

Remarks Prior to a Working Lunch With African Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

July 9, 2025

President Trump. Hello, Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News].

Q. Hey, President Trump. How are you doing?

President Trump. I'm good, thank you. Been pretty busy.

Q. Seems like it.

President Trump. Now it's Africa. First, Europe, then the Middle East, now Africa. Great people with us.

Well, thank you very much, everybody, for being with us today. And I want to thank you, all of these great leaders, for joining us as we welcome to the White House the Presidents and Prime Ministers and various other forms of dignitary to this wonderful place. There's nothing like the White House, to me.

We're represented today—and your continent is represented—by Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, and Senegal, all very vibrant places with very valuable land, great minerals, great oil deposits, and wonderful people.

Last month, the U.S.-Africa Business Summit had recorded in attendance—an attendance record, actually, and generated \$2.5 billion in new economic deals for the United States.

On June 27, the Foreign Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda visited the White House to sign a historic peace agreement that we worked out. They've been fighting for 30 years. Seven million are dead, and they think the number is actually quite a bit higher than that. It's been a long and vicious fight.

And I just wanted to say that the countries represented were very happy that we were able to solve that problem. I think over the next couple of weeks the leaders of both country will come to sign the final agreement. As you know, we had Foreign Ministers last week, but we're going to be signing an end to the horrible 30-year war. It's been going on for a long time. I've been reading about it, hearing about it, and it was a vicious war. It was a terrible war.

I want to thank our outstanding Senior Adviser for Africa, Massad Boulos, for helping to mediate this breakthrough. He was very much involved in that settlement. Most people thought it couldn't be done.

But there's still much more to be done, and we're going to be facilitating peace also in places like Sudan—where they have a lot of problems—Libya, and others. We have—there's a lot of anger on your continent, and we've been able to solve a lot of it.

My administration is committed to strengthening our friendships in Africa through economic development efforts that benefit both the United States and our partners, and we're shifting from a-i-d to trade. We had a-i-d—or aid, as we sometimes call it—right to trade.

And trade seems to be a foundation that I've been able to settle a lot of these disputes, like, as an example, India and Pakistan, Kosovo-Serbia. I said, "You guys are going to fight; we're not going to trade." And we seem to be quite successful in doing that.

To that end, we have closed the USAID group to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, which was tremendous waste, fraud, and abuse. And we're working tirelessly to forge new economic opportunities involving both the United States and many African nations. There's great economic potential in Africa like few other places, in many ways. In the long run, this will be far more effective and sustainable and beneficial than anything else that we could be doing together.

I'm eager to work with each of you on your vital issues and also to discuss security. We've encouraged our staff at the White House to work along with these nations. There's such tremendous wealth there and potential there.

We encourage the countries here today to make greater investments in defense—hopefully, of course, buying our equipment, because we do make the best defense equipment. I guess we proved that about 2 weeks ago in Iran. But we make the best equipment—best military equipment—anywhere in the world by far. There's nobody close. And keep pursuing the fight against terrorism, which is a big problem in Africa.

Immigration will also be on the agenda, and I hope we can bring down the high rates of people overstaying visas and also make progress on the safe third-country agreements.

And once again, I want to thank you all for being here, and it's an honor for me. And some of you I've met, and some of you I just got to meet. And I think it would be nice if you said a few words to the press, which is right back here. Do we have a camera over here? Be nice if you could—oh, there it is. You could speak to them. You don't want to turn your head so much. I do it a lot. It's not pleasant.

But perhaps we could start with you, please. Thank you very much. Great gentleman, by the way.

President Mohamed Ould Cheikh Ghazouani of Mauritania. Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr. President.

First of all, I would like to thank you. Thank you, Mr. President Trump, for inviting us to come here today. I'm President Ghazouani, president of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Thank you, Mr. President, for this invitation and the invitation you sent to the other colleagues present here today. This is a very strong message from you, and we are receiving this message very well. This is a message of interest that you're sending to us, and it's a message that you're sending to the whole of Africa. All of this is generous on your part. We are receiving this, and we accept this message from you.

