

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks on Next Generation Air Dominance and Military Readiness and an Exchange With Reporters

March 21, 2025

The President. Okay. Thank you very much. It's a great honor to be with you.

Proposed Closure of the Department of Education

I just want to start by saying we had a meeting yesterday on the Department of Education, which is being moved. We're going to educate the children in their States, where they can get a proper education. Their numbers are horrible the way it is, and we're going to make a move that's very big.

I don't think it's even risky a little bit. I think it's going to be amazing. It should have been done years ago. They've been talking about doing it for many years, but nobody ever got it off. But we did. And there was great excitement and great acceptance of it by almost everybody, including a lot of Democrats, actually.

I do want to say that I've decided that the SBA—the Small Business Administration—headed by Kelly Loeffler, who is terrific person, will handle all of the student loan portfolio.

We have a portfolio that's very large, lots of loans—tens of thousands of loans. Pretty complicated deal. And that's coming out of the Department of Education immediately, and it's going to be headed up by Kelly Loeffler at SBA. And they're all set for it. They're waiting for it, and it will be serviced much better than it has in the past. It's been a mess.

And also, Bobby Kennedy, the Health and Human Services, will be handling special needs and all of the nutrition programs and everything else. Rather complex, but that's going to be headed by and handled by Health and Human Services.

So I think that'll work out very well. Those two elements will be taken out of the Department of Education, and then all we have to do is get the students to get guidance from the people that love them and cherish them, including their parents, by the way, who will be totally involved in their education, along with the boards and the Governors and the States.

And it's going to be a great—it's going to be a great situation. I guarantee that in a few years from now—I hope I'm going to be around to see it, but I think we're going to see a lot of it—I think that you're going to have tremendous results. You're going to have results like Norway, Sweden, Denmark—a lot of the countries that do so well. I think you're going to have a lot of those results.

If you look at Iowa and Indiana and Idaho—so many places that run so well. Florida, Texas—big ones. You're going to have great education, much better than it is now, at half the cost. And we're not even doing it as a cost item, although you will save probably half, maybe more than that.

And you're not going to be at the bottom of the list. You're going to be much higher. And maybe you'll be—I will guarantee some of the States will be at the top of the list. They'll be comparable or better than these number one, two, three, four, five countries—the countries that are in the top five positions.

So that's—to me, it's very exciting, and it's been received very well. So, I just wanted to tell you about the student loans and special needs.

Next Generation Air Dominance and Military Readiness

But we're here for a reason today that is very exciting, and I'm thrilled to announce that, at my direction, the United States Air Force is moving forward with the world's first sixth-generation fighter jet. Number six. Sixth generation. Nothing in the world comes even close to it. And it'll be known as the F-47. The generals picked a title. And it's a beautiful number, F-47.

It's something the likes of which nobody has seen before. In terms of all of the attributes of a fighter jet, there's never been anything even close to it, from speed to maneuverability to what it can have to payload. And this has been in the works for a long period of time.

After a rigorous and thorough competition between some of America's top aerospace companies, the Air Force is going to be awarding the contract for the Next Generation Air Dominance platform to Boeing. As you know, it was highly competed for. There was a lot of competition, generals. And it's been going on for a long time. Very, very tough competition.

But this plane is—has produced numbers that nobody has ever seen before. The F-47 will be the most advanced, most capable, most lethal aircraft ever built. An experimental version of the plane has secretly been flying for almost 5 years, and we're confident that it massively overpowers the capabilities of any other nation.

There's no other nation—we know every other plane. I've seen every one of them, and it's not even close. This is a next level. You know, level five is good. This is level six, they say.

The F-47 is equipped with state-of-the-art stealth technology. It's virtually unseeable and unprecedented power. It's got the most power of any jet of its kind ever made. Maneuverability, likewise, is the—there's never been anything like it, despite the power and speed.

Its speed is top. It's over two, which is something that you don't hear very often. America's enemies will never see it coming. Hopefully, we won't have to use it for that purpose, but you have to have it. And if it ever happens, they won't know what the hell hit them.

A new fleet of these magnificent planes will be built in the—and in the air during my administration over the next couple of years. It's ready to go. They've already built much of what has to be built in terms of production, including the sheds.

We'll ensure that the U.S.A. continues to dominate the skies. We're—we've given an order for a lot. We can't tell you the price, because it would give—it would give way to some of the technology and some of the size of the plane—it's a good-sized plane.

This contract also represents a historic investment in our defense industrial base, helping to keep America at the cutting edge of aerospace and technology. Our allies are calling constantly. They want to buy them also, and we'll—certain allies, we'll be selling them, perhaps, toned-down versions. We like to tone them down about 10 percent, which probably makes sense, because someday, maybe, they're not our allies. Right?

But I would like to ask Secretary Hegseth, who's doing a fantastic job—he's really, really been very inspiring in so many ways.

