

Remarks on the Installation of New White House Flagpoles and an Exchange With Reporters

June 18, 2025

The President. So the White House opened about 1800, a little before that. Just a tad. And I've always said, "Why doesn't it have a flagpole from the grass?" They call it a flagpole from the grass. They have a little one on top. Very little one.

And this is about the largest you'll ever see, and it's tapered. It's a quality that you guys rarely get to even put up. They do that for a living. They're incredible people. I don't know them, but I love them. *[Laughter]* And I would bet that they all voted for Trump. I mean, I don't know for a fact, but I think so.

But we're about to lift it. And we also have one going on what's called the front or the north. We have one going there, identical. So we'll have one on this side of the building. We'll have one on that side of the building, properly placed.

In this case, we had a lot of choices: putting it on that hill, putting it different places. It's such a beautiful pole, we thought we'd put it near—I mean, it always looks best when it's near—at Doral, I put it right near—I have a similar pole.

And these are the best poles anywhere in the country—or in the world, actually. They're tapered. They have the nice top.

You know, I don't know if you people are aesthetic. You know, they're the fake news, so I don't know if I'm—*[laughter]*—I don't know if they're—but it's a very exciting project to me. And then at 11 o'clock, we're lifting the flag. But we're going to lift the pole now. And then, they're going to the other side, get that. And then, we're going to do, I think, two flag liftings. We'll be putting it up at 11 on here and couple of minutes later on the other side. We'll start here at 11.

So that will be very nice and very patriotic. We're doing well—and as a country. If the Fed would ever lower rates, you know, we'd buy debt for a lot less. It's a shame. This guy—I have a guy—do you ever have a guy that's not a smart person, and you're dealing with him, and you have to deal—he's not a smart guy. *[Laughter]*

He's worried about inflation. I said, "That's right. If there's inflation in 6 months or 9 months, you lower the rates or you raise the rates. You can do whatever you want"—Brian [Brian Glenn, Real America's Voice], right?

Q. That's right.

The President. So let's say there's rampant inflation, which there's none. You know what there is? There's success.

I got a call from Congress last night. "Sir, there's a problem." I said, "What is it?" "Money is pouring in. We don't know how to account for it." I said, "Check the tariffs." Eighty-eight billion dollars came in from tariffs, no inflation, and it's going to get even more so. I know what I'm doing.

So we have a—stupid person, frankly, at the Fed. He probably won't cut today.

Europe had 10 cuts, and we had none. And I guess he's a political guy. I don't know. He's a political guy who's not a smart person, but he's costing the country a fortune. So what I'm going to do is, you know, he gets out in about 9 months. He has to—he's gets, fortunately, terminated.

Biden—I would have never reappointed him. Biden reappointed him. I don't know why that is, but I guess maybe he was a Democrat. You know, I got great advice from Mnuchin on this one. Great advice. But he's done a poor job.

So we have no inflation. We have only success. And I'd like to see interest rates get down.

Now, Biden did a lot of very short-term debt. So we have short-term debt coming due, and because of this guy's rates—you know, if he'd lowered it a point, I'd pay about a point less. Then if he'd lower it 2 points, I'd pay about 2 points less. And that's for 10 years, 12 years, 15 years, 5 years. It's hundreds of billions—it's even trillions of dollars that we're going to lose because of this. "Too Late"—I call him "Too Late" Powell, because he's always too late.

I mean, if you look at him, every time I did this, I was right a hundred percent. He was wrong. Maybe I should go to the Fed. Do you—am I allowed to appoint myself, Doug [Doug Mills, New York Times]? I don't know. Am I allowed to appoint myself at the Fed? I'd do a much better job than these people.

So, anyway, we should be 2 points lower. It'd be nice to be 2½ points lower. We'd be saving \$800 billion, \$700 billion. It's a lot of money, right? Thank you. For nothing. For absolutely nothing. We'd save \$6-, \$7-, \$800 billion. We have—I think we're 38th now in interest, and we should be number one. We should be the lowest.

But—and by the way, if he's worried about inflation, that's okay. I understand that. I don't think there's going to be any. So far, there hasn't. I mean, we have almost no inflation. We've done a great job. We had—when I came in, we had a lot of inflation. We went through 4 years of the highest inflation in the history of our country with Sleepy Joe Biden. [Laughter] And—Sleepy Joe. And he didn't know what the hell he was doing.

And so we had the highest inflation we've ever had in the history of our country. And then, it came down, because when I got elected, it started dropping because people understood that I knew what I was doing.

But now we have a man that just refuses to lower the Fed rate. Just refuses to do it. And he's not a smart person. I don't even think he's that political. I think he hates me, but that's okay. You know, he should. He should. I call him every name in the book trying to get him to do something. I've been nice to him—I do it all ways. I don't know how to sell.

I've been so nice to him, fellas, you wouldn't believe —"Let's have dinner." "Too Late." I'd call him "Too Late." "Come on, Too Late. Let's have dinner." I do it every way in the book. I'm nasty, I'm nice. Nothing works. He's, like, just a stupid person. But I don't expect anything. Maybe he does a little bit, but we should be 2½ points—

Remember, Europe had 10 cuts. We had none. We're paying more rate—more interest than a lot of European nations that can't carry our suitcase. I'm going to be nice. That's another expression. You know what the other expression, "Can't carry your"—you know what it is, but I shouldn't use it in front of the fake news.

