

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One En Route to Joint Base Andrews, Maryland

March 9, 2025

The President. Hello, everybody.

Q. Hi, Mr. President.

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. How are you? Very good. Wow, it's a lot of people. That's a lot of people. Any questions?

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Yes, sir. On Russia. Have you made a final decision about what sanctions or tariffs you might impose on Russia and when that might be?

The President. We're looking at a lot of things. We have big meetings coming up, as you know, in Saudi Arabia. That's going to include Russia. It will be Ukraine. We'll see if we can get something done. I'd like to get something done.

A lot of people died this week, as you know, in Ukraine—not only Ukrainians, but Russians. So I think everybody wants to see it get done. We're going to make a lot of progress, I believe, this week.

[At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.]

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Mr. President, is Putin disrespecting you by attacking Ukraine when you're trying to make peace there?

The President. Who? Who?

Q. Is President Putin disrespecting you by attacking Ukraine when you're trying to make peace there?

The President. What did he do?

Q. Well, he's attacked Ukraine.

The President. Is he disrespecting me?

Q. Yes.

The President. Who are you with?

Q. I'm Michael Birnbaum with the Washington Post.

The President. You've lost a lot of credibility.

Go ahead. What else?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Tariffs/Semiconductor Manufacturing

Q. What do you say to Americans who have seen their retirements accounts fall in recent day and are getting very nervous about these tariff conversations?

The President. Oh, I think the tariffs are going to be the greatest thing we've ever done as a country. It's going to make our country rich again.

We have many companies—as you know, auto companies are opening up plants now. We've had four or five announced already, but many more are coming. And we're basically going to take back the money or a lot of the money that we've given away over many decades.

We've lost our jobs. We've lost our factories. We've lost 90,000 factories since the beginning of NAFTA. It's not that long ago. Ninety thousand factories. Think of that. And we're going to get them back. And they're coming back, and they're coming back in records.

Look at what happened with the big chip company—the biggest in the world—by far, the most powerful chip company in the world, from Taiwan. And they're going in with \$200 billion of money, and they're going to build something that's going to give us 35, 40 percent of the chip market in one—just in one company.

No, it's going to bring it back, and I think it's going to make us—bring us to a level that we've never had before.

Q. Is there going to be a Government shutdown this week?

Supreme Court Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett

Q. Mr. President, many of your supporters are concerned about conservatives—that they're—your supporters are attacking SCOTUS Justice Amy Coney Barrett. You put her on the bench. She—they're saying, "She's a DEI hire." Do you regret putting her on the bench?

The President. Look, she's a very good woman. She's very smart. And I don't know about people attacking her. I really don't know. I think she's a very good woman, and she's very smart.

Federal Government Appropriations

Q. Is there going to be a Government shutdown at the end of this week?

The President. It could happen. I mean, the Democrats want that. They want to destroy the country. So I can't tell you, but it could happen. It shouldn't have happened, and it probably won't. I think the C.R. is going to get passed. We'll see. But it could happen. You never know.

The Democrats are out of control. You saw that the other night during the speech when they wouldn't stand up for two of the young ladies were killed by illegal aliens, one with the cancer—the young man with the cancer. And all you want to do is stand up and applaud the man and the—the boy, the young boy. And nobody has ever seen anything like that. They're out of control. They've lost their minds.

China

Q. Mr. President, are you alarmed by escalatory rhetoric——

Q. Sir, do you think there's going to be a deal on TikTok?

Q. ——from the Chinese in response to your tariffs, and are you planning to meet with Xi Jinping about trade anytime soon?

The President. No, they took that rhetoric back, as you know. They were very tough. And I said, "Whoa, what's that all about?" And that rhetoric was taken back. You know that, right?

Q. My question to you is are you——

The President. I mean, but if you know that, why would you ask that question?

President Xi Jinping of China

Q. Are you planning to meet with Xi Jinping anytime soon?

The President. Yes, at some point I will. I have a very good relationship with President Xi. Very good. And at some point, I'll be meeting with him.

TikTok

Q. Sir, do you think there's going to be a deal on TikTok soon?

The President. There could be. We're dealing with four different groups, and a lot of people want it, and it's up to me. So there could be.

Q. Who are you leaning towards?

The President. All four are good.

The President's Cabinet/White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk/U.S. DOGE Service

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President——

Q. ——you have said there's no feud between your Cabinet members and Elon Musk. You even had dinner with him last night and Secretary Rubio. However, tensions are high between your Cabinet and Mr. Musk. How are you going to simmer down tensions? Does Mr. Musk need to back off a little bit?

The President. I don't think the tensions are high. Look, Elon is a very special person, and these Cabinet people are special people. You know, these are very successful people, or they wouldn't have gotten—you know, they've attained the highest heights of Government. And they—I think they have fantastic relationship to Elon.

And DOGE has been incredible. You know, hundreds of billions of dollars of waste and fraud and abuse has been found—already found. And that doesn't mean they don't have a little bit of an argument here and there about something or maybe personnel arguments.

There's not too many contract arguments. You know, contracts have been found. This is much more than just personnel.

