

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Nayib Armando Bukele Ortiz of El Salvador and an Exchange With Reporters

April 14, 2025

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. It's an honor to have a friend of mine, because we went through this together and got along very well for my entire period of time. So, I knew him as a very young man. Now he's just a young man. [*Laughter*] And he's done a fantastic job.

Mr. President, it's an honor to have you.

President Bukele. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. And you're doing incredibly for your country, and we appreciate working with you because you want to stop crime, and so do we, and it's very, very effective. And I want to just say hello to the people of El Salvador and say they have one hell of a President. Okay? And I mean that. And I know him well.

I know him as a very young man, Marco—even younger than you. You know, he started pretty young. [*Laughter*] And——

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. He'll always be younger. [*Laughter*]

President Trump. We—young at heart. But I want to thank you for the great job you're doing.

President Bukele. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. And I appreciate it very much.

President Bukele. It's an honor.

President Trump. Thank you.

President Bukele. Thank you. Well, it's an honor to be here in the Oval Office with the President and leader of the free world. We're very happy and we're very eager to help. We know that you have a crime problem and a terrorism problem that you need help with. And we're a small country, but if we can help, we will do it.

And we actually turned the murder capital of the world—that was the journalists call it——

President Trump. Right.

President Bukele. ——murder capital of the world into the safest country in the Western Hemisphere.

And you know, if they—sometimes they say that we imprison thousands. I like to say that we actually liberated millions. So, you know——

President Trump. Good. That's——

President Bukele. ——like, if——

President Trump. That's very good. [*Laughter*] Who gave him that line? Do you think I can use that?

President Bukele. Yes, you can use that.

President Trump. That's great.

President Bukele. And in fact, Mr. President, you have 350 million people to liberate.

President Trump. Yes.

President Bukele. But to liberate 350 million people, you have to imprison some. You know, that's the way it works, right? You cannot just, you know, free the criminals and think crime is going to go down magically. You have to imprison them so you can liberate 350 million Americans that are asking for the end of crime and the end of terrorism. And it can be done. I mean, it can—you're doing it already. And I'm sure that people have seen the change in the streets.

President Trump. They have.

President Bukele. A long way to go because you're just initiating your second term. But it's clear that, you know, with the numbers at the border, you know, and the—even in Democrat-run cities, they get a help from the work you're doing.

So I'm really happy to be here, honored, and eager to help.

President Trump. Well, we had a terrible thing happen. We had an administration that allowed people to come in freely into our country from not only South America, but from all over the world—many from the Congo in Africa, Asia, all over the world—Europe, rough parts of Europe.

And they came from prisons, and they came from mental institutions, and they came from gangs and—the gangs of Venezuela and other places. And hundreds of thousands and even millions of them came—21 million people altogether. But many of the people that came, just a tremendous percentage of them, were criminals—in some cases, violent criminals. We had 11,088 known murderers. Half of them murdered more than one person.

This was allowed by a man who—what he did to our country is just unbelievable. So we're straightening it out. We're getting them out.

But what they did and what that party did to our country—open borders, anybody could come in. As soon as I heard that, I said, "Every prison is going to be emptied out into our country." That's what happened, and we're straightening it out.

And we just had numbers—we had the highest recruiting numbers in the history of our country going into police departments. And a year ago, we had the lowest numbers. You couldn't hire a policeman.

President Bukele. The biggest change.

President Trump. Nobody's ever seen——

President Bukele. Yes. From the lowest to the highest.

President Trump. And the military now—Marines, the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard—every slot is—I mean, we have the best numbers we've ever had. We call it recruitment—recruitment numbers, and we've never had anything like it. We had records on every single—at every single level.

But very important, the policemen. The policemen are joining forces now that—we really were having a hard time with policemen because we weren't protecting our police.

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. And we cherish our police. Our police are great and the firemen and everybody else.

But we have the highest numbers that we've ever had, the most enthusiasm we—great enthusiasm.

And on trade and other things, we're doing great. We're taking in billions and billions of dollars. We made—2 weeks ago, I gave them a little bit of a pause, because, you know, you have to show a little flexibility, but we go back, do what we have to do. The markets have been very strong once they got used to it.

But we were losing \$2 billion a day. There's no company—big like this.

President Bukele. No.

President Trump. This is the biggest deal ever made. Now we're making \$3 billion a day.

We're a great country, but we had stupid people running this country, and I can say it. But what they've done to us at the border should never and can never be forgotten. It's a sin, what they did. And you are helping us out, and we appreciate it.

President Bukele. Thanks. Thank you.

Actually, what you're doing with—the border is remarkable. It has dropped—what?—95 percent. It's incredible.

President Trump. Yes. Cut, as of this morning, 99 percent—99.1 percent, to be exact.

President Bukele. Why are those numbers not in the media?

President Trump. Well, they get out, but the fake news, you know, like CNN—[laughter]—CNN over here doesn't want to put them out because they don't like putting out good numbers. They only like putting out—because I think they hate our country, actually.

President Bukele. Yes, they seem very——

President Trump. But it's a shame, you're right. Isn't that a great question: Why doesn't the media—why don't they put out numbers? I mean——

President Bukele. Yes, 99 percent. I mean, it's a—it's crazy, right?

President Trump. Yes. We're doing great.

President Bukele. It's a crazy turnaround.

