

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks at a Document Signing Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters
April 17, 2025

The President. Okay. Why don't we start just by—we're going to be signing some Executive orders.

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

The President. And do you want to discuss it for a second, Will? And then we'll have a couple of people speak. It's a—and it's my honor to help you.

Commercial fisherman Ricardo Da Rosa. Thank you, sir.

The President. What they did to you is ridiculous.

Mr. Da Rosa. I would agree.

The President. How long has this been going on?

Mr. Da Rosa. Well, there's a lot of—lot of this, but this one's been going on for——

Representative Amata Coleman Radewagen. Since 2008.

Mr. Da Rosa. Two thousand eight, yes. And it just gets bigger and bigger.

The President. And they basically took away your fishing rights.

Mr. Da Rosa. Yes.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Da Rosa. They cashed my tax check.

The President. Was that Obama and Biden?

Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing Peter K. Navarro. Two thousand fourteen——

—
Chairman of the Republican Party of American Samoa Taulapapa William Sword. Yes.

Mr. Da Rosa. Yeah.

Senior Counselor Navarro. ——was when they expanded to 500,000 square miles. Obama signed that in 2014. It's crazy.

The President. It's so sad. It's so crazy.

Senior Counselor Navarro. It was a tiny one, and Obama made it huge.

The President. It's too bad they won't pick it up properly.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Yes.

The President. But it's so sad.

Go ahead, Will.

Staff Secretary Scharf. So, as Peter said, sir, starting in 2009, continuing in 2014, a very large part of the American exclusive economic zone in the Pacific—amounting in total to half a million square miles of the American economic zone has been—exclusive economic zone has been held off limits to commercial fishing.

We have a proclamation for your signature today, sir, that would reopen this area for commercial fishing by American-flagged vessels only. This is a huge deal to the island populations in the Pacific.

The President. It is.

Staff Secretary Scharf. And we hope that this will lead to a new dawn for the American fishing industry in the Pacific Islands.

The President. Could you, Captain, say a few words about how ridiculous this has been that you had to live like this? American Samoa.

Mr. Da Rosa. Well, it's a—we operate out of American Samoa. We supply to StarKist, American company—does military packs.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Da Rosa. And it's—you know, it's our right. The U.S. has the biggest EEZ in the Pacific, and yet we can't fish there. And it seems unfair, and I'm glad that we're opening it up so that we can feed the—feed our people.

The President. And tell them how large an area we're talking about.

Mr. Da Rosa. It's—the Pacific is big, but this is a huge area. Again, the U.S. has the biggest EEZ in the Pacific.

Mr. Sword. It's three Californias.

Mr. Da Rosa. And it's——

Rep. Radewagen. It's an area of three Californias.

Mr. Da Rosa. Yes, and it's shut off.

The President. It's an area the size of three Californias. They can't fish there.

And so what do you do? How do you fish? They took away your livelihood, right?

Mr. Da Rosa. Well, we fish in the high seas, and then we have to pay to fish in other people's EEZs.

The President. Now, the high seas would mean more danger, right? Is there more danger in the high seas?

Mr. Da Rosa. Not really. It's just a——

Senior Counselor Navarro. More expensive.

The President. Far away.

Rep. Radewagen. More distance.

Mr. Da Rosa. ——a more expensive—it's a bigger area, and you know——

Mr. Sword. So expensive.

The President. How far do you have to travel to get to fish?

Mr. Da Rosa. The—well, the boat carries a lot of fish, so it goes until it's full, basically. But it's good to have plenty of fishing grounds.

Senior Counselor Navarro. To get out to where you have to go from Samoa, it's 7 days?

Mr. Da Rosa. It can be as close as 4 days, but it's—it's a little bit of a jaunt, yes. And——

The President. That's a little bit, I'd say. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Da Rosa. Yes. Fuel is not cheap, so——

Staff Secretary Scharf. Four days.

The President. So you'll travel from 4 to 7 days——

Mr. Da Rosa. Just to get to the fishing grounds, yes.

The President. ——just to get to the area that you're allowed to fish.

Mr. Da Rosa. Mm-hmm.

The President. And is that as fertile an area as the area that you're not allowed to fish in, or——

Mr. Da Rosa. Well, the Western Pacific, in a whole, is—80 percent of the world's tuna comes from the Western Pacific. So U.S. has a huge EEZ there. There's also the island countries, but it's a big area.

The President. So they took away very fertile grounds.

Mr. Da Rosa. Very fertile, yes.

The President. This is so crazy.

What would you like to say? Go ahead.

Rep. Radewagen. Thank you, Mr.——

The President. It's such an honor to do this for these people. This is just crazy.