So it's very sad to see it. And what I'm going to do is I'm going to go very short-term—like 6 months, 7 months, 8 months—wait till this guy gets out, get the rates way down, and then go long-term, because we have a tremendous appetite for our debt, because our country is doing well.

But think of it. I got a call from Congress 3 nights ago. "Sir, we can't account for the money coming in." I said, "That's a good problem." You know, the bad problem is we don't have any money. They can't account. There's so much more money than we thought is coming into the Treasury. "We don't know where it's coming from, sir." I said, "Check out the tariffs." He calls back about a day later, "Wow, I think you were right." Yes, I was right. That's nothing. You haven't seen anything yet.

More importantly than the money coming in, we have factories being built—AI, auto factories—two of them stopped yesterday in Mexico, you read, and they're coming here because they don't want to pay the tariffs. They can't pay the tariffs. Doesn't work.

So I just want to wish you a lot of luck with the new flagpole. We have two of them. And we're going to do this one now, then we're going to do the other one at 11 o'clock or so. We're going to have a flag raising, which will be great.

And I've got to get these guys back to work. They're making a fortune. *[Laughter]* They're standing around making a fortune.

But remember this, somewhere in this group, there's somebody that is going to captivate some movie producer—not Harvey Weinstein, but somebody else. *[Laughter]* Harvey has seen a better day. So it won't be Harvey, but it will be somebody, and he'll say, "That guy is perfect for a movie." And you're going to become a star, and your friends are going to call you, and you won't even return their phone call anymore, you know? *[Laughter]* They'll say, "What do you do for a living?" "I put up flagpoles. I'm not even going to talk to you. I'm a big movie star." *[Laughter]* So some way you have that.

Anyway, let's have a good—they call it a "lifting." They also use another word, but I'm not going to use that word. You know what that is—the word? It starts with an "e." You know what the word is? *[Laughter]* If I ever used it, I'd be run out of town by you people.

All right. So enjoy it. Doug, you're going to get some good—he's going to win another Nobel Prize, I think, for this picture. So maybe the flag will be even more exciting. But this is pretty exciting.

That's some equipment, I'll tell you what. Look at that crane. That's some beautiful equipment. It's—there's nothing like America.

Have a good time, everybody.

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

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Have you given answer questions about whether you are moving closer—or you believe the U.S. is moving closer to striking Iranian nuclear facilities? Where's your mindset on that?

The President. Well, obviously, I can't say that. Right?

Q. But where's your mindset on that?

The President. You don't seriously think I'm going to answer that question. "Will you strike the Iranian nuclear component? And what time exactly, sir? Sir, would you strike it? Would you please inform us so we can be there and watch?"

Q. But would you say you're closer to wanting to get involved?

The President. I mean, you don't know that I'm going to even do it. You don't know. I may do it. I may not do it. I mean, nobody knows what I'm going to do.

I can tell you this, that Iran has got a lot of trouble, and they want to negotiate. And I said: "Why didn't you negotiate with me before all this death and destruction? Why didn't you—I said to the people: "Why didn't you negotiate with me 2 weeks ago? You could have done fine. You would have had a country."

It's very sad to watch this.

Q. Do you think it's too late?

The President. I mean, I've never seen anything like it. It's so—you know, everyone thought it was going to be the reverse. I didn't think so. And I was telling them: "You've got to do something. You've got to negotiate."

And at the end, last minute, they said, "No, we're not going to do that." And they got hit. Remember, 60 days? And then came the 60—61 is going to become a very famous number. That was one hell of a hit, that first hit. That was one hell of a hit. Not sustainable, to be honest.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Mr. President, have the Iranians reached out to you?

The President. That's where—it ended—on the first night.

Yes.

Q. Is it too late, though? Do you think it's too late to now——

The President. Not really. Nothing is too late.

Q. ——make a—a deal with the Iranians?

The President. The only thing too late is Powell. Powell is too late. "Too Late" Powell. "T-o-o."

Q. Have the Iranians reached out to you, Mr. President?

The President. What?

Q. Have Iranians reached out to you?

The President. Yes.

Q. And what did they say?

The President. I said, "It's very late." You know? I said, "It's very late to be talking."

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

We may meet—it's—I don't know. There's a big difference between now and a week ago, right? Big difference.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Mr. President, you said you—"We may"—you just about said, "We may meet." Is this about Vance and Witkoff possibly going to talk with him?

The President. It's about anybody. They even suggested they come to the White House. It's a big difference. But they've suggested that they come to the White House.

That's, you know, courageous. But, you know, it's, like, not easy for them to do. But they suggest it, because I can't go now, because of what's going on. I had to come back early from the G-7—which was terrific, by the way, in Canada. Really terrific. Good people.

Q. Is there a possibility of next week or sooner that you're—some—these officials go talk with them?

The President. Well, I don't know how much longer it's going to go on. I mean, they're totally defenseless. They have no air defense whatsoever. We've totally captured——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

——you know, we've totally captured the air.

Brian.

