies in the world, probably number two in the world. Probably going to be number one in the not-too-distant future, knowing him. They employ over 160,000 employees. They have 750 major container vessels worldwide.

And I'm thrilled to announce that he's going to be investing \$20 billion into the United States because of the election—the election results, which comes along with a lot of other things, like great protections and other things.

This massive investment will go toward building out shipping logistics, infrastructure, and terminals, which will create an estimated 10,000 new jobs in America. It's so important because it's about shipping.

You know, we lost our way. For many years, we haven't done anything. We used to build a ship a day, and now we essentially don't build ships. We're going to start that.

And we're going to be announcing, next week or the week after, a massive new program for building very larger and larger ships in the world. And it will have to do with incentives, taxes. They'll be coming from all over the world, just like they are with cars, with what we've done with tariffs. We have at least seven new major car plants that are going to be starting very shortly because of what we're doing with the tariffs, which will primarily start on April the 2nd. Much of it will—most of the tariffs go on April the 2nd.

Right now, we have some temporary ones and small ones on—relatively small, although it's a lot of money—having to do with Mexico and Canada.

But the predominant tariffs will go—they'll be reciprocal in nature. They'll be going on on April the 2nd. So we'll be talking about that.

It will be a big game changer for our country, because we've been ripped off by every country in the world. And now whatever they charge us—they charge us 150, 200 percent, and we charge them nothing. So whatever they charge us, we're going to charge them. And there'll be no getting out of it.

So we look forward to April 2. I've been looking forward to that date for a long time. I had it as April 1, but I didn't want to be hit for April Fool's Day. I'm a very superstitious person. So we made it April 2. It probably cost us a lot of money doing that, but it's okay. I feel better about it. And that'll be something very big.

But I'd like to ask Rodolphe—if you'd say a few words, please, about what you're going to do and also about the possibility of shipbuilding in our country. Please.

CMA CGM Group Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Rodolphe Saadé. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Yes, indeed, we are CMA CGM, one of the leaders in shipping and logistics around the world. We are very enthusiastic about this big announcement of today. We are investing \$20 billion in shipping and logistics. This means the creation of 10,000 new American jobs.

We're also looking at investing in shipbuilding of container vessels, and we most probably will be making also announcement in the next coming weeks. And we would like also, Mr. President, to go for more U.S. flag vessels. And we will go from 10 that we operate today to 30 U.S. flag ships and, hopefully, doing more in the months to come.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Congratulations on your great success.

Mr. Saadé. Thank you.

The President. He's built one of the—with his father before him, built one of the great shipping empires of the world. And that is—I never heard 750. That's—sounds like a lot to me, doesn't it, huh? That's——

Mr. Saadé. It is, Mr. President.

The President. That's a fantastic company. Congratulations.

Mr. Saadé. Thank you.

The President. Really great job.

Mr. Saadé. Thank you.

The President. An honor. A real honor to have you.

Why is it that more people don't have American flags? They don't have—they seem to have Panamanian flags and Liberian flags. They don't seem to have a lot of American flags.

Mr. Saadé. But this will change, Mr. President. You will have more ships with U.S. flag as we move forward. And you can count on us to do as much as we can.

The President. That's very good.

It's true, the other countries take advantage of us even on that. So we're going to be changing that around, and I appreciate you coming up and even bringing it to our attention. That's really a great thing. Thank you very much.

Mr. Saadé. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Appreciate it.

Will, could you come over? We're going to——

White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. ——sign some Executive orders.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Sir, your administration has made it a priority both to end lawfare and the weaponization of Government and also to hold those who engaged in lawfare accountable. One of those—one of the law firms that has been involved in that is called Perkins Coie. That's also a law firm that has engaged in unlawful DEI practices.

This Executive order will suspend security——

The President. And I've watched it take place.

Staff Secretary Scharf. This Executive order will suspend security clearances and access to certain Federal resources for that law firm and also launch a holistic review of unlawful DEI practices at some of the Nation's largest law firms.

The President. This is an absolute honor to sign. What they've done is in—it's just terrible. It's weaponization—you could say weaponization against a political opponent, and it should never be allowed to happen again.

[*At this point, the President signed an Executive order titled, "Addressing Risks From Perkins Coie LLP."*]

And you're looking at about 15 different firms?

Staff Secretary Scharf. That or more, sir. Yes.

The President. Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

One of the tools the left has consistently used to frustrate good Government policies has been the use of injunctions and temporary restraining orders. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(c) allows for a—essentially a demand for an injunction bond for folks who are seeking temporary restraining orders and injunctions to post a bond before they're allowed to proceed in court.

This Presidential memorandum would order the Department of Justice, its litigating components, to seek those injunction bonds whenever someone tries to challenge our policies in court so that when they end up losing in court—and we believe, that they will end up losing in court—that they can be held financially responsible for the disruption to Federal activities that their actions have caused.

The President. Great. Something they've wanted to do a long time, right? They've been looking to do this for years.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. And what are—they just never got it off?

Staff Secretary Scharf. This is a rule that's been on the books for a very long time. We've just—the Department of Justice has been very inconsistent in seeking these bonds.

[*The President signed a memorandum titled, "Ensuring the Enforcement of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(c)."*]

The President. From a legal standpoint, really a very big thing.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

In order to protect American car manufacturers and American farmers, we have two modifications to the IEEPA tariffs that have already been announced against Canada and Mexico.