President Trump. Kristi, could you maybe say a couple of words about the border, how we're doing, how we're——

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem. Yes, it's just been absolutely phenomenal what a great leader can do. Clear direction. Our laws matter. We should only have people in our country that love us, and the Border Patrol and our ICE officers and law enforcement officers have done fantastic work. So we're proud of them. Now we just need to get the criminals and murderers and rapists and dangerous gang members and terrorist organizations out of our country.

So, Mr. President Bukele, we thank you very much for your partnership. It has been wonderful for us to be able to have somewhere to send the worst of the worst and someone to partner with. And we'd like to continue that partnership, because it's been a powerful message of consequences.

Mr. President, you wanted people to know that there was consequences if you break our laws and harm our people and endanger families, and this is a clear consequence for the worst of the worst, that we have somewhere to put them.

President Trump. Thank you very much.

President Bukele. Yes, we even had this gang member from Venezuela—one of the ones you sent—and we interviewed him, just, you know, to get some information, et cetera, from them. And he said, "Oh, well, you know, I got arrested six times, but they released me there six times, so I should be released again." And then we said, "Well, what was the last thing you do?" And he said, "Well, I shot a cop in the leg, but I didn't kill him. I just shot him in the leg."

And we're like, this guy was arrested six times here in the United States. Six times. He was released six times. And then the—no, he was released five times, and then the last time, he was sent to El Salvador—right?—so he's not getting released. But the last time, he shot a cop, actually, and he shot him in the leg.

So these are, you know——

President Trump. Incredible, right?

President Bukele. Like you said—yes, it's—I mean, the—yes, there's something broken in the—

President Trump. The liberal establishment. But they're not running things anymore in this country. And we're run by—and I don't say "conservative." I don't say anything. We're run by people with great common sense.

President Bukele. Yes, common sense.

President Trump. Because it's all common sense.

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. It's not liberal or conservative. It's common sense.

President Bukele. Exactly.

President Trump. And, like, do you allow men to play in women's sports? Do you allow men to box your women and—because I know you have a lot of boxing in your country.

President Bukele. That's violence. That's——

President Trump. That's abuse of a woman.

President Bukele. Violence against women, yes.

President Trump. It's abuse of a woman.

President Bukele. Totally. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. But we have people that fight to the death because they think men should be able to play in women's sports. And some of those sports, it wouldn't matter much, but it still matters. But some of them are very dangerous for women.

President Bukele. Some years ago, some—I would say a decade ago or so, women rights movements were pressuring so that we enacted specific laws to avoid men abusing women. And I think those laws were great because there were a lot of men abusing women.

But now some of the same people are trying to backtrack on that—*[laughter]*—and actually trying to make new laws allowing men to abuse women——

President Trump. That's right.

President Bukele. ——within a sport. So, actually, that doesn't make sense.

President Trump. You do it in sports.

President Bukele. It doesn't make sense.

President Trump. It's crazy. You know, they have weightlifting records, right?

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. A woman gets up, lifts weights. She's incredible. A guy gets up and beats her by 100 pounds. What are you going to do? A record that hadn't been broken in 18 years. You know, they put on an ounce and an ounce, quarter of an ounce, eighth of an ounce, for 18 years now. Now they have a guy come up—ping.

[*At this point, President Trump raised his arms.*]

[*Laughter*] The whole thing is crazy, but they continue to fight.

And I don't like talking about it, because I want to save it for just before the next election. I say to my people, "Don't even talk about it, because they'll change."

And we'll have a—but I watched this morning, there was a Congressman fighting to the death for men to play against women in sports. And you say to yourself, "Why? What are they doing?" Right? "What are they doing?"

But your country is not too big on that.

President Bukele. No, no. Of course not. [*Laughter*]

Minister of Foreign Relations Alexandra Hill. No.

President Bukele. We're—big in protecting women.

President Trump. Good. That's right. It's a very important form of protection too.

President Bukele. And as you can see——

Minister Hill. The Cabinet.

President Bukele. ——most of my Cabinet are women, so——

President Trump. That's impressive.

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. That's why you're running——

President Bukele. And they're not DEI hires or anything. They're just——

President Trump. They can be——

President Bukele. ——great at what they do. Right?

President Trump. That's right. This is very impressive.

President Bukele. Yes, no.

President Trump. This is a first. We've had women, but we've never had three of them right here. That's—[*inaudible*].

President Bukele. Four, and three men.

President Trump. And look at—look who we have. Do you guys feel a little bit mistreated? [*Laughter*]

Minister of Justice and Public Security Hector Gustavo Villatoro. Yes, a little bit. [*Laughter*]

President Trump. That's good. I like that.

Well, we've been advanced—I've been very advanced on that regard too. We have Pam is—who's been——

President Bukele. Yes, I know.

President Trump. ——so fantastic.

President Bukele. And Kristi and——

President Trump. Kristi and——

Secretary Noem. And Susan.

President Trump. ——and the most powerful woman, they say, anywhere in the world.

President Bukele. I know. It's like—[*laughter*]——

President Trump. She's rated——

President Bukele. They're all afraid of her.

President Trump. Susie Wiles, they say, "Oh, she's tough."

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. Most powerful woman in the world, according to magazines. What do I know?

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. But I think she probably is.

President Bukele. Yes. She probably is.

President Trump. Yes, she probably is. [*Laughter*]

President Bukele. Congratulations.