Iran/Russia/Ukraine

Q. Yes. Mr. President, you've been fairly compassionate towards the Iranian people's suggestion——

The President. I have been. They're human. They're human beings. I know a lot of people from Iran—from New York, from Washington—mostly from New York. They're incredible people. They're smart. They're energetic. They can be difficult, but so can you.

Q. Yes.

The President. You know—no, they're great people, smart people.

And those people are getting the hell beat out of them now.

Q. I was just going ask, what's your message——

The President. And it's really a shame. It's so stupid. It's so stupid. It's another one. You know, Russia-Ukraine is so stupid. It would have never happened if I was President.

You guys agree with that. Right? It would have never happened if I was President. Putin would have never done it. And I spoke to him yesterday, and I said, "You know"—he actually offered to help mediate. I said: "Do me a favor. Mediate your own. Let's mediate Russia first. Okay?" I said: "Vladimir, let's mediate Russia first. You can worry about this later."

But I think that's going to work out too, but it's—so many people have been killed. The big thing with that one is far more people are dead than have been reported in the Ukraine-Russia—many, many more people.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. A building falls down, they say nobody was hurt. You know, it's, like, ridiculous.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, what does "unconditional surrender" mean?

The President. Well, you know what it means—unconditional——

Iran/Israel

Q. Can you explain it for those who don't?

The President. Two—very simple words. They're very simple. "Unconditional surrender."

That means "I've had it." Okay? "I've had it. I give up. No more." Then we go blow up all the—you know, all the nuclear stuff that's all over the place there.

No, they had bad intentions. You know, the—for 40 years, they've been saying: "Death to America. Death to Israel." Death to anybody else that they didn't like. They were bullies. They were schoolyard bullies. And now they're not bullies anymore. But we'll see what happens.

Look, nothing's finished until it's finished. You know, war is very complex. A lot of bad things can happen. A lot of turns are made. So I don't know. I wouldn't say that we won anything yet. I would say that we sure as hell made a lot of progress. And we'll see. And the next week is going to be very big—maybe less than a week. Maybe less.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But is there anybody here that said it would be okay to have—to have a hostile—very—you know, zealots, really—but to have a hostile country have a nuclear weapon that could destroy 25 miles, but much more than that—could destroy other nations just by the breeze blowing the dust?

You know that dust blows to other nations, and they get decimated. This is just not a threat you can have. And we've been threatened by Iran for many years. You know, if you go back and look at my history, if you go back 15 years, I was saying we cannot let Iran get a nuclear weapon. I've been saying it for a long time. I mean it more now than I ever meant it.

Yes.

Q. Mr. President, on——

Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. Question on deportations, Mr. President. You said last week that changes would be coming for farmers who have seen a lot of the workers they rely on taken away. But then DHS said this week that worksite enforcement would remain in place, that it's a cornerstone. So what's your message to farmers?

The President. Well, we're—everybody is right. Everybody is right. Look, we've got to get the bad people out of here first, and we're doing that. We're taking them out by the thousands—murderers, drug dealers, people that are mentally insane from insane asylums.

What they gave to us, fellas—they gave—do we have anybody in here that's a member of—*[inaudible]*. Have you known all these people for a long time? Any illegal immigrants that are here now? If they were, they'll find out. *[Laughter]*

Participant. Right?

The President. They'll be checking you. You won't believe. Your whole life will be destroyed because of this press conference. Watch. They'll destroy these people.

I didn't want to tell them that before they stood up. They'll end up being up—"He's so and so. This one is from you-know-where." Don't worry. I think you've—I think you're going to be okay. I'll be right behind you.

Participant. Thank you.

The President. Far behind you. *[Laughter]* I'll be right behind you.

Now, look, we have to take care of our farmers. We have to take care of people that run leisure, hotels. I mean, we have to take care of them. But most importantly, we have to get the criminals out of our country. And Biden let in thousands and—11,888 murderers. Many of them murdered more than one person. Can you believe it? Many—almost 50 percent of them murdered more than one person—he let them into our country.

They emptied out the jails of countries from all over the world—from the Congo, from Venezuela, from all over the place. They emptied out. There's just—many of them. I would. If I

were running one of the countries, I would have emptied out my prison population into the U.S., and many countries did. And we're getting them out. Okay? We're getting them out.

Thank you very much. Let's watch this.

Brian, go ahead. Are you okay?

Special Immigration Program/Harvard University/Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Q. I was just going to follow up on the immigration real quickly.

The President. Yes.

Q. Can you comment on the impact of the Trump card and how much revenue that's potentially brought in?

The President. Yes, we have a thing called the Trump card. This has not been done before or thought up. And for \$5 million, this is usually people that would either be working for companies—like Apple, I think, is going to buy a lot of them—because they can't get people into the country.

You know, if you come in through the southern border, you have no problem. You can be a criminal, you can be a drug dealer, and you have no problem. But if you go and graduate number one in your class from a great school, you can't get a job because there's no access to getting it. You can't get a green card.

So we're going to sell that to people—in some cases, wealthy; in some cases, not wealthy. They'll be paid for by universities. Look at Harvard. They got \$53 billion they—that whole thing is coming to an end. It's amazing what we found out. What a disgrace.