This first order relates to Canada. Essentially, what it will allow for is the flow of parts and subassembly product into America to allow American car manufacturers to continue building cars. It basically excludes USMCA-eligible goods from existing tariffs.

And also, in order to help our farmers at this crucial time of year, we're going to be reducing the tariff imposed on Canadian potash from 25 percent to 10 percent. So this is a modification to our tariff regime to protect American car manufacturers and American farmers.

The President. It basically makes it more fair for our car manufacturers during this short-term period before April 2. April 2 is a little bit different. That will be much more significant. But this—during this interim period between now and April 2, this makes it much more favorable for our American car manufacturers.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Amendment to Duties To Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across Our Northern Border."*]

Okay. Can you see that, Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News]? Look. Nice to be tall, Peter. Right?

Q. It is. I see right over everybody. [*Laughter*]

The President. You can see. It's so nice. That's why he's such a gentleman. He doesn't have to rush.

Okay.

Staff Secretary Scharf. And this is the same, just for Mexico, sir. The previous one.

The President. Same thing for Mexico.

Staff Secretary Scharf. That's exactly right.

The President. So one for Canada, one for Mexico.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. They've been in the news lately, haven't they?

And I spoke to the President of Mexico, a wonderful woman, today, and we helped them out with a problem they were having having to do with the tariffs, short-term tariffs. And we had a very good conversation.

Also, we discussed drugs, and they've been working much harder lately. Do you notice that? On people coming in and drugs—and we've made tremendous progress on both.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Amendment to Duties To Address the Flow of Illicit Drugs Across Our Southern Border."*]

Tariffs/China-U.S. Trade

Q. President Trump, what's your thought about why the markets are so spooked? Do you think they don't like the tariffs, or do they not like the uncertainty with some of the changes that have—and the carve-outs?

The President. Well, a lot of them are globalist countries and companies that won't be doing as well because we're taking back things that have been taken from us many years ago. We've been treated very unfairly as a country. We protect everybody. We do everything for all these countries. And a lot of these are globalist in nature. You know, they have—if you're outside of the United States, you know, it's going to be a little bit different.

We just weren't treated right. We were ripped off as a country. I've been saying it for a long time. And I did it, to a certain extent, in the first administration. But with COVID coming in, we had to focus on that toward the end. But we had the greatest economy in history in the first administration, and I think we'll do even better now.

But this is something that we have to do. There'll always be a little short-term interruption. I don't think it's going to be big. But the countries and companies that have been ripping us aren't particularly happy with what I'm doing, but the United States will be very happy.

And you know, our farmers are going to be very happy. And again, there'll be disruption. But in the end—I said it before with China. We signed an unbelievable deal with China—\$50 billion in purchases. And we're doing great. Biden, however, when he came in, he never—they never enforced that deal.

So that's the only thing that—basically, you have globalist companies that have been ripping us off that won't be able to rip us off any longer. I think that's what the big charge is.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

Tariffs/China-U.S. Trade/Coronavirus Pandemic

Q. Have you been influenced? These—some of these exemptions that have been announced and some of these temporary delays, have you been influenced in those decisions because of the market reaction?

The President. Well, there were no delays at all. No, nothing to do with the market. I'm not even looking at the market, because long term, the United States will be very strong with what's happening here.

No, these are countries and companies—foreign companies—that have been ripping us off, and no President did anything about it until I came along, and then I did a lot about it.

You know, we took in, in tariffs from China, \$600 billion. Nobody else took in 10 cents from China. They never did.

But when COVID came along, we had to focus on COVID. We did a great job. We got rid of that. We ended up handing over with a market that was higher than it was previous to COVID coming in. But this is very much about companies and countries that have ripped off this country—our country, our beloved U.S.A. And they're not going to be ripping us off anymore. So, you know, I think that has an impact on the market.

Q. Mr. President——

Staff Secretary Scharf. Sir, this is a slate of nominees that's been prepared by the Presidential Personnel office. It includes a number of subcabinet level appointments, a number of your Ambassadors that have been previously announced. And also, crucially, given the administration's concerted effort to focus on violent crime, it includes a number of U.S. attorneys in major cities that have real crime problems.

[*The President signed the nominations document.*]

The President. Okay. Some very good people, too.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, sir.

And then we have a number of ceremonial proclamations that Lindsey Halligan is going to——

White House Senior Associate Staff Secretary Lindsey Halligan. Thank you.

The President. Hi.

Associate Staff Secretary Halligan. So two very special proclamations, the first of which is a proclamation that proclaims March 2025 as Women's History Month in honor of all the wonderful women in your administration, all the wonderful women in America, and in honor of everything you've done for women and this administration has done for women in just—what?—a month and a half? So——

The President. Yes. We've done a lot, and women have done a lot for us. Right? This is an honor. We have a wonderful woman here: Maria Bartiromo.

Fox News Channel Program Host Maria Bartiromo. Thank you so much.

The President. Nice to have you, Maria.

Ms. Bartiromo. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. She——

Ms. Bartiromo. And thanks for all that you're doing for women.

The President. Thank you.

She's going to do an interview of me later. Maybe I shouldn't do this interview. I should be like Biden, not do any interviews. *[Laughter]*

[The President signed a Proclamation titled, "Women's History Month, 2025."]

That's great. Women, we love you. *[Laughter]*

White House aide. We love you too, sir. *[Laughter]*

The President. Thank you.