And I must say that before he speaks, we have had record people wanting to join our military in the last 2½ months. Literally, since this—I think probably since the election, November 5th, but especially since we came to office and—since I announced Pete. He's young, he's smart, he's strong, he loves it, and they love him. But we've had record numbers of people wanting to join our military.

Now, if you go back 6 months, it was the exact opposite. You had record numbers of people not wanting to join the military. Now you have record numbers of people wanting to be in our military. And that's a really—that's a great honor. That shows you we're really on the right track.

So, Pete, maybe say a few words, please.

Secretary of Defense Peter B. Hegseth. Sure.

Well, Mr. President, this is a big day. This is a big day for our war fighters. This is a big day for our country, a big day in the world.

The name of this program is the Next Generation of Air Dominance. And, Mr. President, because of your leadership, your clarity, we are going—America is going to have a—generations in the future of air dominance because of this sixth-generation fighter.

We've had the F-15. We have the—had the F-16, the F-18, the F-22, the F-35. Now we have the F-47, which sends a very direct, clear message to our ally—allies that we're not going anywhere and to our enemies that we can—we will be able to project power around the globe unimpeded for generations to come.

Mr. President, this is a gift to my kids and your kids, to my grandkids and your grandkids. This is a historic investment in the American military, in the American industrial base, in American industry that will help revive the warrior ethos inside our military, which we're doing; rebuild our military, which the previous administration did not do, by the way, Mr. President. They paused this program——

The President. Right.

Secretary Hegseth. ——and were prepared to potentially scrap it.

We know this is cheaper, longer range, and more stealthy. President Trump said, "We're reviving it," and we're doing it.

And then we are also going to reestablish deterrence. Under the previous administration, we looked like fools. Not anymore. President Trump has reestablished American leadership. The F-47 is part of it.

And, Mr. President, thank you——

The President. Thank you very much.

Secretary Hegseth. ——for having the courage to do it and leading the way for all our war fighters.

The President. Thank you very much, Pete. One of the things I will say, but the generals are going—the generals are going to speak in just a couple of seconds. But this plane flies with drones. It flies with many, many drones—as many as you want.

And it's a technology that's new, but it—it doesn't fly by itself. It flies by—with many drones, as many as we want. And that's something that no other plane can do.

So I'd like to introduce, if I might, Air Force Chief of Staff General David Allvin and also General Dale White—two incredible people that I've known over the years, but I got to know them really well over the last few months.

And would you say a few words, please, General?

U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff General David W. Allvin, USAF. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Mr. President and Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for your unwavering commitment to our military. I will say, this is a big day. This is a big day for our United States Air Force as well.

You know, air dominance is not a birthright, but it's become synonymous with American air power. But air dominance needs to be earned every single day. And since the earliest days of aerial warfare, brave American airmen have jumped into their machines, taken to the air, and they've cleared the skies.

And whether that be clearing the skies so we can rain down destruction on our enemies from above or we can clear the path of the ground forces below, that's been our commitment to the fight and that's really been our promise to America.

And with this F-47 as the crown jewel in the Next Generation Air Dominance family of systems, we're going to be able to keep that promise well into the future.

I also want to thank everyone from industry and within Government, our engineers who have put—worked tirelessly on this program to bring it where we are right now today. This shows that American talent and American skill and American determination are second to none, because this platform is second to none.

So we believe that this provides more lethality. It provides more capability—more modernized capability in a way that is built to adapt.

This—along with our collaborative combat aircraft the President talked about with drones, this is allowing us to look into the future and unlock the magic that is human-machine teaming. And as we do that, we're going to write the next generation of modern aerial warfare with this. This enables us to do this.

The manner in which we put this program together puts more control in the hands of the Government so we can update and adapt at the speed of relevance, at the speed of technology, not at the speed of bureaucracy.

This is more Air Force. This is more options for the President. We say as—our mission in the United States Air Force is to fly, fight, and win air power anytime, anywhere.

If you want to go anywhere, you have to have a platform that gets you anywhere. This provides the President—options from the very one end, which is a quick response—and then we can get right back into fighting stance without having to deploy troops that are going to take maybe months and cost more lives—we can be back in fighting stance and maybe we restore that deterrence all the way—to decisive victory as part of a joint force that is the most lethal and capable military ever known in history.

That's what we provide now, and this provide—allows us to provide it into the future. It's more deterrence, more capability. It's what peace through strength looks like into the future, Mr. President. And so we're very proud to do that.

Then all we can say is, on behalf of United States Air Force, let's deliver.

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

Would you like to say something?

Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Lieutenant General Dale R. White, USAF. No, sir. I'll just double down on what the Chief said. This is——

The President. He knows what to do. [Laughter] He——

Lt. Gen. White. This is a generational leap——

The President. He knows who the boss is. Look at that. [*Laughter*]

Lt. Gen. White. Yes. That's exactly right.

Air superiority is what it's all about, and this is what we'll deliver.

The President. That's great. Thank you very much. Great job.