They have \$53 billion. We gave them \$5-, \$6-, and some people say it's as much as \$9 billion over a short period of time. So that's very much coming to—they want to make a deal more than—I would say Harvard wants to make a deal more than Iran wants to make a deal, and Iran wants to make a deal.

But, I mean, a lot of things—look, a lot of things are happening on a lot of fronts, Brian. I mean, a lot of good things are happening. And frankly, you know, it's a little bit of a—as we used to say "liberal," now they say "progressive"—I use the word "liberal." "Progressive" is too nice a word because they're destroying the country. They're really destroying these—the liberal politicians are destroying our country.

Look what they've done during Biden's 4 years. I mean, we're working on—I mean, so much of our effort goes to getting people out of the country that should have never been here in the first place.

What he's done to this country—it's not him. He had no idea what was going on. Everybody knows that. It's other people. It's Lisa and this one and that—all these people, all this scum that was around the Oval—you know, the Oval Office or around the beautiful Resolute Desk, telling this guy: "Here, do this. Do that." And not even telling him.

They'd just go over to the autopen and sign whatever the hell they wanted to sign, because say what you want about Biden, he wasn't for open borders. He wasn't for transgender for everybody. He wasn't for men playing in women's sports. But he has no idea what the hell—he has no idea.

And they were very upset. They wanted Bernie Sanders. And after about a week of this guy, they said: "Wait a minute, we just hit gold. This guy has no clue. He'll do anything we tell him." And then they realized they don't even have to get permission. They just go up to the autopen.

That's a subversion. That's a takeover of our Government. And you people ought to start looking at it. That's a takeover. Not only did they cheat—I guess you saw—yesterday it came out—with China and the license plates. Tens of thousands of cards. They used those cards to vote on the second election—my second—the one 2020. Because, as everybody here knows, I won that election by a lot.

But the only good thing I can say is, this is a much more historic term than I think I could have had as a second term. This is a much more historic election.

And now we're going to put up a beautiful flagpole, and we're going to put up a flag, and I hope you enjoy it. And let's see how real people work. These are real people. You're not real people. Your job is too easy. Okay? Thank you very much.

Installation of New Flagpoles at the White House

Q. Mr. President, how tall is the flagpole?

The President. Close to a hundred feet.

Pakistan/India

Q. Real quick on Pakistan, sir. You have a meeting today with the have a meeting today with the Pakistani Army Chief of Staff.

The President. Yes.

Q. What are you looking—what are you looking forward to achieving diplomatically at the lunch?

The President. Well, I stopped the war between Pakistan—I love Pakistan. I think Modi is a fantastic man. I spoke to him last night. We're going to make a trade deal with Modi of India. But I stopped a war between Pakistan and India.

This man was extremely influential in stopping it from the Pakistan side; Modi from the India side; and others. And they were going at it. And they're both nuclear countries. I got it stopped. I don't think I had one story—did I have one story written about—I stopped a war between two major nations—major nuclear nations. I don't think I had a story written about it. But that's okay. You know why? The people know. The people know.

Q. Mr. President——

Did anybody write that story about the war? Did anybody? Did you write it?

Q. Of course.

Q. We wrote one.

Q. We all wrote it.

The President. Oh, did you write it?

Q. Of course.

The President. You wrote it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Yes.

Installation of New Flagpoles at the White House

Q. Just one more on the flagpole, sir. Any adjustments that need to be made for Marine One departures and arrivals?

The President. No, no. We put it so that Marine One is very far away. We did it in conjunction with the Air Force, the—with everybody, and everybody signed off on it. We—no, we have to have it far away. It's very far from—Marine One is out there. It's out in the field. So, you have to have a certain distance. We're about three times that distance.

Okay? Thank you very much, everybody.

White House aide. Thank you, press.

Q. Can you share what you told Prime Minister Netanyahu——

White House aide. Thank you, press.

Q. ——about getting involved?

[*The President walked to the South Lawn driveway to observe the installation.*]

The President. Do you have a good view over there? If you want, you can come over here. Come on over here. Come on over here.

[*Reporters moved to the driveway.*]

Iran

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to the Supreme Leader of Iran, who says that they will not surrender?

The President. I say, "Good luck."

Q. And when does your patience run out with Iran?

Q. And what is the endgame?

The President. Say it?

Iran

Q. When does your patience run out?

The President. It's already run out. That's why we're doing what we're doing.

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Are you going to take out the enrichment facility?

The President. Yes, they had 60 days and a big—you know, 60 days. Plenty of time. And they made a mistake. Honestly, they made a mistake. Their country is in ruins. So many people are dead that shouldn't be dead. It's a very sad thing.

Let's watch this. Come on over here. You don't have to ruin your shoes.

[*Reporters moved closer to the President.*]

Come on over here. You don't have to ruin your shoes. That's why we're changing the grass, because people are ruining their shoes, right?

Come on over.

That's some pole, isn't it?

Q. That's a great pole.

The President. And the wires go inside. The—you know, it's very rare that you see that. Nice, right?

Q. Yes.

The President. You know, when they're outside, they're very noisy. They snap in the wind.

Installation of New Flagpoles at the White House

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——I hear that this is a personal project for you, sir.