Associate Staff Secretary Halligan. Okay?

So the second one is a proclamation proclaiming March 2025 as Irish-American History—Heritage Month in honor of—well, to commemorate our amazing friendship between America and Ireland and to just honor all of the Irish Americans. And I'm a little bit biased, because I'm American and Irish, but——

The President. Good.

Associate Staff Secretary Halligan. ——you know.

The President. Yes, well, they are great people. They are great people.

Associate Staff Secretary Halligan. And St. Patrick's Day is coming up as well.

The President. And they voted for me in heavy numbers, so I like them even more, right? *[Laughter]*

Associate Staff Secretary Halligan. Yes.

The President. You have to like them. You know you're not supposed to, but you have to like that.

[The President signed a Proclamation titled, "Irish-American Heritage Month, 2025."]

All right. So, for the Irish American people—proclamation.

Okay? Thanks.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Thanks, Lindsey.

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

Q. Mr. President, your Envoy, Steve Witkoff, told us a little while ago that if Hamas does not release hostages that the U.S. and Israel could take some action. What does that mean in your eyes? Is that military action? Would you join strikes with Israel?

The President. Well, you're going to find out. I had the honor of spending a lot of time yesterday with quite a few of the people that we got out, and I can't believe how badly treated they were—really badly treated. Stories that you wouldn't even believe. Some of it was documented. Some of it was so bad you couldn't really—I don't think you could put it on. And it's a shame.

And they said one thing—that they have 59 hostages, of which many of them are killed. They want to know if we could just continue. They said, without us—look, Biden wasn't able to get anybody out. We came along, and they started releasing. But we have 59 left, of which 24 are living. The rest are dead.

And we—I put out a statement. It's sort of self-explanatory, I think. But somebody is going to have to get a lot rougher than they're getting. It's a shame.

And those 24 that are living—because they were with them just 2 weeks ago or 3 weeks ago, depending on when they got out—but they said they're in very bad shape.

White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk/Federal Workforce Reduction Efforts

Q. You spoke today with your Cabinet members and Elon Musk.

The President. I did.

Q. What do you tell them in regards to Elon Musk and his authorities to carry out actions?

The President. We had a great meeting. We had Elon, and we had some of the representatives that—for—you know, the business reps. We also had most of the Cabinet members, not all of them. It doesn't really pertain to all of them, but many of them. And I thought it was a really good meeting. It was about cutting, because we have—everybody knows the country is way out of control in terms of the number of people. We have many people that don't work. We have many people probably that aren't even living that are getting checks. And we're finding all of that out, and it's being reported.

We're going to save hundreds of billions of dollars. We've already—saved a lot. Parts of it are contracts that are expired that we're paying on, many crazy things that, you know, you can see it happening. It shouldn't happen, but you can see it happening. You see a lot of it being put out.

But the other thing, I think most important for today, I want the Cabinet members to keep good people. I don't want to see a big cut where a lot of good people are cut. I want the Cabinet members to keep the good people. And the people that aren't doing a good job, that are unreliable, don't show up to work, et cetera, those people can be cut.

So I had a meeting, and I said, I want the Cabinet members—go first, keep all the people you want, everybody that you need. And it would be better if they were there for 2 years instead of 2 weeks, because in 2 years they'll know the people better. But I want them to do the best job they can.

When we have good people, those—that's precious. That's very important. And we want them to keep the good people. And so we're going to be watching them, and Elon and the group are going to be watching them.

And if they can cut, it's better. And if they don't cut, then Elon will do the cutting.

U.S. DOGE Service/Federal Workforce Reduction Efforts

Q. Mr. President, is that a reflection that you think DOGE and Elon Musk have been moving too quickly?

The President. No. No, I think they've done an amazing job. They've done an amazing job, and look at what they found. I read it the other night in the speech. I mean, they found these things where billions of dollars has been poured down the drain to things—that's not about people, that's about contracts where billions and billions of dollars was just thrown out the window. It's probably got kickbacks. I'm sure there were tremendous kickbacks for the people that authorized those contracts.

But no, Elon has been really teaching everybody about the numbers that you can do. But what I want is, I want the numbers, but I also want to keep the good people. We want to get rid of the people that aren't working, that aren't showing up and have a lot of problems. And so they're working together with Elon, and I think we're doing a really great job.

We're cutting it down. We have to for the sake of our country. We have—you can't have that kind of fat. It's bloat like nobody's ever seen before—where you need 20,000 and they have 120,000 people, and you just don't need that many.

And it happens with companies, and it happens with governments, I guess. You could go to a lot of governments, you'd see the same thing. But we're trying to get it down.

We want to be able—next year, we could balance the budget. We—I think there's a good chance we could balance the budget next year. We have a lot of good things happening, plus we have a lot of revenue things happening, like today with the shipbuilding. And this gentleman behind me is going to create a lot of jobs, and you know, he's about the biggest there is in the world.

We had the biggest chipmaker in the world here a few days ago. He's going to be spending \$200 billion on building plants. We're not giving him any money to build anything.

You know, it's—that CHIP Act is ridiculous. Where—the Biden thing, where they give billions of dollars to people, that have nothing but money. They're not going to spend that money. They're just taking that money.

We're giving nothing. They're coming in because of the tariffs, because they don't want to pay the tariffs, and they're opening up big.