Just tell me: When did this start? When was it—when did it——

Rep. Radewagen. It started back in 2008. But thank you, Mr. President, for this great announcement, and thank you so much for your awesome leadership and giving back to American Samoa what had been taken away from us without even consulting with our leaders and people at that time. And——

The President. You mean they just, one day—just took away three Californias?

Rep. Radewagen. Yes. And so this is such a wonderful gift to American Samoa. And, of course, it's also Holy Week beginning today. And so thank you for returning to our Indigenous people this wonderful gift of our traditional fishing grounds. [*Inaudible*]

The President. It's such an honor to do this.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Yes.

The President. You know, normally, I sign things and it's nice and everything is good. You'll get more water in the showerhead and things like that. [*Laughter*] But this is such an honor. What they've done to you people is incredible. It's like—it's so terrible, where you have to travel 4 days in a boat to fish—and it's usually 7 days, I was told, before—but 4 days to 7 days in order to fish. And you were there a long time before we were, right?

Rep. Radewagen. Yes.

The President. Like——

Rep. Radewagen. Yes. For centuries.

The President. Like, I would say——

Rep. Radewagen. Centuries.

The President. —yes, thousands of years, is what I was going to say. [Laughter]

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council Executive Director Kitty M. Simonds. Mr.—so, Mr. President—

The President. Please.

Executive Director Simonds. —you have another fishery in the Pacific Ocean. This is the purse seine fishery that fishes for canned tuna, and then the fishery in Hawaii fishes for fresh tuna. And so, there are 150 vessels, and you're opening up Johnston Island, which is very close to Hawaii, makes it a lot easier for them to fish. Because of the—

The President. Even Hawaii?

Executive Director Simonds. Yes.

The President. So, even Hawaii is—

Executive Director Simonds. Well, yes, of course.

The President. Yes. [Inaudible]

Executive Director Simonds. So you're helping the entire fleet. And most of our fish are sold on the mainland. We also fish for swordfish. And when we have too many regulations for our swordfish fishery, you get swordfish from Peru, Brazil, and all those other places that don't have the same management measures that we have in the United States.

Rep. Radewagen. That's right.

Mr. Sword. That's correct.

Executive Director Simonds. So, we are very grateful in Hawaii for this, the fisherman and they'll be—just—it's fantastic.

The President. So, what's the difference? You say canned tuna.

Executive Director Simonds. Right. They're two—you have two different U.S. fisheries there.

The President. Yes, but the same tuna?

Executive Director Simonds. Different, no. That's skipjack, albacore—

American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources Director Taotasi Archie Soliai. And yellowfin.

Executive Director Simonds. —and yellowfin. And then—

The President. So albacore is canned tuna, right?

Executive Director Simonds. Right.

Rep. Radewagen. Yes.

The President. I know that from—I won't say it, but—[laughter].

Executive Director Simonds. You've seen the can. So—

The President. I've seen the can.

Executive Director Simonds. Yes. So our fishery fishes for the sashimi-quality fish, so it's all fresh. It's an ice fishery, and it's been around since—well, it started in the early 1900s and—

The President. Well, it's been around for millions of years.

Executive Director Simonds. Right. Exactly.

The President. Long before us.

Executive Director Simonds. Right. Exactly.

The President. That's great.

Executive Director Simonds. So, you know, that's where you're getting your sashimi and your swordfish from. Most of the swordfish that you eat on the mainland comes from our fishery.

Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick. Right.

Director Soliai. And, Mr.——

The President. You know, they shut down, also, areas off Maine. You know that?

Director Soliai. Yes, yes.

Executive Director Simonds. Yes.

The President. The Maine lobster.

Executive Director Simonds. Oh, yes. Yes.

The President. And I think we're going to have to open that one up really quickly too.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. But we did it. And then, after the election, which was totally rigged, they went out and they put it back again.

Senior Counselor Navarro. We'll have that for you next week.

The President. It was like 500 square miles or some ridiculous thing like that. And Canada fishes there——

Senior Counselor Navarro. Right.

The President. ——but we're not allowed to.

Senior Counselor Navarro. But we're not allowed to.

The President. Can you imagine? They restricted it, but Canada fishes there.

Please.

Director Soliai. Mr. President, this is such a great honor. You know, today, in American Samoa, we're celebrating the 125th Flag Day. It's the first day——

The President. Wow.

Director Soliai. ——celebrating when the U.S. flag was first raised there. At this very moment, they're celebrating that. So this is a monumental occasion for the people of American Samoa, and we are truly——

The President. So this is a big thing that's going on——

Director Soliai. This is——

The President. ——right now?

Director Soliai. This——because we we're a tuna-dependent economy, 99.5 percent of our exports is tuna. And——

The President. Ninety-nine point five percent?

Secretary Lutnick. [Laughter] Wow.

Director Soliai. Yes.