Q. There——

The President. And we found hundreds of billions of dollars of fraudulent contracts, or very wasteful, but I think fraud. I think it's fraud.

Q. There was just another plane crash in Pennsylvania.

The President. I think—I actually think they—I think, really, the Cabinet—for the most part, I think they get along really well with Elon.

Department of Transportation/Aviation Safety

Q. There was just another plane crash in Pennsylvania. Today Secretary Duffy's big concern is, his department is being gutted. He's been, you know, dealing with these crashes ever since he was sworn in. Does he have a legitimate concern with Elon Musk——

The President. Well, that has nothing to do with the department. That has—that was a small plane, and that would have happened whether you had a big department or a small department, as you understand.

It's just they're in—they have spates like this. You know, they have times when things happen a little bit more often than normal. And then it goes back, and you go many years without having a problem.

I'll tell you, I think the Southwest pilot did a fantastic job last week when he lifted that plane off there, because if he put the brakes on, that wouldn't have been good. And I think the license should be maybe revoked for the plane that got in the way—from the pilot—revoked for the plane that got its way. But the way he immediately stepped on the gas and lifted up, as opposed to, you know, thinking for about 3 seconds when it would have been too late. The Southwest pilot, or pilots, were—did—they did a great job.

Russia/China/Iran/U.S. Military Readiness

Q. Russia, China, and Iran are doing military exercises together. Does that concern you?

The President. No, not at all. Not at all.

Q. Why not?

The President. Because we're stronger than all of them. We have more power than all of them.

I rebuilt the military. Unfortunately, Biden did nothing with it, but I rebuilt the military. But we don't want to even talk about that.

I think if you look at what's happening, and if you see what we've done, and if you see where we've come—and let's see what happens with the whole Russia-Ukraine thing. I think you're going to have, eventually—and maybe not in the distant future, you're going to have some pretty good results coming out of Saudi Arabia this week.

Ukraine/Critical Minerals Supply

Q. Are you going to resume aid to Ukraine if they sign the minerals deal with you?

The President. Well, I think they will sign the minerals deal. But we want them to—I want them to want peace. Right now——

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance/Russia

Q. How do they show that? How do they show that?

The President. Well, right now, they haven't shown it to the extent that they should. I think, right now, they haven't, but I think they will be, and I think it's going to become evident over the next 2 or 3 days. I think eventually, look, we have to have peace.

And I'm doing this—money is one thing. We're going to lose—with—we spent \$350 billion on this. But the big thing: human life. Thousands of people—this week—thousands of young soldiers died this week. Hundreds of people died in cities in Ukraine. And we've got to get it stopped.

It would have never happened if I was President. And it didn't happen. This was not going to happen.

By the way, October 7 wouldn't have happened. Inflation wouldn't have happened. The Afghanistan—the way they—not that they left, but the way that they left. It looked so bad. Probably the most embarrassing day in the history of our country. That wouldn't have happened. A lot of things wouldn't have happened, but it is what it is.

I think we're going to have a good time. I think we're going to have a good result in Saudi Arabia—meaning they're hosting the various talks, and we have a lot of good people going out

there. And I think Ukraine is going to do well, and I think Russia is going to do well. I think some very big things could happen this week. I hope so.

So 2,000 people—at least 2,000 young soldiers have died this week, and this is almost on a constant basis. A couple of thousand soldiers a week. It's a killing field, and we got to stop it. And if I can stop it, I'll be very happy.

Q. Would you consider——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Ukraine/Intelligence Sharing

Q. Would you consider lifting the intel pause on Ukraine? What does Ukraine have to do?

The President. Well, we just about have. I mean, we really just about have. And we want to do anything we can to get Ukraine to be serious about getting something done.

You know, I say they don't have the cards. Nobody really has the cards. Russia doesn't have the cards. They don't have——

What you have to do is, you have to make a deal, and you have to stop the killing. It's a senseless war, and we're going to get it stopped.

Q. You hesitated when Maria Bartiromo——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Where are we? Are we just about——

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. Yes, sir, we're landing.

Q. We're close. We're close.

Press Secretary Leavitt. They're trying to land the plane.

The President. We're just about ready to land.

National Economy/Tariffs

Q. Are you worried about a recession?

The President. No.

Q. Maria Bartiromo asked you, and you kind of hesitated.

The President. I'll tell you what, of course, you hesitate. Who knows?

All I know is this: We're going to take in hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs, and we're going to become so rich, you're not going to know where to spend all that money. I'm telling you, you just watch. We're going to have jobs. We're going to have open factories. It's going to be great.

And the plane is landing.

Press Secretary Leavitt. We've got to go. Thanks, guys.

The President. And thank you for a lot of good questions. Okay?

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:08 p.m. in the press cabin. In his remarks, he referred to honorary U.S. Secret Service agent D.J. Daniel; and former President Joseph R. Biden Jr. A reporter referred to Maria Bartiromo, host, Fox Business Network's "Mornings With Maria" program. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on March 10.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Air Force One.

Locations: Air Force One.

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