So—but with respect to people, I want—I said, I want to cut the people, but I want to keep the good people.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Tariffs/Steel and Aluminum/U.S. Timber Resources

Q. Mr. President, on tariffs, sir. Can you walk us through the next steps on this? Steel and aluminum tariffs are due to kick in next week on Canada, Mexico, and every other country.

The President. Right.

Q. Are those going to be modified as well?

The President. No, those aren't modified. Those are happening next week, and the big one will be on April 2, when—reciprocal tariffs. So, if India or China or any of the countries that really—India is a very high-tariff nation.

I'll tell you what's a high tariff nation is Canada. Canada charges us 250 percent for our milk product and other product and a tremendous tariff on lumber and things as such. And yet, we don't need their lumber. We have more lumber than they do. We don't need Canada's lumber.

So what I'm doing is, I'll be signing an Executive order freeing up our forests so that we're allowed to take down trees and make a lot of money and then reharvest trees.

Also, we're cutting fire divides. A fire divide is a 50-yard to a 70-yard swath where the trees can't—you know, it's long enough so trees don't burn forever, until you can get them out, and those trees can be sold and made a lot of money with.

So—but we'll be doing that. We don't need trees from Canada. We don't need cars from Canada. We don't need energy from Canada. We don't need anything from Canada.

So we're—we can be self-sustaining, which is in most things. Look, we have more oil and gas than anybody. Our forests are massive. Massive forests. We're just not allowed to use them because of the environmental lunatics that stopped us. So I'm going to be freeing that up very shortly so that we don't have to go to other countries to buy lumber.

You know, why should we be buying lumber from other countries, paying tariffs, paying big prices—extraordinary prices, and we have lumber? We have the best lumber.

Go ahead.

Tariffs/U.S. Automobile Industry

Q. And this USMCA exemption you're essentially announcing today for just 1 month——

The President. Just a—it's just a modification short term, because I didn't want to hurt the American—it would have hurt the American car companies if I did that.

Q. Would you consider the same sort of exemption or pause for the auto tariffs you're talking about next month? In other words——

The President. We're not looking in that. No.

Q. You're not looking—you're not——

The President. No, we're not looking at that.

Q. ——considering exempting them?

The President. No.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes.

Temporary Protected Status/Ukraine

Q. Are you considering revoking the TPS for the Ukrainians who live here in the U.S.?

The President. What about it?

Q. Are you considering revoking the TPS status for the more than 200,000 Ukrainians who live here in the U.S.?

The President. What are you saying? I don't——

Q. The Ukrainians that are here in the U.S.——

The President. Yes. Yes.

Q. ——they're under a TPS status.

Q. Temporary protected status.

The President. On GPS?

Q. TPS—temporary status protection.

Q. Temporary protected——

The President. Oh, I thought you said GPS.

Q. TPS.

The President. Yes.

Q. There—there was some news saying that they were going to be revoked and they were going to be deported from the country. Are you considering that for the Ukrainians?

The President. No, we're not looking to hurt anybody, and we're certainly not looking to hurt them. And I'm looking at that. And there were some people that think that's appropriate, and some people don't. And I'll be making a decision pretty soon.

Okay?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. But we're not—we're not looking to hurt them.

Q. President Trump——

The President. Especially Ukrainians. They've gone through a lot.

Yes, Peter.

Daylight Savings Time

Q. The clocks are going to spring forward on Sunday. When are you going to get rid of daylight savings time?

The President. Okay. Are you ready? [Laughter] So this should be the easiest one of all, but it's a 50–50 issue. And if something is a 50–50 issue, it's hard to get excited about it. I assume people would like to have more light later, but some people want to have more light earlier because they don't want to take their kids to school in the dark.

And it's very much—it's a little bit one way, but it's very much a 50–50 issue. And it's something I can do, but a lot of people like it one way, a lot of people like it the other way. It's very even. And usually, I find, when that's the case, what else do we have to do?

2024 Assassination Attempts on Former President Trump

Q. And I've got to ask because you were talking about this in your joint address. You were talking about Butler. It's been 7 months.

The President. Yes.

Q. Why do you think we don't know more about the guy who shot you in the ear?

The President. Yes. Well, and the second one with all of his cell phones. So I want to find the answers. I've told them. In fact, today I said I want to find—we can no longer blame Biden for that one. She—he should have released that a long time ago.

So they are giving me a report next week sometime, and I do believe I will be releasing. I want to release the report. A lot of people have asked that question.

You had one who had three apps, two of which were foreign, supposedly, and who has the biggest white-shoe law firm in Pennsylvania, even though they don't live in, necessarily, a white-shoe area. What's that all about? His law—you know, the law firm.

The other one had seven or six cell phones, and I don't have six cell phones. And why would somebody have six cell phones?

So we're going to be releasing a report on that soon, Peter.

Q. But——

Q. Mr. President.

Q. ——based on what you're saying right there, the lack of information——

The President. Yes.

Q. —and the data points that you just gave, does that make you think that there's some part of a—that there's some bigger—

The President. It could be. Well, it makes other people think that. It makes me think it a little bit too. I say, when you have three apps and two of them are foreign and you had an FBI that wouldn't report on it, they didn't want to say why, I would say that could be suspicious.

And then, on the second assassin, you had, you know—and by the way, I have to tell you, Secret Service did a great job on that by spotting him.