We've worked together long and hard on this, and this was a big secret. In fact, we don't show too much of the plane for that reason. You see what we show? You see how beautiful that is. But that's just a very small part of it.

General Allvin. Yes, sir.

The President. I wasn't surprised. I was wondering: How much are you going to show? But they came in with that. You see a wheel in the front. [*Laughter*] That's about it.

Any questions?

Q. Mr. President Trump, is——

Q. President Trump——

The President. Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News].

Release of Declassified Records Concerning the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy/Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Q. Eighty thousand pages of documents is a lot to sift through.

The President. Yes.

Q. Can you just tell us who killed Kennedy?

The President. Well, you know, I was given the task of releasing that because many Presidents have gone through it and they haven't released. And I said, "Release." We even released Social Security numbers. I didn't want anything deleted. They said, "Sir, what about Social Security?"—of people long gone. But they're long gone, so I can't imagine.

But I said: "If you don't delete it—if you do delete it, we have—people are going to say, 'Why did you delete it? There's something in there.'"

So we gave Social Security, we gave everything, and the rest is for you to look at, Peter. You're going to see whether or not you see anything, but we've given it.

We're doing it with Dr. Martin Luther King too. They're preparing all of that. They're going to release everything and whoever else we—they want. I mean, you know, we have nothing—we really have nothing to hide. We shouldn't have, you know, when a lot of time goes by. But with the Kennedy files in particular, they were going crazy on them.

I don't think there's anything that's Earth-shattering, but you'll have to make that determination.

In those—you know, it's 80,000—it's actually 88,000. And we have some additional things, as you know, come out today. And for that, you can go to the offices and you can see whatever you want to see. Everything is out there, totally open.

The additional stuff is available later on today. You go over to the offices, and you can have it immediately. And you'll make a determination.

Tren de Aragua Criminal Organization/Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. And on something else. These Tren de Aragua guys—because of your Executive order, they are designated as foreign terrorists.

The President. Yes.

Q. If ISIS or Al Qaida foreign terrorists were operating here in the United States, cops would probably be shooting first and asking questions later. And so, what is the difference between terrorists—between somebody like an ISIS or an Al Qaida operative—versus a MS-13 or Tren de Aragua?

The President. Well, these are people that focus on destroying people in their homes. They're not as international, in that sense. They're a group of thugs. They come from Venezuela. They come from the prisons of Venezuela.

They're very, very dangerous people, but they didn't look so dangerous when the guards took care of the situation from El Salvador. And I want to thank the President. He's a friend of mine. He's a—done a great job.

But I just can't imagine that the Democrats are taking this issue, where they want to have them back. You know, so now they have men playing in women's sports. They have transgender for everyone. They have open borders. They have all of their crazy policies that are, I think, 95/5, not 90/10. Okay? And their new policy is, "Let's bring Tren de Aragua back into our country. Let's bring the worst"—these are the worst gang members there are.

They—looked amazingly frail, though, by the way they were handled. It's very amazing. You know, they weren't—when they were in Colorado cutting the fingers off a man because he made a phone call to the police, they seemed a lot tougher then than they did when they were having their heads shaved and they were in shackles.

They're tough people. They're bad people. We don't want them in our country. We can't let a judge say that he wants them. You know, he didn't run for President. He didn't get much more than 80 million votes. And we just can't let that happen. It would be so bad for our country.

I won on the basis of getting criminals out of our country that were let in—it was called unforced error. It—they were let in by Biden—incompetently let in—and let in by the millions, actually. Twenty-one million people. I believe it's 21 million, and that's not even including the got-aways. But these are rough people. We want them out of our country.

And I won the election based, at least partly, on that, and that's a big part.

Yes.

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

The President. Peter, go ahead.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Hold it. Hold on.

2024 Democratic Vice Presidential Nominee Governor Timothy J. Walz of Minnesota

Q. I don't know if you saw this. Tim Walz is now saying, about Trump supporters—and, forgive me, I'm just reading a quote from Tim Walz.

The President. Yes.

Q. "I think I can kick most of their ass."

The President. Oh, boy. He'd be in trouble.

Q. Is there any way to know?

The President. Well, he's a loser. [*Laughter*] You know, I mean, the guy is a loser. He lost an election. He—played a part. You know, usually a Vice President doesn't play a part, they say. I think Tim played a part. I think he was so bad that he hurt her. But she hurt herself, and Joe hurt them both. They didn't have a great group. But I would—probably put him at the bottom of the group.

Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Q. Have you heard that Biden wants——

Q. Mr. President——

Q. ——to get back involved for Democratic politicians fundraising and campaigning against your policies? What do you think of that?

The President. I hope so. I hope so.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Who are you——

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Who are you with?

Transnational Criminal Organizations/Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. I'm with La Nación newspaper from Argentina. There are families from some of the people that were on those flights to El Salvador that claimed that they're not criminals, they're not members of Tren de Aragua, of MS-13. What can you tell them and what guarantees can you give them that everyone in those planes were actual criminals, terrorists, as you say?