The President. It is. Yes. Well, I'm paying for it.

Q. You spent your own money on it?

Q. How much are these costing you?

The President. Yes.

Q. Wow.

The President. I'd say each pole was like \$50,000.

Proposed White House Ballroom

Q. Is there any update on the ballroom that you're——

The President. Yes, we start pretty soon.

Q. Where is it going to go?

The President. We've got a beautiful ballroom, which—good question. Right here. See the East Wing? Goes from here, all—see the big piece of land over here? It goes all the way over to there. We've done it really, very careful—we're using one of the top architects.

Installation of New Flagpoles at the White House

Q. How large will the flags be?

The President. They're big. They're beautiful. They're big.

Q. Mr. President, do you still intend to go to NATO?

The President. Yes, I'll be going. I think so.

Amazing equipment, isn't it? Wouldn't you think—what we have?

Q. Hardworking people of America.

The President. What they do—the mind. What they can develop. No, look, it's—they don't know what we're doing. They don't know it's tough or it's easy. They just want to put up flags and go to work. These are great workers.

Installation of New Flagpoles at the White House

Q. What gave you the idea to do this?

The President. I've had it for a long time. The—in the first term, I had it, but you know, you guys were after me. I said I had to focus—I was the hunted, and now I'm the hunter.

Q. That is true.

The President. It's a big difference. Big difference.

Q. It's nice to be the hunter.

The President. But he was the same, no matter what. [Laughter]

Q. Yes, it is surprising that you've—out of all the Presidents we've had, that this has never taken place.

The President. Think of it.

Q. It's crazy.

The President. And look, there's a little flagpole that's like 15 feet high——

Q. Yes. That no one can see.

The President. ——with a little tiny flag up top.

This is the real deal. This is the best you can get. There's nothing like this.

You know, most of them are 20 feet, 25 feet. This is close to 100 feet. And I think it's a great location too. You know, you put it out there, people don't appreciate it.

Q. Yes, that's true.

The President. And then we're going to do a flower bed around it—beautiful flower bed.

Q. Okay, where that open spot is?

The President. Bigger—than that.

Q. Oh, okay.

The President. So you have the pole and then you have the flower bed.

The President's Use of the South Lawn

Q. When are you going to come out here and hit some golf balls?

The President. Boy, I——

Q. When you find time in your schedule, right?

The President. Thirty-five club championships. You all know that.

Q. I know that.

The President. Thirty-five club championships. I haven't hit a ball in 3 weeks, 4 weeks. I don't know.

Q. Time to get out there.

The President. It's time to—been a little busy. Wouldn't you rather have me be doing what I'm doing? I——

Q. Of course.

The President. ——in the end?

See the way they have that hoisted. It's great. Because if you lift it up from one—you have to lift it from the bottom. But you have to get it there. But if you lifted it from—without that, the whole thing would split——

Q. It's so interesting.

The President. ——because it's in big sections. But—and they connect so incredibly.

Governor Gavin C. Newsom of California

Q. Mr. President, while we're watching, could I ask: When was the last time you spoke with Governor Newsom?

The President. Well, I—the phone call that he said I didn't make that I documented. Did you see that? I haven't spoken to him.

Q. Yes, you showed——

The President. I know.

Q. ——you showed the screenshot.

The President. It's—yes, screenshot.

Q. That was the last time?

The President. That was the last time.

Q. Any changes to the troops being deployed there?

The President. No, I won the case yesterday. I didn't read that I won it, because I don't think anybody wrote it. They only write if I lose it.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Did you notice—did you notice I won the case?

Q. Ninth Circuit.

The President. You know what's interesting here is that when it goes in, they then put sand inside. And if they use dirt or anything else other than sand, it rots out the pole over a period of years. But sand, for some reason, chemically, just works.

Q. Do you think you'll deploy a——

The President. It gives you flexibility, and it doesn't do anything to the cast. It's amazing. So watch when—so that's 9 feet deep. And then—boy, that's a beautiful—that's a perfect pole for this.

Q. Oh, so that's going 9 feet down?

The President. It goes 9 feet down.

Q. Okay.

The President. And then—there's nothing in there right now, just a tube—goes nine feet down. And when they fill it, they fill it with sand—pure sand—absolutely pure sand. If they didn't, the chemicals do—you know, they work on the bottom part. Is that interesting to anybody? I don't—not really.

Installation of New Flagpoles at the White House

Q. So you prefer the rope on the inside?

Q. Well, you're a builder. [Laughter]

The President. Oh, much better. First of all, it looks better. I mean, it's—I've never seen it on these. This is the new—the newest and the greatest. I've never seen it—at Mar-a-Lago, I have a similar pole. Not quite as tall as this. But the rope is on the outside, and you hear that rope banging——

Q. Clanging all the time. Yes.

The President. You hear a little——

Q. What's that little thing sticking up out of the top, sir? You see the little thing sticking out? What is that?

The President. The ball?

Q. Yes, the—bar. What is that? Like, the little fin.

The President. Oh, I see. That's—so they can hook up the ropes. They put the rope in later.