But on the second one, he had six cell phones. That's a lot of cell phones. And a couple of them had some strange markings on them.

So yes, I want to find out, and I would be willing to release it. I mean, I'd—maybe there's a reason that we shouldn't, so I don't want to get too far ahead of my skis. But, yes, I would be very willing to release that. I'd like to see it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I want to see it myself, Peter. Not only you. I want to see that one myself.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Ukraine/Russia/Nuclear Arms Reduction Efforts

Q. On the President of France, may I?

The President. Yes.

Q. President Macron yesterday said that France was ready to offer its nuclear protection to other European countries. What do you make of it? And in this case, would the U.S. also maintain a nuclear umbrella for European countries?

The President. Well, France is also willing to put soldiers into Ukraine for safety reasons, if we can get it. I will say that we've made a lot of progress with Ukraine and a lot of progress with Russia over the last couple of days. And it would be great to bring that to an end so we don't have to talk that way about nuclear.

It'd be great if everybody would get rid of their nuclear weapons. And we have—Russia and us have, by far, the most. China will have an equal amount within 4 or 5 years. And it would be great if we could all denuclearize, because the power of nuclear weapons is crazy. It is crazy.

And you know, I was very far along a process with Russia, despite the "Russia, Russia, Russia" hoax, which didn't make it easy. It was a total hoax—a total rigged hoax by some bad people. But despite that, I was very close to having a program with Russia, denuclearization, and we were going to get China. I spoke to President Xi about it, and he would have been very happy to have gone along with it. But bad things happened, like an election that was rigged happened. And so we had to come back 4 years later.

But I would very much like to start those talks. The opposite of what you say—the denuclearization—would be incredible.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Tariffs

Q. Mr. President, on the auto tariffs that you were talking about. I know, yesterday, you spoke with the Big Three. Did you tell them that no more exemptions were on the way? And what was the reaction to that?

The President. I told them: "That's it. We're"—this was a short-term deal. And they came back to me yesterday. They said, "Could we have some help on the tariffs?" Because of the speed. And I said: "Look, I'm going to do it. But that's it. Don't come back to me after the 2nd—April 2. I don't want to hear from you after April 2. We're not going to be doing it anymore." I want to help them.

Q. What was their response?

The President. They didn't complain. But I helped them short term, during this short-term transition. April 2 is going to be a very big day for America.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

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

Q. My understanding is that the long-standing U.S. policy is that we do not negotiate with terrorists. So how did you come to the decision to send somebody from your team to negotiate with Hamas?

The President. We are having discussions with Hamas. We are helping Israel in those discussions, because we're talking about Israeli hostages. And we're not doing anything in terms of Hamas. We're not giving cash. We're not giving \$6 billion, like you hear other administrations give.

In fact, I got 59 hostages out, and we gave nothing. In 59, we gave nothing, not including what's going on with Hamas. I mean, I consider that something where we're helping Israel, for the most part. We had a couple of hostages, as you know. We got a couple of hostages out, American hostages.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. And are you going to talk about any changes to NATO——

The President. But certainly, Peter, I—you know, I do—you have to negotiate. There's a difference between negotiating and paying. We want to get these people out.

If you would have seen the people yesterday—maybe you did, I don't know—but if you would have seen them, the way they spoke about their captivity, it was unbelievable. It's terrible.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Are you thinking about making any changes to NATO, where a NATO country gets attacked but they're not paying enough dues, so the United States doesn't defend them?

The President. Well, I've said that to them. I said, "If you're not going to pay, we're not going to defend." I said that 7 years ago. And because of that, they paid hundreds of billions of dollars. I said, "If you're not going to pay your bills, we're not going to defend you." And it also went for the attack.

But if they got attacked, they said, "Well, does that mean you won't defend us?" I said, "Are you current, or are you delinquent?" They said, "If we were delinquent, would you?" I said, "Nope, I would not." And because of that, as you know, hundreds of billions of dollars came into NATO—you wouldn't have NATO right now if I weren't there. And your previous Secretary General has said that. He said he's never seen anything like it.

When I came to NATO, when I first had my first meeting, I noticed that people weren't paying their bills at all, and I said, "I should wait till my second meeting." And I did. And I

brought that up, and I said, "If you don't pay your bills, we're not going to participate and we're not going to protect you." And when I said that, as soon as I said that, it was amazing how the money came in.

The money came in, and now they have money. But even now, it's not enough. It's really not enough. They should be paying more.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization/European Union

Q. Mr. President, a question on the investment, sir. You've overseen about \$2 trillion worth of domestic private-sector investments come in in just about 2 months.

The President. Yes.

Q. This is the newest one. It comes after your announcement of a new shipbuilding office at the White House during your joint session to Congress. Can you talk about why this is important not only for national security but to continue the renaissance of domestic manufacturing?

The President. Well, we have to maintain a strong country. We have to maintain—and we want to pay off debt. We have a lot of debt. But that'll start coming off quickly when this all comes around.

Look, we've been supporting the whole world. You mention NATO, and you mention other things. We've been supporting the whole world.

When I first came in, we were paying almost 100 percent of NATO. NATO wasn't—it was crazy. We were supporting NATO. We were paying the bills for other countries, and yet those same countries, mostly European—you know, the European countries—were ripping us off in trade. They won't take our cars. They wouldn't take our agricultural product.