The President. Well, what about the other half a point? [Laughter] What is that? Necklaces?

Director Soliai. And then——

Executive Director Simonds. Snakes.

Director Soliai. ——about 80 percent of our private employment is related to the tuna industry.

The President. That's unbelievable.

Director Soliai. So yes, this is a big thing for the territory.

The President. So what is——

Rep. Radewagen. We are a one-industry economy.

The President. Right. What's this going to do in terms—it's so interesting to me. It's so, so horrible and so stupid. It's so stupid. We're talking about a massive ocean, and they're forced to travel 4 to 7 days to go and fish in an area that's not as good, and it's probably a little more dangerous—the whole thing.

So what's this going to—how is this going to affect your business? It's—it's going to be many more—I mean, you're going to be able to do much more business, I would think, right?

Director Soliai. Yes, we would think that this will definitely result in more fish deliveries, and more fish deliveries is more economic gains for the Territory.

The President. Tell us what happens where you say China and other people steal your fish.

Executive Director Simonds. Well——

The President. When—in other words, you're forced to go to areas——

Executive Director Simonds. Right. Because——

The President. ——that are very dangerous.

Executive Director Simonds. Well, because of the monuments and overlays of sanctuaries, our fishermen mostly fish on the high seas. And if you look at Global Watch, you will see China, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan all fishing on our very edge of the 200-mile zone. So our fishing, we're in competition with them.

And also, you know, their dumping of their fish on U.S. markets lowers the price for our fishermen. And that's another difficult thing that we hope you'll take care of soon.

The President. And what about the stealing of your fish?

Director Soliai. Well, we——

Executive Director Simonds. That's what they're doing.

Director Soliai. You're competing with tuna in a very competitive market, right? So they're camped right outside—like Kitty said, they're camped right outside our EEZ, and——

The President. And what happens?

Director Soliai. And they're taking our fish, because it's migratory.

Executive Director Simonds. Yes.

Director Soliai. Tuna is migratory. They don't——

Executive Director Simonds. Yes. Because we can't fish in our zone——

Director Soliai. Yeah.

Executive Director Simonds. ——the fish goes to whoever.

Senior Counselor Navarro. And they come in—they come in in the dead of night and poach there——

Rep. Radewagen. Yes, they do.

Senior Counselor Navarro. ——and then go out.

The President. They take almost——

Senior Counselor Navarro. And nobody catches them.

The President. They take the fish, yes.

Senior Counselor Navarro. They steal, yes.

Mr. Sword. They steal our fish.

Senior Counselor Navarro. That's a common, well-documented problem.

The President. Does anybody——

Senior Counselor Navarro. Poaching.

The President. I mean, it's so interesting. Even you have to find this one interesting.

So, by doing this, we're going to give you back your lives.

Rep. Radewagen. Yes.

The President. And you've been doing this for thousands of years in this area——

Rep. Radewagen. Absolutely.

Mr. Sword. Yes, sir.

The President. ——and then along comes Biden and Obama, and they say you can't do it anymore, right?

Senior Counselor Navarro. This is, sir, "fish, baby, fish." [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes.

Mr. Sword. Fish, baby, fish.

Rep. Radewagen. That's right.

The President. So what's the level of popular—and this is a risky question, but what's the level of popularity of Trump in Samoa versus the Democrats?

Rep. Radewagen. Seventy-seven percent all chose——

The President. For Trump?

Rep. Radewagen. For Trump, yes, that's right.

The President. Wow.

Rep. Radewagen. Seventy-seven percent.

The President. I like that.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Probably go up to 90 tomorrow. [*Laughter*]

Rep. Radewagen. Yes, it will go up to 100.

The President. Maybe 100.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Maybe 100.

The President. Well, it's an honor. I'm not doing it for that.

Senior Counselor Navarro. I love it.

The President. I'm doing it because——

Senior Counselor Navarro. I love it.

The President. ——it's just an honor.

Mr. Sword. The right thing to do.

The President. Here's one of the boats that they have. Look how beautiful that is.

Now, they use it for a beautiful cruise to take 7 days before they can do their first fish. Can you believe it? [*Laughter*]

So now you'll be able to do it, like, almost immediately, right?

Mr. Da Rosa. Well, yeah, much closer. Absolutely.

Rep. Radewagen. Yes. Absolutely.

Mr. Da Rosa. So, if the fish is there, we can make more trips and employ more people, and——

The President. Do you know—through sonar, radar, everything, do you know where the fish are? I mean, can you see that?

Mr. Da Rosa. You get educated guesses, so you can—you get all kinds of different reports, plankton and all kinds of stuff, and they can——

Mr. Sword. Temperature.

The President. It's a beautiful life. You wouldn't choose any other life, right?