The President. Well, I was told that they went through a very strong vetting process and that that will also be continuing in El Salvador. And if there's anything like that, we would certainly want to find out. But these were—these were a bad group. This was a bad group, and they were in bad areas, and they were with a lot of other people that were absolutely killers, murderers, and people that were really bad, with the worst records you've ever seen.

And—but we will continue that process, absolutely. We don't want to make that kind of a mistake.

Q. Mr. President——

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Is the U.S. planning to give up the position of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander? And, if so, why?

The President. NATO is something that I saved. NATO was gone until I came along. In fact, the previous Secretary General—very good man—both of them are good. The current man is fantastic. But both of them have said if it wasn't for Trump, you wouldn't even have a NATO, because we were paying the cost of almost all of the countries, and now they're paying. I said, "We're not going to do this. We're not going to continue—you—hurt us on trade. You do bad things on trade, and then, on top of it, we're supposed to pay for your military."

And because of what I did, hundreds of billions of dollars flowed into NATO by countries that just weren't paying. They were delinquent. They weren't paying their bills.

So NATO is solid. They're strong. But they have to treat us fairly. They have to treat us——

Q. Are we going to give up the——

The President. Because, look, without us, NATO is not the same thing.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/U.S. Security Assistance to Ukraine

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. And I can tell you, I've been having very good discussions, as you know, with President Zelenskyy and with President Putin. And President Putin will tell you that without the United States, he wouldn't be worried.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. But he is worried when the United States is involved.

Q. Sir, have you——

The President. And I have to tell you, I've dealt very well with both gentlemen, and we have—I think we have the confines of a deal. I hope we have the confines of a deal.

I'm doing it for two reasons. Number one, and—by far, most importantly, thousands of young people—and they're not American people; they're Russian and they're Ukrainian—are being killed every week. Thousands a week.

And also, the United States is—has paid, because of Biden, \$350 billion on a war that should have never happened. If we had a competent President in this—right—sitting right here, that war would have never happened. It would have absolutely never happened with me, and it didn't happen. For 4 years, it didn't happen.

Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. Mr. President, do you think you have the authority, the power to round up people, deport them, and then you're under no obligation to a court to show the evidence against them?

The President. Well, that's what the law says, and that's what our country needs, because we were—unfortunately, they allowed millions of people to come into our country, totally unvetted, totally unchecked. So you ought to ask: Did he have the authority to allow millions of people? Did Biden have the authority to do something that's unthinkable—have open borders where millions of people poured into our country, totally unvetted and totally unchecked, just as you would say?

And many of those people were criminals. Many of them were from jails and prisons and mental institutions and gang members and drug dealers and very dangerous people. Many were murderers. We have 11,088, that we know of, murderers. They've murdered. Of that number, at least half killed more than one person. They're in our country. They're in a location near you.

Biden allowed that to happen to our country—and his people that really ran the country, and the person that operated the autopen. I think we ought to find out who that was, because I guess that was the real President.

So, when you ask me if we have the authority, did Biden have the authority to allow millions of people to come into our country, many of these people hardened criminals at the top of the line, who have caused tremendous damage in our country? You see them, in New York City, fighting with our police. I mean, literally, having fist fights in the street with our police.

These are tough, hard criminals. Many of them came out of jails—and not just South America, from all over the world. They came out of—from Africa, from the Congo. They came out from Asia. Not just South America, but many from South America.

These are hard, tough criminals, and we have to get them out. And a judge, sitting behind a bench someplace, got a nice appointment—you can't take that away from the people that are responsible.

Now, in this case, Marco Rubio has a lot of big decisions to make. And he's a fantastic person, a great man. Think he'll be our best—I think he has a chance to be our best Secretary of State. He's been doing incredibly. He works so hard. He stopped—he's gone to so many different countries already, and he's got the authority to get bad people out of our country.

And you can't stop that with a judge sitting behind a bench that has no idea what goes on, who happens to be a radical-left lunatic.

Okay.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes, Peter.

China/White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk/News Media

Q. You guys are denying this New York Times report that Elon Musk was going to be shown a 20-to-30-page presentation about a theoretical war plan against China.

The President. Yes.

Q. Why not just show it to Elon?

The President. Because I don't want to show it to anybody. You know, you're talking about a potential war with China. Now, I deal with these people all the time, and I'm dealing with Pete. I'm dealing with these gentlemen on numerous different airplane purchases, and I think they're all going to be great. But I don't want other people seeing—anybody seeing potential war with China. We don't want to have a potential war with China.

But I can tell you, if we did, we're very well equipped to handle it.

But I don't want to show that to anybody. But certainly, you wouldn't show it to a businessman who is helping us so much. He's a great patriot. He's taken—he's paying a big price for helping us cut costs, and he's doing a great job. He's finding tremendous waste, fraud, and abuse.