They wouldn't take anything, yet we were taking their cars by the millions—Mercedes and BMW and you—Volkswagen, all of them. We were taking their cars. They weren't taking—we were taking their farm products. They weren't taking ours. It was a total rip-off. And yet we were protecting them by giving them the money.

And you know, that adds up to a bad number at the end of a lot of years. And that's what happened. And now it's time for this country to stop being ripped off.

I had that done very much in the first administration, but then we had to focus on other things at the very end, with COVID. And—but we had the greatest economy in history. We had the greatest economy in history. I think we're going to redo it here but even better.

And I wanted to do what we're doing now in the first term, but we had so many other things to do. We had to fix the border, which we did. We had to fix our military. We rebuilt our military. We completely rebuilt the military only to watch Biden give so much of it away to Afghanistan, if you can believe it. That's not even believable. It's not even believable what he did.

The damage that that man did—or that administration did to this country is, frankly, not even believable.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And in particular, allowing millions and millions of people to come into our country. Many of them were murderers and drug dealers and gang members and people from prison for really heinous crimes. For him to allow those people into our country—and now we're spending tremendous amounts of time and effort—Nicki [Kristi; White House correction] and Tom Homan, who's doing an unbelievable job.

But we shouldn't have to be spending anything on that. We had the safest border ever. Now we have, actually, as you saw—the numbers just came out—where we have, actually, the lowest numbers in the history of our country. But we shouldn't have had to do that.

What we—what we're doing now is, we're looking for murderers. Can you believe it? We're looking for murderers. Because thousands of murderers—some, about 50 percent, killed more than 1 person. One killed five or seven. And we're looking for those people right now. We shouldn't have to be looking for them.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization/Japan-U.S. Defense Relationship

Q. President Trump, on Peter's question, are you going to make that policy, U.S. policy, that the U.S. wouldn't defend NATO countries that don't pay their fair share?

The President. I think it's common sense, right?

Q. But are you going——

The President. If they don't pay, I'm not going to defend them. No, I'm not going to defend them.

I got into a lot of heat when I said that. You said, "Oh, he's violating NATO."

And you know the biggest problem I have with NATO—I really—you know, I mean, I know the guys very well. They're friends of mine. But if the United States was in trouble and we called them, we said: "We've got a problem, France. We've got a problem"—a couple of others I won't mention—do you think they're going to come and protect us? They're supposed to. I'm not so sure.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

You know, with Japan, we have a deal, which is a very interesting one. And I love Japan. We have a great relationship with Japan. But we have an interesting deal with Japan that we have to protect them, but they don't have to protect us. Do you know that? That's the way the deal reads.

We have to protect Japan. And by the way, they make a fortune with us economically. There's another case. But we have to protect Japan, but under no circumstances do they have to protect us.

I actually asked, "Who makes these deals?"

Yes, Peter.

Q. Well, so why stay in NATO at all?

The President. I view NATO as potentially good, but you've got to get some good thinking in NATO. It's very unfair what's been happening. Until I came along, we were paying close to a hundred percent of NATO.

So think of it. We're paying a hundred percent of their military, and they're screwing us on trade.

Ukraine/Russia/Saudi Arabia

Q. And when Zelenskyy inevitably comes back to the White House, what do you expect from him? And do you think you'll see him in a necktie?

The President. Well, I think what's going to happen is, Ukraine wants to make a deal because I don't think they have a choice. I also think that Russia wants to make a deal because in a certain a different way that only I know—they have no choice either.

Q. Are you still thinking of going to Saudi Arabia and meeting with Putin about this?

The President. I don't know. I can't tell you. I'm going to Saudi Arabia.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

They've been very good. You know, I've——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I've made a deal with Saudi Arabia where—because normally you'd go to U.K. first. And last time I went to Saudi Arabia, they put up \$450 billion. You know that, right? You were there.

We had a—we had American companies took in \$450 billion. I said: "Well, this time, they've gotten richer. We've all gotten older." So I said, "I'll go if you pay a trillion dollars—\$1 trillion—to American companies," meaning the purchase, over a 4-year period, of a trillion dollars.

And they've agreed to do that, so I'm going to be going there. And I have a great relationship with them, and they've been very nice. But they're going to be spending a lot of money to American companies for buying military equipment and a lot of other things.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Is that a trip in the near future?

The President. Probably over the next month and a half. Yes.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Xi Jinping of China

Q. Mr. President, you told us a couple of weeks ago that you were looking to speak with President Xi of China. That hasn't happened. What—how come, and what are you waiting for?

The President. Well, I have spoken to him. Yes.

Q. Since that last phone call?

The President. I don't want to say that, but I have spoken to him.

Yes, please.

Q. Yes. Mr. President, regarding——

The President. I have a great relationship with President Xi.

Q. But you've spoken to him since January 17?

The President. It was hurt because of COVID.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. That's why I don't call it the "China virus" anymore. He said, "Please don't call it the China virus."

Q. But, to be clear, you've spoken to him since January 17, which is——?

The President. I don't want to say that, but I have spoken to him.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And I speak to him a lot.

Perkins Coie LLP Law Firm

Q. Regarding this Executive order you signed revoking security clearances at Perkins Coie, do you think there should be more steps like this to be taken against other people involved in the Russia collusion hoax?

The President. I do, but that's going to be up, ultimately, to the Attorney General and various other people.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Just as a follow-up. The other night, you know, we saw Democrats' behavior during your joint address to Congress.