President Trump. And you know Stephen, who has done such a great job.

President Bukele. Yes.

White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Stephen Miller. Thank you, sir.

President Trump. We have just—we have great people.

President Bukele. He's very famous too.

President Trump. But we love working—[*laughter*]. He is. He's—he really lets him have it, right?

President Bukele. Yes, exactly.

President Trump. There's no games.

President Bukele. No. No. No. It's very good.

President Trump. He knows.

Do you have any questions, please?

Q. President Trump——

President Trump. Go ahead. Let's not start with CNN, because they're so—they're just so——

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. —wrong.

Yes, please.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. You repeatedly mentioned last night that Russia's — attack on Ukraine was a mistake. What is the exact mistake? And have you given Putin a deadline—

President Trump. Yes.

Q. —to actually move toward a ceasefire?

President Trump. The mistake was letting the war happen. If Biden were competent and if Zelenskyy were competent—and I—don't know that he is. We had a rough session with this guy over here.

President Bukele. I saw it. I saw it.

President Trump. He just kept asking for more and more. That war should have never been allowed to happen. That war, 4—I went 4 years, and Putin wouldn't even bring it up. And as soon as the election was rigged and I wasn't here, that war started. There was no way that war should have been allowed to happen, and Biden should have stopped it.

And you take a look at Putin—I'm not saying anybody's an angel, but I will tell you, I went 4 years, and it wasn't even a question. He would never—and I told him: "Don't do it. You're not going to do it." And it was the apple of his eye, but there was no way that he would have done it.

All you had to do is lower oil prices. If you lowered oil prices—Biden kept the prices so high, because he—made it impossible to get it. If you lowered oil prices, you would have never had the war. But you wouldn't have had it with me anyway. That war would have never happened. And I think it's a great abuse.

So now what do you do? You got a country where 25 percent of its land is gone and the best locations, where millions of people are killed. You know, you haven't reported accurately the death. And this was Biden's war, and I'm trying to stop it. And I think we're going to do a good job. I hope we're going to do it.

They lose 2,500 young people a week. Think of—on average. Now, they're Russians and they're Ukrainians, but it's 2,000—we don't care. It's, like, whatever it is.

President Bukele. Intolerable.

President Trump. They're not from your country. They're not from mine. But I want to stop it. Two thousand five hundred—it's a killing field. It's like the Civil War.

You take a look—I look at the satellite pictures. This should not be happening in our—time. Of course, our time can be pretty violent, as we know. But that's a war that should have never been allowed to start. And Biden could have stopped it, and Zelenskyy could have stopped it, and Putin should have never started it. Everybody's to blame.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Have you spoken to President Zelenskyy, sir, about his offer to purchase more Patriot missile batteries?

President Trump. Oh, I don't know. He's always looking to purchase missiles. You know? He's against—listen, when you start a war, you got to know that you can win the war, right? You

don't start a war against somebody that's 20 times your size and then hope that people give you some missiles.

If we didn't give them what we gave—remember, I gave them Javelins. That's how they won their first big battle, with the tanks that got stuck in the mud, and they took them out with Javelins.

They have an expression that Obama, at the time—Obama gave them sheets, and Trump gave them Javelins. But just something that should have never happened. It's a really shame. The towns are destroyed. Towns and cities are, you know, largely destroyed. They have the spires—you know, the beautiful spires that go up. They say they were the most beautiful in the world, in Ukraine, for whatever reason—but the most beautiful in the world. They're mostly laying on their side, shattered and broken.

And most importantly, you have millions of people dead. Millions of people dead because of three people. I would say three people. Let's say Putin, number one; but let's say Biden, who had no idea what the hell he was doing, number two; and Zelenskyy.

And all I can do is try and stop it. That's all I want to do. I want to stop the killing, and I think we're doing well in that regard. It should—I think you'll have some very good proposals very soon.

Q. Last question, sir. Have you attributed a motive——

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

President Trump. Yes.

Arson Attack on the Governor's Mansion in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Q. Have you attributed a motive, through the FBI investigation, behind the attack on Governor Josh Shapiro over the weekend?

President Trump. No, I haven't. But the attacker was not a fan of Trump, I understand, just from what I read and from what I've been told. The attacker basically wasn't a fan of anybody. He was probably just a whack job. And certainly, a thing like that cannot be allowed to happen.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

El Salvador

Q. Mr. President, is a good relationship with President Bukele the best guarantee that this time you won't terminate the temporary protective status——

President Trump. I have a great relationship with this man.

Q. ——for nationals of El Salvador?

President Trump. I have the best relationship with him. We've known each other—I've known him since he was a very young man, as I said—very, very young. And I was impressed. I said, "Look how—this guy is"—in fact, you sort of looked like a teenager. *[Laughter]* You still——

President Bukele. That's—*[laughter]*.

President Trump. You looked like a teenager. I said, "What kind of a country is this?" *[Laughter]*

President Bukele. That's—I don't know if that's good or bad, Mr. President. But thank you.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. He grew up—he grew up well in the last 5 years.

Q. Do you support an extension for nationals of El Salvador under temporary protective status?

President Trump. I support him.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I support him.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead. Let's hear the question from this very low-rated anchor at CB—at CNN.

Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. Thank you, President Trump. Do you plan to ask——

President Trump. —low rated.