Mr. Da Rosa. It's a very unique life. I love what I do. I really do.

The President. I mean, if you could have a life—like some beautiful, leisurely life in Washington, DC——

Executive Director Simonds. No.

The President. ——where you get mugged when you go to work—[*laughter*]——but other than that, you love politics—if you could live in the White House, you'd take——

Secretary Lutnick. Oh, yes.

The President. ——exactly what you——

Mr. Da Rosa. I might take it under consideration. [*Laughter*]

The President. All right. Let's do this. Right? It's an honor.

[*At this point, the President signed a proclamation titled, "Unleashing American Commercial Fishing in the Pacific."*]

You've seen that signature, and I don't use autopen, you know? Like Biden—Biden uses autopen. *[Laughter]* I think we ought to——

[Participants sang in Samoan.]

Executive Director Simonds. Thank you.

Rep. Radewagen. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you so much.

Mr. Sword. Thank you so much.

The President. Hold that. You hold that.

And what is the second one, please?

Staff Secretary Scharf. We have one more also relating to fisheries, sir. This is an Executive order on seafood competitiveness. Currently, we have two basic problems here. One is that the American seafood industry is dramatically overregulated. Our fisheries are——

The President. That's true.

Staff Secretary Scharf. ——dramatically overregulated. The other is that we have unfair trade practices from our foreign trading partners relating to the seafood industry. So this Executive order is going to attempt to address both of those. The Department of Commerce, other Federal departments and agencies are going to work with the fisheries to establish commonsense, regulatory reforms to allow——

The President. How long will that take?

Staff Secretary Scharf. I think we're expecting to move as quickly——

The President. Fast?

Staff Secretary Scharf. ——as we can. Yes, sir.

The President. You know what the regulation—I mean, you know exactly what we're talking about already, right? It's crazy——

Rep. Radewagen. Yes.

The President. ——the regulations?

Mr. Da Rosa. It is.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Secretary Lutnick is going to fast-track that, I can assure you.

The President. Howard, please, go ahead.

Secretary Lutnick. Sure. So you just heard us: The economic zone around Hawaii and Samoa is huge, and it's exclusively ours. So why wouldn't we have our fishermen fish there? I mean, imagine saying our own fishermen—every country in the world, they all fish the 200 miles off their coast, and we were stopping our own fishermen from going off the coast. It's totally the opposite of common sense. That's why President Trump has changed it.

Now, let's talk about regulation. If you're not even going to let them fish, imagine the regulations that have been written to stop our fishermen from just surviving and thriving. We have the greatest coasts in the world, with the greatest fishermen in the world, and we need to let them do their great jobs—raise and capture fish; bring them to our tables; have America have the greatest fish in the world, which we have; and then let them export.

All these other countries—right?—they stop us from exporting. That's going to be over.

With your leadership and your trading policies, we're going to open all of these markets, and we're going to let our fishermen thrive and prosper, and we are going to have lower cost fish, more of it, and the freshest fish in the world. And this is just common sense for the United States of America.

The President. So could I ask—it's so interesting.

Executive Director Simonds. Yes.

The President. So you take these massive areas of water, and other countries are allowed to fish in them, right?

Executive Director Simonds. No.

Senior Counselor Navarro. No, they sneak in. They poach. They come in——

The President. So they're not allowed, but they do it because they don't care?

Senior Counselor Navarro. That's right.

Staff Secretary Scharf. But they fish in their own zones, sir.

The President. Yes.

Staff Secretary Scharf. So we're systematically disadvantaging our fishermen by not allowing them to fish in parts of our exclusive economic zone, while other countries have their own exclusive economic zones, and they're fishing the heck out of those.

The President. So they're totally benefiting.

Rep. Radewagen. Now that you're allowing the U.S. fishing fleet to fish, they also serve as observers.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Police officers, yes.

Rep. Radewagen. And when they see poachers——

Mr. Da Rosa. Yes, eyes and ears.

Rep. Radewagen. ——they report them to the authorities. And so they are a——

Mr. Sword. Security.

Rep. Radewagen. ——big help to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The President. Right.

Mr. Sword. Yes.

Rep. Radewagen. And so it's great for our U.S. food security.

The President. That's great. So——

Senior Counselor Navarro. I mean, we should have a trade surplus in fish, and we have a big trade deficit.

Secretary Lutnick. It's crazy.

Senior Counselor Navarro. ——because of all this. It's just crazy. No——

The President. Okay.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Familiar——familiar territory.

The President. This is an easy one. This is——

Secretary Lutnick. [Laughter] Yes. Very easy.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Fish, baby, fish.