Q. Sometimes you see an eagle on top of the flagpoles.

The President. I like this better. This is—yes, these are a little more classy. I'm a big eagle person, as you probably know, but this looks better.

Israel

Q. Mr. President, can you share some of what you've told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu?

The President. I said, "Keep going." What do I say?

Q. Have you given him any indication—

The President. I speak to him every day. He's a good man. He's doing a lot. Been very unfairly treated by his country, I think. Very unfairly treated.

Iran

Q. Have you given him any indication that you may seek to aid them more than you have already?

The President. No. I haven't done that, no. So far, he's doing a good job. He has been treated very unfairly by his country, by the way. You know, he's a wartime President, and he's going through this nonsense. It's ridiculous.

The President's Meeting With His National Security Team

Q. Sounds like he had a good meeting yesterday.

The President. With who?

Q. Your National Security Council.

The President. Very good meeting, yes.

Q. Anything that came up in particular that—

The President. No, things—little things, big things. But good meeting. Good meeting. It's working well.

See how straight that is. Look. They put that dead straight, and then they pour in the sand. It's amazing, right? Who would think you have to have sand?

Q. Do you miss—

The President. And it's got to be a very pure sand. It's got—

The President's Affection for Construction Projects/High-Speed Rail Project in California

Q. I know you enjoy being a President. Do you ever miss building things—hotels?

The President. I love construction.

Q. Yes.

The President. I love——

Q. It's in your heart, isn't it?

The President. Well, I love it. I know it better than anybody. When I see a train, a railroad going from San Francisco to L.A., I think it's a hundred times over budget.

Q. That's incredible.

The President. One of the most incompetent things. That's Newscum.

Q. And why do they keep funding that?

The President. Oh, I think we're not going to anymore. I mean, in fact, a little bit of a story: We're not going to fund that anymore. It's out of control.

First of all, it's not—it doesn't go where it's supposed to. It's supposed to go from L.A. to San Francisco. Now, because they don't have any money—they've spent—what is it?—30, 40 times more than it was supposed to spend. And they made it much shorter, because it no longer goes into the cities. It stops miles outside of the cities.

Q. Because if you were—if you were a builder, and you went 34 times over the budget, you would be fired, right?

The President. Oh, if you went one time—if you went a half a time over the budget.

Q. There you go.

The President. So, see what they're doing? They're unwrapping the sand. That's all pure sand.

Q. Along those lines——

The President. And if it weren't pure sand, it would eat away at the metal.

Q. It would erode, right. Yes.

Governor Gavin C. Newsom of California

Q. Mr. President, with the rail funding in California, will your recent dustups with Governor Newsom impact additional wildfire relief out there? They've requested \$40 billion.

The President. Well, maybe. The man is incompetent. He shouldn't have fires like that. You clean the floor of your forest and you won't have any forest fires.

You know, Austria has very, very flammable trees. They don't have forest fires because they clean the floors. They maintain their forests.

I could, in fact—you know, hatred is never a good thing in politics. When you don't like somebody, don't respect somebody, it's harder for that person to get money if you're on top, you know what I'm saying? But he's done a bad job.

Q. How will you ensure that——

Political Protests in Los Angeles, California

The President. I'll tell you one thing, if I didn't bring in the military to Los Angeles, you wouldn't even have a—you probably wouldn't be here. You'd be covering the riots in Los Angeles right now.

We got a great ruling, as you know, yesterday, from the judge. We had the absolute right. If we didn't bring in the military in Los Angeles, you would have maybe no city. You'd have just what you have with the housing: burned to the ground.

Q. How will you ensure that changes——

The President. See what they're doing is they take this out.

Q. With the ruling yesterday, does that mean that you——

Q. Mr. President, it sounds like you agree with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu——

The President. Go ahead. You were going to ask one more.

Deployment of National Guard Troops to California

Q. Yes, well, with the ruling yesterday, does that mean you're more empowered to send National Guard to other cities as well, maybe New York?

The President. I don't think more empowered. I always thought I was empowered. It would be a shocking ruling. Only a guy like Newsom would even ask for it.

You know, he should be thanking me instead of fighting. Newsom would—he wouldn't have a city. Right now it would be burning to the ground. You'd have people running all over, throwing rocks.

Did you see them breaking up the concrete? Because we caught the bricks. They were bringing bricks—heavy bricks, red bricks—by the bag—five or six big bags. The guys could hi—strong guys that can hardly even carry them. They were going to hand them out to people to throw at the police.

And by the way, the—chief of police in Los Angeles said that—"We needed the help. If we didn't have the help, we would have been in trouble." Now he changed his mind 4 days later, because he put—you know, a little bit. But they—and he actually needed it more then.

But we did a great job. We quelled that thing. And the fact that we are even there thinking about going in, they won't bother with it anymore. They're not going to—they'll go someplace else. But we'll be there too. We'll be—wherever they go, we're going to be.

Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. Did you see the May numbers for immigration?

The President. Yes, great numbers.

Q. Mr. President, TikTok. Will you extend it again?

Q. Zero.

The President. Yes. We had zero. Did you see that, everybody? Zero.

Q. Yes. You were going to ask that.

Q. I did. I was going to ask that.

The President. She's on our side then, because most people don't want to ask me that.