Q. —President Bukele to help return the man who your administration says was mistakenly deported?

President Trump. Which one is that?

Q. The man who was mistakenly deported to El Salvador.

President Trump. Well, let me ask Pam. Would you ask—answer that question?

Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi. Sure, President.

First and foremost, he was illegally in our country. He had been illegally in our country. And in 2019, two courts—an immigration court and an appellate immigration court—ruled that he was a member of MS-13 and he was illegally in our country.

Right now it was a paperwork—it was additional paperwork had needed to be done. That's up to El Salvador if they want to return him. That's not up to us. The Supreme Court ruled, President, that if, as El Salvador wants to return him—this is international matters, foreign affairs. If they wanted to return him, we would facilitate it, meaning provide a plane.

Q. So will you return him, President Bukele?

President Trump. Good. And you are doing a great job. Thank you, Pam.

Attorney General Bondi. Thank you, President.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Trump. Stephen Miller—wait a minute—could you just also respond to that question? Because, you know, it's asked by CNN, and they always ask it with a slant because they're totally slanted because they don't know what's happening. That's why nobody's watching them. But would you answer that question also, please?

Deputy Chief of Staff Miller. Yes, sir. Gladly. So, as Pam mentioned, there's an illegal alien from El Salvador. So, with respect to you, he's a citizen of El Salvador. So it's very arrogant, even, for American media to suggest that we would even tell El Salvador how to handle their own citizens, as a starting point.

As two immigration courts found that he was a member of MS-13, when President Trump declared MS-13 to be a foreign terrorist organization, that meant that he was no longer eligible, under Federal law—which I'm sure you know; you're very familiar with the INA—that he was no longer eligible for any form of immigration relief in the United States. So we had a deportation

order that was valid, which meant that, under our law, he's not even allowed to be present in the United States and had to be returned because of the foreign terrorist designation.

This issue was then, by a district court judge, completely inverted, and a district court judge tried to tell the administration that they had to kidnap a citizen of El Salvador and fly him back here. That issue was raised to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court said the district court order was unlawful and its main components were reversed 9–0, unanimously, stating clearly that neither Secretary of State nor the President could be compelled by anybody to forcibly retrieve a citizen of El Salvador from El Salvador, who, again, is a member of MS–13, which, as I'm sure you understand, rapes little girls, murders women, murders children, is engaged in the most barbaric activities in the world. And I can promise you, if he was your neighbor, you would move right away.

Q. So you don't plan to ask—[inaudible]—to get him back?

Q. But the Supreme Court is asking to——

President Trump. And what was the ruling——

Q. Is that your decision?

President Trump. ——in the Supreme Court, Steve? Was it nine to nothing?

Deputy Chief of Staff Miller. Yes.

Attorney General Bondi. Nine.

Deputy Chief of Staff Miller. It was a 9–0——

President Trump. Yes. In our favor.

Deputy Chief of Staff Miller. ——in our favor, against the district court ruling, saying that no district court has the power to compel the foreign policy function of the United States.

As Pam said, the ruling solely stated that if this individual, at El Salvador's sole discretion, was sent back to our country, that we could deport him a second time.

Q. Well, I——

Deputy Chief of Staff Miller. No version of this legally ends up with him ever living here, because he is a citizen of El Salvador.

That is the President of El Salvador. Your questions about it, per the court, can only be directed to him.

Q. I asked—President Bukele, what are you—what is your——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Can President—can President Bukele weigh in on this? Do you plan to return him?

President Bukele. Well, I'm—suppose you're not suggesting that I smuggle a terrorist into the United States, right?

President Trump. It's only CNN.

President Bukele. I mean, how could I—how can I smuggle——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

How could I return him to the United States? Like, if I smuggle him into the United States, or what do I do? Of course, I'm not going to do it. It's like—I mean, the—it's the question is

preposterous. How can I smuggle a terrorist into the United States? I don't have the power to return him to the United States.

Q. But you could release him inside El Salvador.

President Bukele. Yes, but I'm not releasing—I mean, we're not very fond of releasing terrorists into our country. We just turned the murder capital of the world into the safest country of the Western Hemisphere, and you want us to go back into the murder—releasing criminals so we can go back to being the murder capital of the world? No, that's not going to happen. That's—no.

President Trump. Well, they'd love to have a criminal, you know, released into our country. [Laughter]

President Bukele. Yes. I mean, there's—a fascination——

President Trump. So they would love it.

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. They're sick. These are sick people. [Laughter]

Marco, do you have something to say about it?

Secretary Rubio. Yes. I mean, Stephen outlined it. I don't understand what the confusion is.

This individual is a citizen of El Salvador. He was illegally in the United States and was returned to his country. That's where you deport people: back to their country of origin. Except for Venezuela that wasn't—refusing to take people back, or places like that.

I can tell you this, Mr. President. No—the foreign policy of the United States is conducted by the President of the United States, not by a court. And no court in the United States has a right to conduct the foreign policy of the United States. It's that simple. End of story.

Q. The court specifically said he couldn't——

Deputy Chief of Staff Miller. And that's what the Supreme Court held, by the way.

Q. ——be sent back to El Salvador though.

Deputy Chief of Staff Miller. To Marco's point, the Supreme Court said exactly what Marco said: that no court has the authority to compel the foreign policy function of the United States. We won a case nine-zero, and people like CNN are portraying it as a loss, as usual, because they want foreign terrorists in the country who kidnap women and children. But President Trump, his policy is: Foreign terrorists that are here illegally get expelled from the country, which, by the way, is a 90–10 issue.