But I certainly wouldn't want—you know, Elon has businesses in China, and he would be susceptible, perhaps, to that. But it was such a fake story. The New York Times is just as fake as CNN and MSDNC. And anybody who read that story, people laughed at that story. Who would do such a thing?

And the first thing I did is I called Susie, and I called Pete. I said, "Is there any truth to that?" And they said, "It's ridiculous." No, he's over there to talk about costs. You might want to address that, Pete.

But Elon was over there today to address costs. DOGE. A thing called DOGE, which you've heard about.

Pete.

Secretary Hegseth. That's exactly right, Mr. President. You pointed out it was a fake story. We pointed out it was. It was meant to sort of undermine whatever relationship the Pentagon has with Elon Musk.

Elon Musk is a patriot. Elon Musk is an innovator. Elon Musk provides a lot of capabilities our Government and our military rely on, and I'm grateful for that. We welcomed him today to the Pentagon to talk about DOGE, to talk about efficiencies, to talk about innovations. It was a great informal conversation.

The rest of that reporting was fake. There was no war plans. There was no Chinese war plans. There was no secret plans. That's not what we were doing at the Pentagon.

The President. I might add that I think Elon—if you—if they ever wanted to do that, I think Elon wouldn't do it. *[Laughter]* I think he wouldn't do it. He wouldn't want to put himself in that position.

But if you read what's out of the New York Times, it's such a dishonest newspaper. It's such garbage. It's—you know, it used to be called "All the News That's Fit to Print." Well, it's all the news that's not fit to print. They have fake sources, or they don't have sources. I think they make most of it up.

But this was a made-up story by the New York Times. I call it "the failing"—it's a failing newspaper. It's failing. And they shouldn't do that. They really are the enemy of the people.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And we really—we do need honest journalism in this—you know, we've made such big strides over the—last 2 months, but we just need honest journalism, and we don't have it. When you have a CNN—I watch—you have to watch these people every once in a while just to see where they're coming from, and it's so dishonest. MSNBC is, I think, probably worse, and they're both doing horribly in the ratings.

I think they're going to be turned off. I don't think—they're not doing any ratings.

You're doing well in the ratings.

Q. Thank you. I'll pass that along.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Just quickly on—I understand that your Trade Rep is meeting their Chinese counterpart next week.

The President. Yes.

Tariffs/Semiconductor Manufacturing/Automobile Industry

Q. Is there anything that they can do to—stop April 2 or to roll back the tariffs that you put on China already?

The President. Well, we can talk. But basically, I call April 2—I would have made it April 1, but I didn't want to be April Fool's Day, because then nobody would believe what I said. And they do believe me.

April 2 is going to be "Liberation Day" for America. We've been ripped off by every country in the world, friend and foe. We've been ripped off on trade. We've been ripped off on military. We protect people, and they don't do anything for us. We—it's just so unfair. For years and years.

And now some of that money is going to be coming back to us in the form of tariffs. They're—I mean, tens of billions. It's going to be numbers like nobody has ever seen.

So Nvidia announced today—you saw that?—hundreds of billions of dollars of investment. The biggest chipmaker in the world announced hundreds of billions of dollars of investment. Hundreds of billions. Not millions but billions. And they're all coming here. Apple just announced 500 billion dollars' worth. They're going to build plants here. You know, they built their plants in China. They're going to build them here. And they're starting immediately.

We have investment the likes of which this country has never seen already announced, and they all want to have news conferences. I don't have enough time to have that many news conferences.

But I would say, so far, at least \$4 trillion. Four trillion dollars is coming in. Car companies—very importantly, a lot of the car companies that were going to build in Mexico or Canada are now building here, because I don't want cars from Canada. I don't want cars from Mexico. If they want to do it, it's fine. But I want the car companies to build here, not—you know, they were building in Mexico three plants—big plants, really big plants—and they were going to sell the cars right across the border. We wouldn't have the jobs, we wouldn't have the profits, we wouldn't get the taxes. We get nothing. All we get is unemployment and empty factories.

Those days are over. So now those three places are going to build here. But many more than that. We have a big one: Honda is building—just announced a really big plant in Indiana. Great State. Smart place to build. And we have many car companies coming here.

The steel mills are going to be booming—going to be booming. And many other things.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

You know, many other things come with that. But we need that for defense. You know, you—there are certain things you have to have. You have to have steel. We would have had—if I didn't do, in my first term, tariffs to stop the onslaught, because they were dumping steel in order to destroy our steel plants—if I didn't do 50 percent and even 100 percent, in certain cases, tariffs on steel, you wouldn't have a steel plant in the United States.

And Biden was unable to get rid of those tariffs because they threw off so much money that his numbers, which didn't work anyway, because his numbers were terrible—what he did—the way he spent money was so horrible and what he allowed to happen to energy.

That's the other thing. Energy is going to be like it's never been before.

Mr. Vice President is here. Do you have any—do you have anything to say while you're here?

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance. No, sir. I'm——

The President. He's a very good Vice President.

Vice President Vance. *[Laughter]* I'm just here to watch the show, sir.