Q. Well, she said—she told earlier—she goes: "Brian, did you see the May numbers? It's zero."

The President. Zero, yes.

Q. How—is that even possible?

The President. Because we really have a tight border. Now, we have let a lot of people in, but they came in legally. They actually have to take a little test, and they have to say, "I love America." You know, minor things like that. [Laughter]

Q. Minor things like that.

TikTok

Q. Mr. President, can you talk about extending TikTok again?

The President. Yes, we'll be extending it. We're going to extend it. We're going to probably make a deal. I think we'll need China's blessing on it, and I think they'll bless it.

Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada

Q. How was Prime Minister Carney toward you?

The President. Very good.

Q. Yes.

The President. He couldn't have been nicer. We enjoyed the Canada stay a lot, and, you know, I had to come back, obviously, for the—for what's happening in the Middle East. But I got everything done.

He's a good man. I think Carney is a good man. Very well—a good representative of Canada.

Q. You think he's liked by the people?

The President. I think so, yes.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, have you given the Iranians an ultimatum?

The President. You could say so. Right? They know what—they know what's happening. Maybe you could call it the ultimate——

Q. Yes.

The President. ——the ultimate ultimatum, right?

Q. What essentially was that, though? What do you mean?

The President. Oh, I don't want to say. Look, I mean, give me a break.

Q. What about the Paramount deal?

First Lady Melania Trump/Weather in the District of Columbia

Q. Mr. President, how is the First Lady doing?

The President. I would say the——

She's doing great. She's doing great. She's really enjoying it. Barron is enjoying it. All my kids are enjoying it, actually.

It's pretty hot out here, isn't it? Huh? It's——

Q. This is muggy. Is this—what's muggier: the DC or West Palm Beach in the summer?

The President. I think this is muggier.

Q. This is worse.

The President. This is a muggy—this is hot. I mean—

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Media Company Mergers/CBS News

Q. Mr. President, could I ask you about the Paramount deal and the merger with Skydance and the Ellisons? Like, what's holding that up and, like, do you see that being resolved anytime soon?

The President. I hope so. It's a good—Ellison is great. He'll do a great job with it. But—so what they did is they interviewed—"60 Minutes," they interviewed Kamala. Her answer was horrendous. I would say election-threatening. This is the day before the election. Her answer was election-threatening, it was so incompetent. So they took the entire answer out, and they took another answer to another question and put it in.

And they did that, I understand, a number of times. But you don't have to do it a number of times. The main question they asked—and we caught them, and they're very embarrassed by it, and they're working on a settlement now.

But think of it, did you ever hear of that one before? They took the entire—every word, threw it out, put another answer. Do you think—

Q. I think it happens daily.

The President. Do you think they do that for me?

Q. I think it—happens daily.

The President. Well, I've never seen it. I've—I thought I've seen everything. That I've never seen. And it's very embarrassing. And the head of "60 Minutes" got fired. The head of CBS got fired. They're all getting fired over it.

Q. Do you think that your—

The President. See what they're doing here? Wait. This is—only if you're in construction, this is exciting. See, they have to get it perfectly straight. And once it's perfect, then they pour in the sand, and it's there for a hundred years.

The President's Legislative Agenda/State and Local Tax Deduction

Q. Mr. President, as the Senate works on the "Big Beautiful Bill," it seems like SALT is going to be a really big issue between Senate Republicans and House Republicans.

The President. Well, I hope it's not.

Q. So, what are you telling Senators? Because the New York Republicans on the House side are making clear that that's a red line for them.

The President. Well, if it were a red line, then get ready for a 68-percent tax increase and—
and 1929, because we're taking care of that issue too. You know what that is? That's debt ceiling. The debt ceiling—we have to move the debt. And if we don't move the debt, it's—you know, you violate covenants, it's a terrible thing.

Actually, Pocahontas even agreed with me on that. She's been wanting to get rid of the debt ceiling because she said it's—it's too violent. It is violent.

So, I mean, anybody that votes against it, they voted to give a 59—a 68-percent tax increase and many other bad—there's—there would be no money for the border. You know, we have

billions of dollars allocated to immigration, the border, keeping criminals out, getting criminals out too.

If that doesn't pass, you'll get a 68-percent tax increase. And I would say this: Any Senator that votes against it, and that includes Democrats, I think they'll be finished in politics.

Tax Code Reform

Q. On SALT specifically, do you think Senate Republicans or House Republicans will have to bend more in order to get the bill at large passed?

The President. I don't know. We're going to see how it works out. It's a very difficult issue, to be honest with you. It's very difficult, and I understand both sides, but we'll just have to see. Hopefully, a compromise or something is going to be made, but it's a very difficult issue.

But remember that—you know, people say, "What do you think?" Sixty-eight percent tax—so,—all those numbers—I told you how well the economy is doing—it all gets wiped out. You would have the largest tax increase in history by far—by three times—if they don't get the "Big Beautiful Deal." I always say the "Great Big Beautiful Deal." I put the word "great" in there. They took that out.

Q. It's going be "Great, Great Big Beautiful Bill."

The President. If we get that passed, it will be the best—one of the greatest pieces.