Q. Well, the President—Mr. President, you said that if the Supreme Court said someone needed to be returned that you would abide by that. You said that on Air Force One just a few days ago. And they said the—it must be facilitated.

President Trump. How long do we have to answer this question from you? Why don't you just say, "Isn't it wonderful that we're keeping criminals out of our country?" Why can't you just say that?

Q. Well, it's a legal dispute. So I just wanted to get some clarity on it, sir.

President Trump. Why do you go over and over? And that's why nobody watches you anymore. You know, you have no credibility.

Please, go ahead.

Border Security/President Trump's Health

Q. President Trump, thank you very much. How many illegal criminals are you planning on exporting to El Salvador?

And, President Bukele, how many are you willing to take from the U.S.?

President Trump. As many as possible. And I just asked the President—you know, it's this massive complex that he built—jail complex. I said, "Can you build some more of them, please?" *[Laughter]* As many as we can get out of our country that were allowed in here by incompetent Joe Biden through open borders. Open borders.

You probably hear "open borders" and you can't even understand it, because nobody can understand it.

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. Nobody smart or with common sense can understand it.

So we have millions of people that should not be in this country that are dangerous. Not just people, because we have people, but we have millions of people that are murderers, drug dealers. They've been allowed to come into our country by other countries that were very smart. When they heard that this very low-IQ President—and by the way, I took my cognitive exam as part of my physical exam, and I got the highest mark. And one of the doctors said, "Sir, I've never seen anybody get that kind of a"—that was the highest mark. I hope you're happy with that, although they haven't been bugging me too much to take a cognitive. But I did do my physical, and it was released. I hope you're all happy with it. I notice there's no questions, so probably you are.

But the cognitive—they said to me, "Sir, would you like to take a cognitive test?" I said, "Did Biden take one?" "No." "Did anybody take one?" "No, not too many people took them." I said: "What about Obama? Did he take one?" "No, he didn't take one either." I said, "Let me be the only one to take one."

But I've actually taken them three times already. I like taking them because they're sort of—they're not too tough for me to take.

But we had a great physical exam. So I knew you were going to ask that. And the doctors, who are total professionals—Walter Reed Medical Center, they're great—great people.

And I visited a soldier that was a badly wounded—incredible soldier—lost his leg, and we spent a lot of time with him. I mean, great—with his mother. And it was really a very great thing. They do a phenomenal job.

I just want to say, Walter Reed—I was there for—what?—5, 6 hours. You were there with me. But I took a full physical, and it came out perfect. So that's good. That means you've got me for a little longer.

Detention Facilities in El Salvador/U.S. Prison Population

Q. Would the U.S. be willing to pay for those facilities to be opened if new ones were going to be built in El Salvador—*[inaudible]*?

President Trump. I'd do something. We'd help them out, yes. We'd help them.

Q. *[Inaudible]*

President Trump. They're great facilities, very strong facilities, and they don't play games.

I'd like to go a step further. I mean, I say—I said it to Pam, I don't know what the laws are. We always have to obey the laws. But we also have homegrown criminals that push people into

subways, that hit elderly ladies on the back of the head with a baseball bat when they're not looking, that are absolute monsters. I'd like to include them in the group of people to get them out of the country, but you'll have to be looking at the laws on that, Steve. Okay?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Immigration Enforcement Actions/President Trump's Foreign Policy

Q. How essential is it for the U.S. to be locking up these prisoners, and do you think more Presidents should follow suit like you guys, as far as keeping a hard stance on crime here in the United States?

President Trump. Well, I do. I think everybody has to. I mean, the President said it better than anybody. He said, you know, you have liberty, and you have to have liberty, but to have liberty, you're going to—not everybody is going to be good.

And you know, some are bad because they're sick. They're mentally deranged. They're bad.

Q. Why do you—*[inaudible]*——

President Trump. Then you have to take them—if you're going to have a country, you're going to have to take those people out, and we've been doing that.

But this was, like, an unforced error, they would call it, where we had people that may hate our country, or maybe they're just stupid people—I think they're probably stupid people more so. They—a lot of people said they did it for the vote, but I did better with Hispanic people than they did.

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. Because they always use Hispanic. I did better—your people love me. I saw—I saw my poll numbers in your country. I'm through the roof—right?—91 percent.

No, no, they—some people think they do it for the vote, but they don't have to do it for the vote. They cheat. You know, they're professional cheaters. That's about the only thing they do well.

So we just have had a great relationship, and it's become bigger because of a strange thing that happened. You know, I came back.

We had no war in Ukraine. We had no war with—we had no October 7 Middle East problem. We had nothing. We had—no inflation. We didn't have the Afghanistan—most embarrassing moment in the history of our country, the Afghanistan—not withdrawing, because I would have been out—you know, I was—I had it all set to bring people out with dignity and pride. That was the worst, most embarrassing moment in the history of our country: Afghanistan. We didn't have any of that.

You wouldn't have had the war with Russia-Ukraine. You wouldn't have had the Middle East problem, because Iran was broke. They had no money because we had secondary sanctions on and lots of other sanctions.

And now, every single thing.

Got a problem with Iran, but I'll solve that problem. That's almost an easy one.