The President. Okay.

Vice President Vance. I think airplanes are pretty cool, so I wanted to check this out.
[Laughter]

The President. The airplane is cool. It is cool.

Vice President Vance. Yes, sir.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Xi Jinping of China/Fentanyl

Q. Mr. President, is there anything that China can do to—take off the—trade war at this point, though?

The President. Well, I'll be speaking to President Xi. I have a great relationship with him. We're going to have a very good relationship. But we have a trillion-dollar deficit, because of Biden, with President Xi. More than that. I mean, I've heard \$1.2 trillion. We have a deficit, and I've explained that to President Xi.

And we also have a problem where he's allowing fentanyl to be sent into Mexico and then cross the border and, you know, killing—I think the number is much higher than the hundred and twenty-five, hundred and fifteen that—I think it's closer to 300,000 people a year. And so, that's a problem.

But they have a—they have a tremendous surplus against the United States, and we don't want that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, why do you want to control Ukraine's power plants, Mr. President?

Q. Mr. President, on the industries——

The President. Say it.

Tariffs/China-U.S. Trade/Canada

Q. A number of industries have come to you asking for exemptions on tariffs. Is that something that is under consideration by you?

The President. Well, people are coming to me and talking about tariffs, and a lot of people are asking me if they could have exceptions. And once you do that for one, you have to do that for all. So, I mean, generally—I did something interestingly during—2 weeks ago. I gave the American car companies a break because it would have been unfair if I didn't. And everybody said, "Oh, he changed his mind on tariffs." I didn't change my mind. I helped our, you know, sort of Big Three, Big Four. I helped some of the American companies. And instead of taking it properly, they said, "Oh, he changed it." I don't change, but the word "flexibility" is an important word. Sometimes, there's flexibility.

So there'll be flexibility. But basically, it's reciprocal so that if China is charging us 50 percent or 30 percent or 20 percent—and I don't mean China. I mean anybody, any country—Canada.

Nobody knows that Canada is charging our dairy farmers—they have 270-percent tariffs. Nobody knows that. Nobody knows that. They have up to 400 percent. They have a couple of tariffs at 400 percent. Nobody knows that. Nobody talks about that.

And remember, with Canada, we don't need their cars. We don't need their lumber. We don't need their energy. We don't need anything from Canada. And yet it costs us \$200 billion a year in subsidy to keep Canada afloat.

So, when I say they should be a State, I mean that. I really mean that, because we can't be expected to carry a—country that is right next to us on our border. It would be a great State. It would be a cherished State. The taxes for Canadian citizens would go down in less than half.

They don't spend money on military because they think we're going to protect them. There are many things that they do, like icebreakers. They want us to provide icebreakers for them. Oh, that's wonderful.

So the—Canada, they've been—they're very tough traders too, —I want to just tell you, of all the people, they're tough traders. They trade very tough.

And you know, the expression I use is, "Some people don't have the cards." I used that expression about a week and a half ago, right? Somebody was negotiating who didn't have the cards, who's now, I think, saying that he wants to do it. And he's—I think we're going to have a big deal on that. Very special something. We got to make a deal on that.

But Canada has been a very nasty negotiator against the United States, took advantage of the United States for a long time. But nobody knows that they were getting 270-percent tariffs on dairy products.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. A follow-up on the Canada——

Q. Mr. President, on Ukraine.

Canada

Q. A follow-up on Canada—and I don't think I've heard you say this in all of the talk about Canada becoming the 51st State. Are you concerned that if they became the 51st State, they would be a very, very blue State?

The President. No, they might be. Yes. Yes.

Q. Very, very big and very, very blue.

The President. No, they might be. But it would—you know, you have that artificial line that goes—that straight artificial—that looked like it was drawn by a ruler. Somebody with a—I don't mean a ruler like a king. I mean, like, a ruler like a ruler. This way. And it's just an artificial line that was drawn in the sand——

Q. Mr. President——

The President. ——or in the ice.

Q. And Mr. President——

The President. And you know—and can I tell you, Peter, just you—you add that to this country, what a beautiful landmass. The most beautiful landmass anywhere in the world, and it was just cut off for whatever reason. It would be great.

Now, is it liberal? Maybe. But you know, a conservative, until I got involved—because I don't care who wins up there. I, frankly, probably would do better with a liberal than the conservative, if you want to know the truth.

But just a little while ago, before I got involved and totally changed the election, which I don't care about—probably, it's to our advantage, actually—but the conservative was leading against—I call him "Governor Trudeau." The conservative was leading by 35 points. So—you know, so I don't know about that.

I think Canada is a place like a lot of other places: If you have a good candidate, the candidate is going to win.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

*National Aeronautics and Space Administration Astronauts/White House Senior Adviser
Elon R. Musk/Vandalism Incidents at Tesla Dealerships*

Q. And I don't know if you've seen this, but the two astronauts that you just helped——

The President. Yes.