The President. Hi, Mom. This is an easy one. This is crazy, huh? [Laughter]

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness."*]

Director Soliai. About 80 percent of the seafood in the U.S. is imported, so——

Secretary Lutnick. Can you imagine that? We import seafood, and we have the greatest coast——

The President. So what——

Secretary Lutnick. ——and fishing in the world.

The President. Okay.

Mr. Sword. In the world. It's true.

The President. So, in Maine, they do something similar. I think it's, like, 500 miles or something—some crazy thing. And Canada goes, and they fish there. Other people fish there.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Sure.

The President. Europe fishes there. The Maine lobster. You can't get Maine lobsters because Maine—so Maine is forced to go for days out to some other area that's not as good.

Senior Counselor Navarro. Yes.

The President. We have to free that up too.

Senior Counselor Navarro. We'll have that on your desk next week, I promise.

The President. The Maine lobster, right?

Senior Counselor Navarro. Yes. Yes.

The President. It's incredible. Think of it.

Senior Counselor Navarro. You did it last time, and they undid it.

The President. Canada fishes there——

Senior Counselor Navarro. Biden undid it.

The President. ——but we're not allowed to.

Yes. I did it last time in Maine——

Senior Counselor Navarro. Yes.

The President. ——and they undid it. That's why we have to stay President for a long time.
[Laughter]

Okay?

Thank you, everybody. What an honor. This is a great honor.

Mr. Da Rosa. Thank you.

Mr. Sword. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you, darling.

Rep. Radewagen. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Take care of yourself.

Thank you.

Mr. Sword. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much.

Mr. Da Rosa. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you very much.

Executive Director Simonds. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Great job.

Director Soliai. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

The President. Beautiful. This guy's——

Q. Mister——

The President. ——looks like a real athlete right here. [*Laughter*]

There—oh, Howard.

Secretary Lutnick. [*Laughter*] I get a shake too.

The President. Here you go, Howard. You can have that.

Secretary Lutnick. Thank you.

Birthright Citizenship

Q. Mr. President, some breaking news. A short time ago, the Supreme Court agreed to hear oral arguments in the case about ending birthright citizenship. How confident are you that the court will rule in your favor and allow that order to end birthright citizenship to go forward?

The President. Well, you're just telling me that for the first time. I am so happy. I think it—the case has been so misunderstood. That case—birthright citizenship—is about slavery. If you look at the details of it, the signings of it, everything else, that case is all about slavery.

And if you view it from that standpoint—people understand it, but for some reason, the lawyers don't talk about it. The news doesn't talk about it. That's not about tourists coming in and touching a piece of sand and, all of a sudden, they're a citizenship—you know, they're a citizen. That ship—that is all about slavery. And even look at the dates on which it was signed. It was right at that era, during—right after the Civil War. And if you look at it that way, the case is an easy case to win.

And I hope the lawyers talk about birthright citizenship and slavery, because that's what it was all about. And it was a very positive—it was meant to be positive. And they use it now instead—not for slavery. They use it for people that come into our country, and they walk in, and all of a sudden, they become citizens, and they pay a lot of money to different cartels and others.

It's all about slavery. And if you look at it that way, we should win that case.

Okay.

[*Several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. Mr. President, on El Salvador. You have a great relationship with the President of El Salvador. Will you ask him to release Abrego Garcia so you can facilitate his return here to the United States? And do you believe he deserves due process here?

The President. Well, I must tell you, I have to refer, again, to the lawyers. I'll have to do what they ask me to do.

I had heard that there were a lot of things about a certain gentleman—perhaps it was that gentleman—that would make that case be a case that's easily winnable on appeal.

So we'll just have to see. I'm going to have to respond to the lawyers.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Firearm Rights/Shooting at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida

Q. Mr. President, we're learning that are now two deceased following that shooting at Florida State University. Following and amid that, is there any changes that you want to see to gun legislation, anything you see broken with gun laws in our country?

The President. Well, I'm going to have to—look, I'm a big advocate of the Second Amendment. I have been from the beginning. I protected it.

And these things are terrible, but the gun doesn't do the shooting. The people do. It's, you know, a phrase that's used probably too often.

I will tell you that it's a shame. I'm just hearing about it now. I just hear about it. I know the area very well. I know the school very well. I know everything about it. It's Florida.

And we'll have more to say about it later. I have to see what happened.

Q. What do you mean when you say there will be more to say about it?

The President. Only in terms of what happened.

As far as legislation is concerned, this has been going on for a long time. I have an obligation to protect the Second Amendment. I ran on the Second Amendment, among many other things, and I will always protect the Second Amendment.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President's Schedule/King Charles III of the United Kingdom

Q. Mr. President, a question about the United Kingdom. Reports that you're going to go and stay with the king in September.

The President. Yes.