We got to solve a war that should have never started, Ukraine and Russia, and we'll get that solved.

And we have to solve problems, and we already solved inflation. You know, if you look at the numbers, the numbers are incredible, actually. Stock market is up, and we're not letting other countries take advantage of this country like they have for the last 40 years.

So thank you very much.

Do you have a question? Please.

Semiconductor Manufacturing

Q. Sure do, Mr. President. Thank you so much. You scored another major investment win this morning, when Nvidia pledged to build its AI supercomputer, the first time ever, right here in the United States.

President Trump. Thank you. That—now, that's a question I like. [*Laughter*] That's true.

Q. What is your reaction to this announcement, sir? And how will this positively benefit Americans across the entire country?

President Trump. Well, it's one of the biggest announcements you'll ever hear, because Nvidia, as you know, controls that whole—almost the entire sector, which is one of the most important sectors in the world, between chips and semiconductors and everything else. And they're the biggest. And the other biggest we already have coming in and spending \$300 billion, as you know. They announced 2 weeks ago. But Nvidia is so highly respected.

And this was an announcement that a lot of people—I knew it was going to happen, but not to the extent that it happened. It's big. And the reason they did it is because of the election on November 5 and because of a thing called tariffs—as I say, the most beautiful word in the dictionary—after "love," "God," "relationship." [*Laughter*]

The press actually hit me. I said, "'Tariff' is the most beautiful word in the dictionary." "What about 'family,' 'love,' 'God'?" [*Laughter*]

I got hit even on that, do you understand? I said, "Okay." So now I say it's my fifth most favorite word—[*laughter*]—because they get you on anything.

But no, that—Nvidia—it's one of the great companies of the world, modern—super-modern companies; controls segments that nobody—you know, it sort of controls the world, in a sense. They're coming in here in the biggest way, with hundreds of billions of dollars. Not, like, millions of dollars. Hundreds of billions of dollars. And I'm honored by it.

And I want to thank Jensen and all of the people that we deal with. They're great people. They're brilliant people. And without tariffs, they wouldn't be doing it.

Okay? Thank you very much. That's really good.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Yes, please. Go ahead.

U.S. Sanctions on Russia

Q. Are you considering additional sanctions against Russia after their latest attack? And do you have an update on the rate and when you might announce semiconductor tariffs?

President Trump. Well, I already have sanctions on Russia. I put them there. If you remember Nord Stream 2, that was—that's the big pipeline that goes through Europe. I stopped it. That's Russia's pipeline—the largest pipeline, I think, in the world. Goes to Germany. And I stopped it.

And when Biden came in, he approved it. And then they say, oh, I'm friendly with Russia. No. No. Putin said, "You know, if you're my friend, I'd hate to see you when you're my enemy."

I stopped the biggest economic job they ever had. I stopped it cold. Right? It was dead. You know that, right? And Biden came in, and he immediately approved it. What was that all about?

Q. What about additional sanctions, sir?

President Trump. And it's a pipeline that takes care of a lot of the needs. Now, you know it's—it was a very controversial thing, but I stopped it, and Biden approved it.

Question?

Q. On tariffs. Do you have an update——

President Trump. No, not you again. Not you.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Additional U.S. Tariffs

Q. *[Inaudible]*—update today on potential semiconductor tariffs and, potentially, pharmaceuticals?

President Trump. What?

Q. Semiconductor tariffs and, potentially, pharmaceuticals. Any update on that?

President Trump. Pharmaceuticals, we're going to do. We have—we don't make our own drugs, our own pharmaceuticals. We don't make our own drugs anymore. The drug companies are in Ireland, and they're in lots of other places—China. And all I have to do is impose a tariff. The more, the faster they move in.

The higher the tariff, it's very—it's inversely proportional. The higher the tariff, the faster they come. And yes, we're going to be doing that.

That's going to be like we have on cars. We have, as you know, a 25-percent tariff on cars. We have a 25-percent tariff on steel and aluminum. And that's what that category fits right now.

Q. Do you have a percentage in mind and a timeline?

President Trump. I have a timeline, yes. Not-too-distant future. And we're doing it because we want to make our own drugs. We're doing it because we want to make our own steel and aluminum, lumber, other things, and they're all coming in. We have record numbers—\$7 trillion since I announced, like, a month and a half ago. Since I came, basically—since I came in, we have over \$7 trillion being invested in the country.

We didn't have \$1 trillion. We didn't have a half a trillion dollars with some of these guys. They didn't know what the hell they were doing.

So we have the largest investment that we've ever heard of, and we're only 2 months in, and that will continue at levels that you've never seen before. That's what's going to happen.

And even the stock market is up today. It's—we also had—you know, we—a lot of people didn't say it the way it was. We had the largest gain in the stock market in history on every single

category last week. That was a nice—gain, because we get a little hit because people didn't understand the power of our economic—our country, economically, if you use it right.

Do you have something to say on that, J.D.?

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance. Yes, sir. I mean, look, for 40 years, we have lost manufacturing capacity. Workers have seen their wages stagnate. And some of the most critical things that we need, from the pharmaceuticals—the drugs that we give to our children, the antibiotics that we give to our kids—to the weapons that we actually need to fight a war if, God forbid, we had to fight a war, we don't make enough of that stuff.