Q. —save from space, they didn't get any overtime pay for all that extra time. They got \$5 a day per diem.

The President. Oh.

Q. For 286 days, that is \$1,430 in extra pay. Is there anything the administration can do to get them—to make them whole?

The President. Well, nobody has ever mentioned this to me. If I have to, I'll pay it out of my own pocket. Okay? I'll get it for them. Okay?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. I'll take care of that. I like that. I think that's good.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. I'll pay it right out of my—is that all? That's not a lot for what they had to go through.

And I want to thank Elon Musk, by the way, because think if we don't have him. You know, there's only so long, even though they're in the capsule up there, that—the body starts to deteriorate after 9 or 10 months and gets really bad after 14, 15 months, with the bones and the blood and all the things that you've been reporting on very well.

And if we don't have Elon, they could be up there a long time. Who else is going to get them? And I just want to thank him.

He's going through a lot, what they're doing to him. And these people are going to be caught, and they—they're going to be caught, and they're going to be prosecuted. And from what they tell me—I see this just by watching your programs and reading the news, but from what they tell me, they could get 20 years in jail, and they'll get it. I'll tell you, there's going to be no leniency and there'll be no pardons. I can tell you that right now.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Vandalism Incidents at Tesla Dealerships/Transnational Criminal Organizations/2021 Civil Unrest and Violence at the U.S. Capitol

Q. And you said this morning, 20 years in jail and then maybe they get—you said this morning, 20 years in jail and then maybe they'll go to one of these prisons in El Salvador. Do you think, with the way that the judges have been issuing injunctions, it would be easier or harder to send these Tesla domestic terrorists to a jail in El Salvador than these MS-13 or Tren de Aragua guys?

The President. Well, I view these people as terrorists, just like others. These are—when I looked at those showrooms burning and those cars—not one or two; like 7, 8, 10 burning, exploding all over the place—these are terrorists.

You didn't have that on January 6, I can tell you. You didn't have anything like that on January 6, which is sort of amazing, because on January 6, the—Democrats were talking—nobody was killed, other than a very beautiful young woman, Ashli Babbitt. Nobody was killed.

And you look at what's going on now with these terrorists. These are terrorists, and that's an organized event. You know, take a look at their signs. Take a look. They're all made by the same sign company. A nice, expensive job.

No, these are—the people that finance it are, in my opinion, in just as big of trouble as the people that are setting the match and setting the fires.

So we'll see. It's under very serious investigation by the FBI and by the Justice Department. These people are terrorists. Okay?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned a deal with——

The President. Yes, go ahead. Behind you, please.

Q. You mentioned a deal with Ukraine——

China/News Media/U.S. DOGE Service/Semiconductor Manufacturing/Tariffs

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to American military families who are seeing Elon Musk at the Pentagon today, are hearing about Defense Department cuts, and their thoughts are immediately going to the safety of their loved ones who are currently deployed?

The President. Well, we're making our country strong. And when they see a thing like that, and they hear that story about Elon and China, what they should do is realize that the New York Times is a corrupt institution, because I think they're the ones. They knew that story wasn't true. Nobody believed that story.

People that—when I first—they—laughed when they heard this story. Nobody believed it, that the Pentagon was giving him a briefing on what war with China would look like, and he has businesses—no, they made that up because it's a good story to make up. They're—very dishonest people. The—I—look, I have it with the Times, and you'll see more and more of it. To me, it's a very, very—you know, a very dishonest organization.

But a story like that is made up. It's total fiction.

And I just wanted to make sure. I called up the Chief of Staff and I called up Pete, and I said, "Is there any truth to that?" "Absolutely not."

He's there for DOGE, not there for China. And if you ever mentioned China, I think he would walk out of the room. He wouldn't—he wouldn't take it anyway. So, it's just a made-up story.

Nobody has taken better care of the military. One of the things that I know that Pete is doing is he's talking about a lot of the civilian staff, and we're going to get them other jobs. You know, we're going to have a lot of jobs in this country because—but we don't want to have wasteful jobs. We want to have meaningful jobs. And those were wasteful jobs. Those are jobs that—not only military, but jobs where people don't show up.

We had—you take a look at Department of Education. I've never seen so many buildings with their names on it. You go past one after another—"Department of Education." And they're empty. The people don't show up. You know why? Because they have other jobs. Because they're playing golf, or they're playing something. They're doing something.

And we have a lot of great people, but we have to move that back to the States.

We're going to make our country strong, and we're going to get people much better jobs, because we have companies moving into our country the likes of which we've never seen before. Nothing like this has happened. And it's automatic.

They don't want to pay the tariffs. How do you get—how do you avoid paying the tariffs? You build your plant in the United States.

And it's going to be—it's a beautiful thing to see. I see it. So far, I would say \$4 trillion. Nobody's ever heard of numbers—no country has ever heard of numbers like that. Four trillion dollars. And those are the best ones. The biggest, best chipmaker in the world.