Q. Can you confirm that? What are you looking forward to about that—

The President. Well, I was invited by the King and by the country—a great country too—they're going to do a second—as you know, a second fest. And that's what it is. It's a fest, and it's beautiful. And it's the first time it's ever happened to one person. And the reason is that we have two separate terms.

And it's an honor to be—you know, I'm a friend of Charles. I have great respect for King Charles and the family. William, we have—it's really just a great respect for the family, and it's a very great honor that—and I think they're setting a date for September.

Q. It's going to be a smaller visit initially, and then a bigger state visit to follow after? Is that the plan?

The President. Yes, they say that it's going to be—I don't know how it can be bigger than the last one. The last one was you—as you know, was incredible. But they say it's going to be even more important. So it's a great honor to be so chosen.

U.S. Steel Corporation

Q. President Trump, yesterday, you spoke with Japan. Is the Nippon Steel deal part of the tariff negotiations? Did you discuss that with them?

The President. It could be, but I doubt it. I mean, I think we're going to view it separately. We want U.S. Steel to remain in the hands of the United States and people from the United States. And great respect for Japan, but we don't want a foreign country buying U.S. Steel.

U.S. Steel was one of our great companies of the world. When you go back 80 years, and it was the biggest, strongest, most powerful company in the world, and we're going to make it very strong and powerful again without Nippon.

But if Nippon wants to come in, and I hear they're working on it very hard—I have great respect for Nippon Steel; I know a lot about it—but we can—they can invest, and they can do lots of things, partnerships. But we want to have U.S. Steel remain in this country.

Japan-U.S. Trade

Q. So is that a stipulation you would put on these tariff negotiations with Japan?

The President. I guess we could talk about it with regard to tariffs. Howard—I mean, it's something that could be a part of it. But tariff negotiations are actually simpler than that. I mean, we're going to set a number, and people are going to pay that number, or they're going to decide to go elsewhere, if there is such a place. There really is no elsewhere, I think.

Internal Revenue Service/Tax-Exempt Organizations

Q. Mr. President, in the first term, your attorney general apologized to the Tea Party groups who have been targeted by the IRS under the Obama administration. Why is it okay for the IRS to now be looking at changing the tax status of Harvard because of policy disagreements you have with the university?

The President. So, you know, I had dinner last night with a lot of pastors and ministers and people of faith, and there were like 32 of them, and it was beautiful—in the Blue Room. And they said, "Sir, I was targeted by the IRS, and the FBI came in, sir, and I've been going through hell for years." And somebody overheard that statement, and they said, "Oh, that happened to me too." Another one overheard, "Oh, that happened to me too."

It was the Biden people, and they had seven or eight of them. We're going to be reporting it very soon. I said, "This has to be reported." These are ministers, pastors, evangelicals. They were targeted by the Biden administration, which was a disgraceful administration.

Well, I was targeted more than anybody in history. I think you probably know that. I hope you admit it, but you might not, but I was targeted more than anybody in history.

But it was interesting because one pastors told me and other—another one heard it—"Oh, me too." "And me too." "Me too." "Me too." All of a sudden, they were all—and one of them spent all of his money, everything he had, on lawyers for 3 years, he said. It took place almost immediately after the election—after the election, when Biden came in, unfortunately for the country, sadly for the country.

So, when you ask me that question, I immediately say let's switch it around to tell you what happened last night. And not only that, we're also finding that many people, just having to do

with Trump support, have gone through hell. And they've used the IRS for purposes of something that's very illegal for them to have to done and—yes.

Q. What—what are you trying to achieve—

The President. It's a very illegal—it's a very, very illegal thing to do what they did, and—

Q. If that was wrong—

The President. —I think it's so—I think it's such a shame. "That was long" what?

Harvard University/Anti-Semitism

Q. If that was wrong, why are you considering changing the tax status of Harvard?

The President. Because I think Harvard is a disgrace. I think what they did was a disgrace. They're obviously anti-Semitic, and all of a sudden, they're starting to behave.

But when you see where they—what they were saying, what they were doing; when you see the way they took care of events; when you watch that woman, that horrendous president that ruined the image of Harvard, maybe permanently, in Congress—in the Halls of Congress, when you take a look at what happened there, it's—it was horrific.

And you know, I've looked at a lot having to do with it. I'm not involved in it. It's being handled by lawyers. I read about it, just like you did. But tax-exempt status, I mean, that's a privilege. It's really a privilege, and it's been abused by a lot more than Harvard too—by a lot more than Harvard. So we'll see how that all works out.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I don't think they've made—I don't think they've made a final ruling. I don't believe they've made a final ruling, but it's something that these schools really have to be very, very careful with. Very anti-Semitic, when you take a look, whether it's Columbia, Harvard, Princeton. Take a—I don't know what's going on. But when you see how badly they've acted and in other ways also. So we'll be looking at it very strongly.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, on that subject—on the tax-exempt status subject. What are the other groups you'd like to see that status removed from? Could we expect an Executive order?