And so President Trump ran explicitly on changing that. Yes, as the President mentioned, it caused a little bit of disruption in the market, but I actually think, over the long term, workers are going to benefit, stocks are going to go up, American businesses are going to benefit as we reinvest and reindustrialize our country.

President Trump. And the autoworkers and the Teamsters and all of the unions—you know, not traditionally Republican, but I'm winning those unions by—we're up 40, 50 points on the Democrats. They're losing everything.

They're losing everything because, I don't know, they just have policies that are not believable. They have—they fight for policies that are 5-percent popular, and nobody knows who the 5 percent are. I mean, nobody can find the 5 percent.

But if you go back to Ohio—and by the way, we have the great championship team from Ohio coming in today, right? *[Laughter]*

Vice President Vance. Very big day. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. And that's going to be a little bit later. But—and that will be—if you want to stick around, I'll introduce you to some nice people—*[laughter]*—who—you'll see some very large people, right? You'll see some people that even you have not seen the people like this. *[Laughter]* *[Inaudible]* These are big—these are 6'7", 380 pounds with no fat. Okay? That's pretty good.

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. Right?

But the team—the national championship team is being honored today—

President Bukele. Wow.

President Trump. —at the White House. So that will be exciting, if you're around.

President Bukele. Yes. *[Inaudible]*

President Trump. Want to stay around? I'll have you up there. You can tell them all about your prison, how you have to behave or you'll go to that prison. *[Laughter]*

Okay. Any—

Q. Mr. President, businesses want clarity.

President Trump. Who else is there?

Tariff Exemptions for Personal Electronics

Q. How temporary are those exceptions on electronics?

President Trump. Yes, please. Go ahead, please. Behind you.

Iran

Q. Yes, you said yesterday that you're making a decision on Iran very quickly.

President Trump. Yes.

Q. What do you mean by that? Is that a decision to strike Iran, or——

President Trump. Well, they have to solve their problem very quickly. Iran wants to deal with us, but they don't know how. They really don't know how. We had a meeting with them on Saturday. We have another meeting scheduled next Saturday. I said, "That's a long time." You know, that's a long time. So I think they might be tapping us along.

But Iran has to get rid of the concept of a nuclear weapon. They cannot have a nuclear weapon. He can't have a nuclear weapon.

[*President Trump gestured toward President Bukele.*]

Nobody can have—we can't have anybody having nuclear weapons.

President Bukele. Of course.

President Trump. You know? We can't have nuclear weapons.

And I think they're tapping us along because they were so used to dealing with stupid people in this country. And I had Iran perfect. You had no attacks. You would have never had October 7 in Israel—the attack by Hamas—because Iran was broke. They were stone-cold broke when I was President.

And I don't want to do it. I want them to be a rich, great nation. The only thing is—one thing, simple; it's really simple—they can't have a nuclear weapon, and they've got to go fast, because they're fairly close to having one, and they're not going to have one. And if we have to do something very harsh, we'll do it. And I'm not doing it for us, I'm doing it for the world.

Q. Does that—[*inaudible*]?

President Trump. And these are radicalized people——

Q. Does that include a potential——

President Trump. ——and they cannot have a nuclear weapon.

Q. Does that a potential—does that include a potential strike on Iranian nuclear facilities?

President Trump. Of course it does.

El Salvador's Offer To House U.S. Prisoners/Iran/Venezuela

Q. I—and just a follow-up question on—a clarification. You mentioned that you're open to deporting individuals that aren't foreign aliens, but are criminals to El Salvador.

President Trump. Yes. Love it.

Q. Does that include—does that include, potentially, U.S. citizens, fully naturalized Americans?

President Trump. If they're criminals and if they hit people with baseball bats over their head that happen to be 90 years old and if—they rape 87-year-old women in Coney Island, Brooklyn, yes. Yes, that includes them. Why? Do you think they're a special category of person? They're as bad as anybody that comes in. We have bad ones too. And I'm all for it, because we can do things with the President for less money and have great security.

And we have a huge prison population. We have a huge number of prisons, and then we have the private prisons, and some are operated well, I guess, and some aren't. But he does a great job with that. We have others that we're negotiating with too.

But no, if it's a homegrown criminal, I have no problem.

Now, we're studying the laws right now. Pam is studying. If we can do that, that's good. And I'm talking about violent people. I'm talking about really bad people. Really bad people. Every bit as bad as the ones coming in.

And I made this statement when I heard about this a long time ago now, 4 years ago. When I heard that this guy was having open borders, I said, "Every single criminal from all over the world is going to be dumped into our country." And that's what happened. Jails—the jails of the Congo were emptied out. The jails of Venezuela were emptied out. And you know what happened? Their crime went way down. But now Venezuela has other countries—problems. You know what their problem is? They have no money——

President Bukele. Yes.

President Trump. ——because I shut off their oil, and we put secondary tariffs because they're not—they're not doing what's right over there. They know what to do. We spoke to him. I spoke to him. They know what to do. But they have no money. Venezuela has no money.

But Iran had no money. And Iran behaved so beautifully. And then Biden took all those secondary tariffs and tariffs on [off; White House correction].

I told China: "You can't buy oil. If you buy oil from Iran"—China; I told it to President Xi—"then we no longer want you to do business with the United States of America." And those ships disappeared from that harbor so quickly. China. I get along great with China.

Iran

Q. Are the talks with Iran productive? Do you want to continue that?

President Trump. What?