I don't—I'm not a fan of the CHIP Act, where you give billions away to—billions of dollars away to companies that don't need it, and it won't bring them here.

I'm giving nothing away. All they're doing is coming here. They're building because they want to avoid.

Remember this on the tariffs, too, because that's going to be—you know, liberation day. April 2. It's reciprocal. If they charge us, we charge them.

So somebody will say, "Well, how much are the tariffs?" Very fair. If—India, as an example, has been very bad to us on tariffs. They charge 100 percent, 200 percent. Whatever they charge.

Now, Europe just announced they're lowering the tariffs on cars. You know, we charge, like a joke, 2½ percent. That's what this country charges. Europe just announced that they're reducing their tariffs on cars to 2½ percent. It's nice, but they also have nonmonetary tariffs, where they make it impossible for the cars to get in, even without the dollars on them and their dollar signs. It's called a nonmonetary tariff, where they put on controls where no matter what happens—because they don't want cars. They don't want the American car in their market. And yet they send us millions of cars.

They send us big agriculture. They don't want our agriculture. They don't want anything from us.

European Union is very tough, but now it's fair. So whatever they do to us, we do to them.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Wait, wait. What?

Russia/Ukraine

Q. As Russia continues to attack Ukraine, are you planning to impose any sort of sanctions on——

The President. Well, they're fighting against each other. Yes, I think we're going to have——

Q. Do you plan to—*[inaudible]*——

The President. We have a cease-fire on a lot of areas, and, so far, that's all held very well. And getting that ceasefire—you know, they had a lot of guns pointing at each other. You had some soldiers, unfortunately, surrounded by other soldiers, and they are going to be—I believe we're going to have—pretty soon have a full cease-fire, and then we're going to have a contract. And the contract is being negotiated—the contract in terms of dividing up the lands, et cetera, et cetera. It's being negotiated as we speak.

Q. What do you say to critics who say that your actions towards law firms are—amount to coercion?

Administration Actions Against Law Firms

The President. Well, the law firms all want to make deals. You mean the law firms that we're going after that went after me for 4 years ruthlessly, violently, illegally? You mean the—are those the law firms you're talking about?

But they're not babies. They're very sophisticated people.

Those law firms did bad things. Bad things. They went after me for years. "Russia, Russia, Russia" hoax. All a hoax. It was a hoax. It was Hunter Biden's laptop. It didn't come out of Russia, by the way. It was his, like—came out of his bedroom. It was all a hoax developed by Democrats, Hillary.

I don't think Biden did, because I don't think Biden knows what the hell he's doing, frankly, based on everything I see. I've seen things since being here that are so sad, what he's done to this country. What he and they did to this country, those people that surrounded him, who, by the way, are radical left, but smart. He's not smart. He was never smart. But these are radical-left, smart people. They totally controlled him. He did whatever they told him to do, and it's a shame.

It's so sad to see what happened, what they've done to this country, both—not only the inflation, the inflation you saw, but allowing millions of criminals—millions and millions of criminals into our country. That's an inexcusable act. And many other things besides that.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Thank you.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Nayib Armando Bukele Orteza of El Salvador; former Vice President Kamala D. Harris; former Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles; Prime Minister Mark Carney and former Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada; Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada; National Aeronautics and Space Administration Astronauts Sunita L. Williams and Barry E. "Butch" Wilmore; R. Hunter Biden, son of former President Biden; and 2016 Democratic Presidential nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton. Reporters referred to U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson L. Greer; and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Next generation air dominance and military readiness; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Allvin, David W.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bukele Orteza, Nayib Armando; Carney, Mark; Harris, Kamala D.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Kennedy, Robert F., Jr.; Loeffler, Kelly L.; Musk, Elon R.; Poilievre, Pierre; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Rutte, Mark ; Stoltenberg, Jens; Trudeau, Justin P.J.; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Walz, Timothy J.; White, Dale R.; Wiles, Susan; Williams, Sunita L.; Wilmore, Barry E. "Butch"; Xi Jinping; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2021 civil unrest and violence at U.S. Capitol; 2024 Presidential election; Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., release of declassified records; Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, release of declassified records; Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; Canada, Prime Minister; Canada, trade with U.S.; China, President; China, trade with U.S.; Department of Education, proposed closure; Domestic terrorism and extremist violence, efforts to combat; Education, global competitiveness; El Salvador, immigration enforcement cooperation with U.S.; El Salvador, President; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Illegal immigration; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Minnesota, Governor; News media, fairness and accuracy; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Nutrition assistance; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President;

Secretary of Defense; Secretary of Health and Human Services; Secretary of State; Semiconductor manufacturing; Small Business Administration; SpaceX; Special education and support services; Student loans and grant programs; Tariffs; Tesla dealerships, vandalism incidents; Transnational criminal organizations; U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff; U.S. DOGE Service; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; Venezuela, Tren de Aragua criminal organization; Vice President; White House Chief of Staff; White House Senior Adviser.

DCPD Number: DCPD202500384.