And that's just the beginning of a lot of things that are going to happen, because we're going to get numbers down and we're going to get them way down. But that's the beginning. That's our big first step. But that's a big—that's the most important piece of legislation. In terms of dollar value and everything else, there's nothing as big as that.

Q. Speaking of the tax——

The President. You know, they thought that might be seven or eight bills. It's all in one.

Vehicle Fuel Efficiency Standards/Gasoline Costs/Inflation

Q. Speaking of taxes, starting in July 1, California is upping their tax on gasoline again per gallon. I mean, that's——

The President. Well, you know, I beat the California mandate. Congress just passed a bill ending it. That was terrible. What—they were saying, "Everybody by 2030 has to have an electric car," and people don't want it. I'm all for electric cars, but you have to want one.

And right now, it's about 7 percent, but they were forcing everybody to have it. I ended—you know, I ended that. And now they're coming out with more.

No, in California, you know, I've got—we've got some gas stations where, just 2 weeks ago, it was \$1.98, \$1.99. We've got the gas down low. Then we have this little situation, which will drive it up a little bit, but very little, and it's going to come down again. It's going to give people a lot of extra money.

Groceries are down. Eggs are down. You know, the eggs—right?—they hit me the first week about eggs.

But no, I think that—look, you know what I do, whenever I talk about Gavin Newsom, I say: "Look at the railroad. Look at the railroad." It's not even possible. Do you think he comes out and sees the construction workers? I don't think so.

Q. I don't think he'd put an American flag in front of the capital there in Sacramento either.

The President. No, I don't think he would.

CNN/The President's Foreign Policy/2024 Presidential Election/Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Mr. President, some of your supporters are split on the U.S. response to——

The President. Who are you with?

Q. CNN.

The President. Oh.

Q. There's a split, though——

The President. Fake news. Fortunately, nobody watches.

Q. But my question is——

The President. Is anybody watching CNN nowadays? I haven't seen it in a long time.

Q. Well, some of your supporters are wary of the U.S. getting involved in another foreign wall.

The President. Oh, no, I haven't seen that. No, no. No.

Q. And some believe that we should support——

The President. Do you ever ask a positive question on CNN? My supporters are more in love with me today—and I'm in love with them—more than they were even at election time, where we had a total—a landslide. We had—you know, we won all seven swing States. Did CNN report that? We won also—seven out of seven, which everyone said would be almost impossible.

We won by millions of votes. We won 2,750 districts versus 505 districts. Think of that, 2,750 versus 505.

And CNN——

Q. I think what she might be alluding to is, the base is going to stay with you regardless, and you've gone through different——

The President. I think they all are.

Q. Regardless. But some of the people in the base don't want a long-term war. They're—afraid that——

The President. I know.

Q. ——we're going to get into a long-term war, which is what——

The President. We're not looking for a long-term war. We're looking—it's only—I only want one thing: Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. That's it. I'm not looking long-term, short-term.

And I've been saying that for 20 years. I've been saying it as a civilian who got a lot of publicity. People would cover it. Very simply, Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. That's it. It's not a question of anything else. And if you did, you wouldn't have much of a country, because they would use it on us, and they'd use it on other people, and they'd be a terror all over the world.

So I may have some people that are a little bit unhappy now, but I have some people that are very happy, and I have people outside of the base that can't believe that this is happening. They're so happy.

And there was a poll that just came out today that my approval rating is the highest it's ever been. All I'm doing is saying you can't have a nuclear weapon. And I tried to do it nicely. And

then, on day 61, I said, "Let's go," because we can't let that happen. And I've been saying it for 20 years.

Okay, I'm going to leave. Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:52 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell; former Secretary of the Treasury Steven T. Mnuchin; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; former Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco; Sen. Bernard Sanders; Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India; Los Angeles Police Department Chief James McDonnell; Lawrence J. Ellison, chairman and chief executive officer, Oracle Corp.; former Vice President Kamala D. Harris; Wendy McMahon, president, CBS News; and Sen. Elizabeth A. Warren. He also referred to H.R. 1. A reporter referred to Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff; Army Chief of Staff Syed Asim Munir of Pakistan; and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei of Iran.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : New White House flagpoles, installation; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Carney, Mark; Ellison, Lawrence J.; Harris, Kamala D.; McDonnell, Jim; McMahon, Wendy; Mnuchin, Steven T.; Modi, Narendra; Monaco, Lisa O.; Munir, Syed Asim; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Newsom, Gavin C.; Powell, Jerome H.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Sanders, Bernie; Trump, Barron W.; Trump, Melania; Warren, Elizabeth A.; Weinstein, Harvey.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Border security; California, Governor; California, high-speed rail between San Francisco and Los Angeles; California, political protests in Los Angeles; Canada, Prime Minister; CBS News; CNN; Federal Reserve System; Forest management and fire prevention, improvement efforts; Fuel efficiency standards, improvement efforts; Illegal immigration; Immigration reform; India, Prime Minister; India, relations with Pakistan; Inflation; Interest rates; Iran, conflict with Israel; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Israel, conflict with Iran; Israel, Prime Minister; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; National Guard; National Security Council; Pakistan, relations with India; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Tariffs; Tax Code reform; TikTok; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; White House flagpoles, new installation.

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