Q. The talks with Iran, do you believe those are productive? Do you want to continue that?

President Trump. I think we're—I think Iran could be a great country, as long as it doesn't have nuclear weapons. If they have nuclear weapons, they'll never get a chance to be a great country. They will never get a chance. It won't even come close.

Q. Sir, on tariffs——

Q. President Bukele——

President Trump. Yes, please.

Q. Yes, thank you. Yesterday you mentioned short-lived product exemptions. Which specific products are you considering, and how long is short-lived? Weeks? Months?

President Trump. I'm looking at something to help some of the car companies where they're—switching to parts that were made in Canada, Mexico, and other places. And they need a little bit of time, because they're going to make them here, but they need a little bit of time. So I'm talking about things like that.

Potential Tariff Exemptions for Personal Electronics

Q. What about any Apple products and other cell phones?

President Trump. Look, I'm a very flexible person. I don't change my mind, but I'm flexible, and you have to be. You just can't have a wall, and you'll only go—no, sometimes you have to go around it, under it, or above it.

There'll be—maybe things coming up. I speak to Tim Cook. I helped Tim Cook recently and that whole business. You know, I'm not—I don't want to hurt anybody. But the end result is, we're going to get to the position of greatness for our country. We're the greatest economic power in the world, if we're smart. If we're not smart, we're going to hurt our country very badly.

We lost, with China, over the Biden years, trillions of dollars on trade. Trillions of dollars. And he let them fleece us, and we can't do that anymore.

And you know what? I don't blame China at all. I don't blame President Xi. I like him. He likes me. I mean, you know, I think. Who knows? Who the hell cares, frankly.

China-U.S. Trade/European Union/U.S. Automobile Industry

Q. Do you have any updates on talks with China?

President Trump. But you know what? You——

Q. Do you have any updates with talks with China, sir, over——

President Trump. No, let me just tell you this. I don't blame China. I don't blame Vietnam. I don't—I see they're meeting today. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't—that's a lovely meeting. They're meeting, like, trying to figure out, "How do we screw the United States of America?"

Don't forget, the European Union was formed to do just that. The European Union was formed to hurt the United States and—on trade. And they get us on NATO because they don't pay their bills. But now, since I got involved, they have been paying their bills. I took in \$600—over \$600 billion for NATO. Nobody took in anything. I mean, we were—they were all delinquent. Most of the—they had 8 nations out of 28 paid their bills. The rest of them were way delinquent.

And I said, "If you don't pay your bills, we're not going to protect you anymore." And the money poured in. Over six hundred—the Secretary General last week made that statement. He said: "I've never seen anything like it. We couldn't get anybody to pay." Because the United States was footing the bill for NATO.

Well, we got hurt there, and we got hurt on trade, likewise—European Union. And they've got to come to the table, and they're trying to. They're trying to. But the European Union has taken terrible advantage. They don't take our food products. They don't take our cars.

We take—we have millions of their cars—BMW, Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz, many others. They come in by the millions. They don't take. There are no Chevrolets in Munich, I can tell you that. I said to Angela Merkel, when she was there, as she was letting millions of people infiltrate Germany, which was not so good from—we would call them illegal immigrants—but she made them legal.

But I said to her—and I got along with her very well. I said, "How many Chevrolets do we have in Munich or Frankfurt?" "Why, none, Donald. None." And I said, "You're right." And yet we take in millions and millions of cars. No, those—those days are over.

Okay.

Q. How long do you think the exemptions are going to last?

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:38 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; Cody Balmer, suspect in the arson attack on the Governor's Mansion in Harrisburg, PA, on April 13; Kilmar Abrego Garcia, who was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers in Baltimore, MD, on March 12, and remanded for detention at the high-security Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT) in Tecoluca, El Salvador; Jensen Huang, founder, president and chief executive officer, Nvidia Corp.; President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela; Timothy D. Cook, chief executive officer of Apple Inc., Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and former Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany. Deputy Chief of Staff Miller referred to Paula Xinis, judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on April 15.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : El Salvador, President Bukele.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Balmer, Cory; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela J.; Bukele Ortez, Nayib Armando; Cook, Timothy D.; Hill, Alexandra; Huang, Jensen; Maduro Moros, Nicolas; Merkel, Angela; Miller, Stephen; Noem, Kristi L.; Obama, Barack; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Rutte, Mark ; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Villatoro, Hector Gustavo; Wiles, Susan; Xi Jinping; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Afghanistan, withdrawal of U.S. military forces; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Attorney General; Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; Border security; China, President; China, relations with U.S.; China, trade with U.S.; El Salvador, immigration enforcement, cooperation with U.S.; El Salvador, Minister of Foreign Relations; El Salvador, Minister of Justice and Public Security; El Salvador, offer to house U.S. prisoners; El Salvador, President; El Salvador, relations with U.S.; European Union, trade with U.S.; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Illegal immigration; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, oil supply and refining; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pennsylvania, arson attack at Governor's Mansion in Harrisburg; Pharmaceutical supply chains, improvement efforts; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Russia, U.S. sanctions; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of State; Semiconductor manufacturing; Sports, efforts to restrict transgender participation; Tariffs; Transgender athletes, efforts to restrict participation; U.S. servicemembers, service and dedication; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; Venezuela, President; Venezuela, U.S. sanctions; Vice President; White House Chief of Staff; White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy.

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