The President. Well, we'll be—we'll be making some statements, but it's a big deal. And they've been—they're so rich and so strong, and then they go so bad. They've earned so much by being a member of this country, you know, a member of this group—this beautiful group of people in this country, and then they go, and they abuse their power like that. I think it's—you know, I think it's very sad.

Q. Are we talking about immigrant rights groups, environmental rights groups?

The President. Could be. Could be. I mean, look, environmentally—yes, I have a group named CREW. CREW. You ever hear of it? I think it's C-R-E-W, and they have a guy that heads CREW—it's supposed to be a charitable organization. The only charity they had is going after Donald Trump. So we're looking at that. We're looking at a lot of things.

But if you take a look at CREW, what they've done, and I think it was a very big abuse, but we're going to be finding out pretty soon.

Yes.

President Xi Jinping of China/Trade Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, can you explain the disconnect between your conversations with President Xi, when those potentially could happen, and why they haven't happened yet?

The President. Well, you don't know whether or not they've happened. I never said.

Q. That's my question.

The President. Yes. I mean, I've never said whether or not they've happened. But I have a very good relationship with President Xi, and I think it's going to continue. And I would say they have reached out a number of times and I——

Q. Xi or they?

The President. Well, the same—I view it very similar. It would be top levels of China. And if you knew him, you would know that if they reached out, he knew exactly—he knew everything about it. He runs it very tight, very strong, very smart.

And yes, we're talking to China.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Q. So they've reached out in recent days or recent weeks?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. They—they've reached out since the 145-percent tariffs?

The President. Oh, yes. Sure. Yes.

Q. Have you spoken to Xi directly?

Q. Do you believe him? Do you believe him?

The President. A lot. I mean, a lot. All the time. We're talking.

Q. You are talking?

Q. Have you spoken to him directly, to President Xi?

The President. I'm don't want to say that. No. It's just no—not appropriate to say.

Q. But you're speaking——

China-U.S. Trade

Q. On—sorry. Has he called you directly—President Xi—or reached out to try to facilitate a conversation?

The President. Well, you'd think it was pretty obvious that he has, but we will talk about that soon. It's not that important because, honestly, we're going to have a deal. I believe we're going to have a deal with China. And if we don't, we're going to have a deal anyway, because we're going to set a certain target, and that's going to be it.

You have anything to say about that, Howard?

Secretary Lutnick. I think our tariff policy around the world has every country in the world coming in and talking to us. It is incredible. We had country after country in yesterday.

We are confident that we will work out something with China. And the president knows what he wants to do, and I think he's—he knows it better than anybody else in the world. And we are confident that this is going to work out well, both for the United States of America—I'm sure he'll work it out with China, but the amount of other countries who are working with us is incredible.

And I think it's really going to work for the American farmers, for our ranchers, for our fishermen, for our businesses. The scale of companies coming to America just every day—like, even this morning, we were talking about Whirlpool, and then we were talking about car companies opening. The scale of factories coming to America is mind-boggling, driven by Donald Trump's tariff policy, which has got the world coming and, finally, respecting the United States of America.

Q. President Trump, you said we——

The President. And by the way, there's never been anything like it. We have at least \$7 trillion of new businesses coming in. If you go back and look at others—I mean, in years, they wouldn't do anything like that. So—and this is in a matter of weeks. So it's been pretty amazing, yeah.

Q. You said "we're talking," so China and the U.S. are talking——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——on tariffs?

The President. Oh, sure.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Do you believe then that they won't go higher than 125 percent? We've heard Chinese officials say that.

And then, like, what happens if they do go higher? Does—do we retaliate more than 145?

The President. Well, at a certain point, I don't want them to go higher, because at a certain point, you make it where people don't buy. So I may not want to go higher, or I may not want to even go up to that level. I may want to go to less, because, you know, you want people to buy. And at a certain point, people aren't going to buy.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And it's actually up—it's actually to 145 percent, because you have the 20.

TikTok Application

Q. You previously said that—that you would consider reducing tariffs on China to get a TikTok deal done. Is that still on the table as of now?

The President. Well, we have a deal for TikTok, but it'll be subject to China. So we'll just delay the deal till this thing works out one way or the other.

Q. If they say——

The President. And I think it's a good deal for China. The TikTok deal is a very good—TikTok is good for China, and I think they'd like to see us do a deal, especially the deal that we have pretty much done with some of the best companies in the world.

Q. If they agree to sign the deal, would you take that into consideration——

The President. I think it would be——

Q. ——when talking about reducing tariffs?

The President. ——something we discuss because it's a—you know, it's a natural if we're—if we're making a deal, I guess we'll spend 5 minutes and talk about TikTok. It wouldn't take very long.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Can you give us a sense of how far along these negotiations are with China? Are they in the early stages, or are you inching closer now to actually making a deal on tariffs?