The President. Yes.

News Media

Q. Do you think it shows just how out of touch they are with the American people, especially given that 79 percent, according to a CBS poll, approved of your—of the speech?

The President. I love this guy. Who are you with?

Q. My name is Nick Gilbertson with Breitbart News.

The President. I see. I have really liked your questions.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Q. Sir, regarding the Executive order——

The President. The answer is—just—Nick, just to—and I know your name very well. Good job you do.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Yes. The answer is, I thought it was very embarrassing for the Democrats what happened the other night. And that's not said for any other reason other than it's obvious. It's fact.

Even CNN fake news said that. They came out, and they said it. And worst than CNN is "MSDNC," which is the worst. And the good news is, very few people watch them anymore. They have lost such credibility.

And frankly, what Nicolle Wallace said—I've never been a fan of hers, but—and she's not very talented—but I'll tell you, what she said the other day about that young man is disgraceful. She should be forced to resign.

And Rachel Maddow should be forced to resign. Nobody watches her anyway. I don't know if—it's not possible they pay her as much money as I hear. But certainly, she's lost all credibility—both of them.

But what they said the other day, they should be forced to resign—about that young person——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

——who has suffered greatly.

Thank you, Nick.

TikTok

Q. Will you extend——

Q. Mr. President——

Q. ——if a TikTok deal is not made on the timeline you gave, will you extend that? Will you——

The President. Probably. Yes.

Q. You will. Is that something——

The President. Yes, I think—look, we have a lot of interest in TikTok. And I—China is going to play a role, so hopefully China will approve of the deal.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. But they're going to play a role.

Q. Are you close, Mr. President?

The President. But we have a lot of interest in TikTok.

Q. How long would you extend it? And how close are you to a deal?

The President. Well, we'll see. But if I need—I don't—right now, we have at least another month, so we don't need an extension. But if I needed an extension, I'd probably get it extended.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes, please.

Department of Education/State Control of Education

Q. Mr. President, regarding the Executive orders, there was talk that you might sign one winding down the Education Department.

The President. Which department?

Q. The Education Department. Are you having second thoughts on that? What's the——

The President. No, no, no.

Q. What's the holdup with that one?

The President. No, I want to bring the schools back to the States.

And you know, I've said it a hundred times: We're ranked at the bottom of the list, and yet we spend more. We're ranked number one for cost per student. We're ranked at the bottom of the list in education.

And I know if I bring it back to Iowa, Indiana, Idaho—all these great States—I think I could say 40 States—I want to bring it back—10 States won't be perfect—5 States will be probably not so good. But they will be every bit as good as Norway and Denmark and Sweden and all of the States that are rated at the top.

If you tell me about Indiana and some of these great States that run really well—Iowa—you tell me about those States, and if they run their own education, they're going to do a lot better than somebody sitting in Washington, DC, that couldn't care less about the pupils out in the Midwest.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. When do you think that might be signed, then? When would you sign that order?

The President. Well, I want to just do it. I mean, we're starting the process. We're trying to get the schools back into the States. Let the States run the schools.

And I'll tell you, you'll see something that's going to—it's going to blow your mind. It'll be run so well——

Q. A follow-up——

The President. ——the school system. And I also believe in school choice, but that will take care of itself.

Federal Student Loan Programs

Q. A follow-up to that, Mr. President. If the Education Department were eliminated, how would you see the—sort of what department, what agency, would handle student loans and the other types of Federal grants——

The President. That would be brought in——

Q. ——that the Education Department——

The President. Yes. That would be brought into either Treasury or Small Business Administration or Commerce. And we actually had that discussion today.

I don't think the Education should be handling the loans. That's not their business. I think it'll be brought into Small Business maybe. Kelly really liked it and really would like to do it.

So the loans would be brought into a group where they really do that. And I think it'd be—that is, by the way, the most complicated thing in moving, but it's very simple if you do that.

Q. And the same for, like, Federal grants?

Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Mr. President, Arab countries rejected your plan to move out more than 2 million people out of Gaza. What's your reaction to that and to Egypt's plan and to this meeting that happened this week?

The President. Out of Gaza?

Q. Yes.

The President. I think that Gaza is a mess, and I think that Gaza could be good. I think it's got to be run properly, but right now Gaza is an absolute mess, and it has been for many, many years and decades.

Yeah, Peter, did you have one more?

Retrieval of National Aeronautics and Space Administration Astronauts

Q. I did. Yes. They have these two Starliner astronauts stuck in space for 8 months.

The President. Oh, boy.

Q. Have you spoken to them?

The President. They left them alone. Biden left them up there.

Q. And what do you know about that? I—Elon Musk——

The President. I know everything about it. I said——

Q. ——is saying——

The President. ——we have two astronauts that are stuck in space. I have asked Elon. I said: "Do me a favor. Can you get them out?" He said, "Yes." He is preparing to go up, I think, in 2 weeks—2½ weeks.

Q. What do you know about how this went down? Because he's saying that the Biden White House was offered some kind of SpaceX rocket to go get these guys, and they said, "No."

The President. That's what I heard. I can't tell you that, but that's what I heard. But Biden was embarrassed by what happened, and he said, "Leave them up there." I would have said, "If you're embarrassed, you got to get them out."

Elon is right now preparing a ship to go up and get them.

Q. I'm sure that they will see this in space. What is your message to those two?

The President. We love you, and we're coming up to get you. And you shouldn't have been up there so long. The most incompetent President in our history has allowed that to happen to you, but this President won't let it happen. We're going to get them out. We're coming up to get you.

I've authorized Elon—I said, "Can you get them out?" Because, you know, they've been left up there. I hope they like each other—[*laughter*]*—*but they've been—maybe they'll love each other. I don't know. But they've been left up there. Think of it.

And I see the woman with the wild hair—a good, solid head of hair she's got. There's no kidding. There's no games with her hair.

But—and you know, there's a danger up there too. They can have some failures up there that would be very bad. You've got to get them out.

So I've authorized Elon—a week ago, I said, "You know, we have two people up there that Biden and Kamala left up there." And he knows it very well. I said, "Are you equipped to get them?" He said, "Yeah." He's got a Starship, and they're preparing it right now. And so Elon is going to go up and get them.

Should I go on that journey just to be on the ship when we stop? What do you——

Q. If that's an option, yes.

The President. I should do it? Oh, that's terrible. I thought he liked me.

Q. First President in space.

The President. I thought he liked me. [*Laughter*]

Q. First President in space.

The President. I thought—Maria, should I do it?

Q. Well, you—should they come——

Ms. Bartiromo. No, stay here.

The President. Maria likes me better. She——

Ms. Bartiromo. Just stay here.

Q. President Trump, then you should then come back from space is what I——

The President. Oh, when they come back, I'll greet them. How about that? [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President——

The President. No, no, we're going to get them out. I've authorized Elon Musk to go and get them, and he's prepared to do so.

Stock Market

Q. Mr. President, what are you making of the market sell-off this week? It's just a normal—like, what's driving it?

The President. I think it's just—I think it's globalists that see how rich our country is going to be, and they don't like it. You know, there's a big market out there.

But, again, they've been ripping off this country for years and now—and they're going to do great. Everyone is going to do great. But we can't let this continue to happen to America. Otherwise, we're not going to have a country any longer.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Great. Thank you, Nick. Great.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo of Mexico; Iair Horn, Omer Shem Tov, Eli Sharabi, Keith Siegel, Aviva Siegel, Naama Levy, Doron Steinbrecher, and Noa Argamani, who were released from Hamas captivity in Gaza, Palestinian Territories; C.C. Wei, chairman and chief executive officer, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co.; Ryan W. Routh, indicted for the attempted murder of former President Donald J. Trump at the Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida, on September 15; Mary T. Barra, chairman and chief executive officer, General Motors Co.; James D. Farley, Jr., chief executive officer, and William D. Ford, Jr., executive chairman, Ford Motor Co.; John Elkann, chairman and executive director, Stellantis; former Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Nicolle Wallace, host, MSNBC's "Deadline: White House"; honorary U.S. Secret Service agent D.J. Daniel; Rachel Maddow, host, MSNBC's "The Rachel Maddow Show"; Administrator of the Small Business Administration Kelly L. Loeffler; National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry "Butch" Wilmore, whose mission in space was to carry out the first piloted test flight of Boeing's Starliner spacecraft, then spent several additional months at the International Space Station; and former Vice President Kamala D. Harris. Reporters referred to U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on March 7.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Argamani, Noa; Barra, Mary T.; Bartiromo, Maria; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela J.; Daniel, D.J.; Elkann, John; Farley, James D., Jr.; Ford, William D., Jr.; Halligan, Lindsey; Harris, Kamala D.; Homan, Thomas D.; Horn, Iair; Levy, Naama; Loeffler, Kelly L.; Maddow, Rachel; Musk, Elon R.; Noem, Kristi L.; Routh, Ryan W.; Saadé, Rodolphe; Scharf, William O.; Sharabi, Eli; Sheinbaum Pardo, Claudia; Siegel, Aviva; Siegel, Keith; Steinbrecher, Doron; Stoltenberg, Jens; Tov, Omer Shem; Wallace, Nicolle; Wei, C.C.; Williams, Sunita; Wilmore, Barry "Butch"; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Attorney General; Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; Border security; Canada, trade with U.S.; China, President; China, relations with U.S.; China, trade with U.S.; Civil Procedure 65(c), enforcement of Federal rule; COVID-19 pandemic; Daylight savings time; Education, global competitiveness; Europe, defense relationship with U.S.; European Union, trade with U.S.; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Federal contracting, improvement efforts; Federal deficit and debt; Federal workforce, reduction efforts; Florida, 2024 assassination attempt

on former President Donald J. Trump in West Palm Beach; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Illegal immigration; Irish-American Heritage Month; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Japan, defense relationship with U.S.; Mexico, President; Mexico, trade with U.S.; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Nuclear disarmament, international efforts; Pennsylvania, 2024 assassination attempt on former President Donald J. Trump in Butler; Perkins Coie LLP law firm, efforts to address risks; Refugees and migrants, U.S. admission policy; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Saudi Arabia, trade with U.S.; School choice and voucher programs; Secretary of Homeland Security; Semiconductor manufacturing; Shipbuilding industry, improvement efforts; Small Business Administration; Tariffs; TikTok; Timber production, expansion efforts; U.S. DOGE Service; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, refugees, humanitarian status; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; White House Border Czar; White House Senior Adviser; White House Senior Associate Staff Secretary; White House Staff Secretary; Women's History Month.

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