The President. I think that we will make a deal with China. I think we've had some very good talks, but we will have some very good talks remaining. And, you know, I view it—and some people say, "Oh, rush." I think we have a lot of time. I think we have plenty of time.

But we have very, very good—you saw Japan was here yesterday. We had Italy today. We had a great conversation with the Prime Minister. We've had very good talks yesterday with Mexico. We're talking with everybody.

You know, the problem is, there's only so many hours in the day. I think we're going to make a deal with China. We're going to make a deal with everybody. And if we don't make a deal, we'll just set a target, and we'll—that—we'll live with that, and it will be fine.

Timeline of Trade Negotiations/Importance of the U.S. Consumer Market/Tariffs/Electricity Supply

Q. How much time—how much time do you think that you have?

The President. I would—I would think over the next 3 or 4 weeks, I think, maybe the whole thing could be concluded.

You have to understand, we're a big—if you think of us as a big, beautiful department store—before that business was destroyed by the internet—we're a big, beautiful store, and everybody wants a piece of that store. China wants it. Japan wants it. Mexico, Canada—they live off it, those two. Without us, they wouldn't have a country. And everybody wants a piece.

And at a certain point, if we don't make a deal, we'll just set a limit. We'll set a tariff, we'll set some parameters, and we'll say, "Come in and shop." They may not like that, and they may find it—or the market may find it too high—you know, more likely the market, but the market may find it too high, or the country may find it too high.

Then they'll come back and say, "Well, we think this is too high," and we'll negotiate, or they're going to say something else. They're going to say, "Well, let's see what happens." But they always have a right not to do it. So they can say: "Well, we don't want it, so we're not going to shop there. We're not going to shop in the store of America."

We have something that nobody else has, and that's the American consumer. And I had the most successful—I had the most successful 4-year period in the history of this country, and I think we're going to blow it away this time. But there is a little bit of a transition, and we're going to have that little transition, and it's not much of a transition.

You know, if you look right now, we're getting 25 percent on cars—right?—we're getting 25 percent on steel, we're getting 25 percent on aluminum. We're going to have some other things that we're going to be adding in the not-too-distant future, because we want them to be made here. The medicines, the drugs—pharmaceuticals are going to be done and computer—computer chips, et cetera, et cetera. And because of that, we have the biggest computer companies in the world coming in from Taiwan and other places, and they're building in Arizona and lots of other places.

We're number one in AI by far. We're leading China by a lot, by tremendous amounts. We're going to supply electricity at levels never supplied before. They're going to build their own electric. We're going to let them become a utility, essentially, and it's going to be amazing for the country. They're going to build their own electric plants.

We have to double up our electricity to be—to remain number one in AI, we're going to have to double up our electricity from—take our whole country—we're going to have to double up our electricity—think of that—and probably even triple it up.

And we're going to let them build their own electric plants with their plant that they're building for the AI or whatever they're doing. Never been done before. We're going to get them quick approvals. It's going to be very clean, going to be very nice, and we're going to get them very fast approvals.

And people are investing in this country like they've never invested before.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:19 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to 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; Prince William of Wales, United Kingdom, Claudine Gay, former president, Harvard University; Norman Eisen, senior fellow in governance studies, Center for Effective Public Management at the Brookings Institution, in his former capacity as board chair of the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW); and Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy. Reporters referred to President Nayib Armando Bukele Ortiz of El Salvador; and Robert Morales, dining coordinator, Florida State University, and Aramark employee Tiru Chabba, who were killed in the shooting at Florida State University on April 17. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on April 18. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abrego Garcia, Kilmar; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Charles III, King; Da Rosa, Ricardo; Eisen, Norman; Gay, Claudine; Lutnick, Howard W.; Meloni, Giorgia; Navarro, Peter K.; Obama, Barack; Radewagen, Amata Coleman; Scharf, William O.; Simonds, Kitty M.; Soliai, Taotasi Archie; Sword, Taulapapa William; William, Prince; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Anti-Semitism; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; China, President; China, relations with U.S.; China, trade with U.S.; Citizenship; Electricity capacity, expansion efforts; Financial regulations, strengthening efforts; Firearm rights; Internal Revenue Service; Italy, Prime Minister; Japan, trade with U.S.; Massachusetts, Harvard University in Cambridge; Secretary of Commerce; Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing; Tariffs; Tax-exempt organizations, Federal review; TikTok; U.S. Steel Corp.; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; United Kingdom, King; United Kingdom, Prince of Wales; White House Staff Secretary.

DCPD Number: DCPD202500492.