Before I talk about my country, I would like to let you know that we are delighted to see President Trump's commitment to our continent. Mr. President, in the short time you've been back in office, the last few months, you came to the rescue for peace. You did it in Asia, with Pakistan and India. The war sort of started, and if it had gone on, the consequences could have been a real disaster. Since the beginning, you've been doing a great deal of work on the war in Europe that is the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

You rushed to Africa to resolve a long-standing problem. Lots of efforts had been made by many heads of states, but your will made it possible for this agreement to be signed, and now this conflict is behind us.

You are currently working with a great deal of enthusiasm, and you're also working on the Middle East. You're paying a great deal of attention to the Middle East. We all know how far back this conflict goes. It is a conflict that is about 80 years old—70 years—but it is also a war that has been raging for a year and a half. And you've also talked about the human toll. Many people have died in this conflict.

Of course, you also stopped the war between Iran and Israel. That could have been a real disaster for the region. It's a sensitive region to start with.

Your work in favor of peace has been tremendous, and we are also very interested in supporting peace in the same way. When there's no peace—like you said earlier today, when there is no peace, a lot of other things are lacking. When there is no peace, it is difficult to have prosperity. It is difficult to have calm, to have a sense of quietness. It's hard to sleep. It's hard to go about your business every day. You understand that well, Mr. President, and you're working on this. So thank you.

President Trump. Thank you. Thank you very much. I appreciate it. Thank you.

President Ghazouani. I am the President of Mauritania. Mauritania is a small country, depending on the criteria you apply. If you look at the number of people who live in Mauritania, it's a small country, because we have about 5 million people in Mauritania. We might just be a little bit over 5 million.

It's a small country, also, in the sense that—what influence it has throughout the world. It's not like the U.S., Mr. President. Internationally, we understand that our weight, our influence, is not that great, and we're—we have no complex about this.

It's also a small country because of our level of prosperity. We're not a very prosperous country. We have many problems related to the well-being of our population.

But it is also a great country, a big country in other ways. Mauritania is a great country in the sense of its strategic position. It is on the Atlantic coast, which makes it a neighbor to the U.S. It is what unites North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, or what links the two. That is its strategic position.

But also, in terms of resources—we have a great deal of resources—many, many resources—and we have a lot of opportunities to offer in terms of investment. We have minerals, rare earths, rare minerals. We have manganese, we have uranium, and we have a good inclination that we have lithium and other minerals. We're the second largest producer, for the last 60 years in Africa, of iron—iron ore. We produce a lot, and we have a lot of resources in our seawaters, so lots of fishing and whatnot.

I don't want to spend too much time on this.

President Trump. Can't—we have to go. But I appreciate it very much. I appreciate it.

Maybe we're going to have to go a little bit quicker than this, because we have a whole schedule. If I could just ask, you know, your name and your country would be great. Thank you.

Please.

President Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea-Bissau. Thank you, Mr. President, and for welcoming everything. For us, this is second time here to come as a guest. The first time, we had that meeting.

In Guinea-Bissau—but I will not talk so much, but Guinea-Bissau is a peaceful country, and we are a small country, but we are a great state—not a great state like the United States, but now we are a great country as well.

And to end, we are—been following your dynamics and the war with Russia and Ukraine, and you can count on Guinea-Bissau. Thank you very much.

President Trump. Thank you very much. Beautiful. Thank you very much.

Please. Go ahead. Thank you.

President Joseph Boakai of Liberia. Thank you, Mr. President. We—first, let me congratulate you for your recent celebration of your 249 anniversary. We did in Liberia, at your embassy.

Mr. President, we thank you for this opportunity to be here. Liberia is a longtime friend of the United States, and we believe in your policy of making America great again. And we also go a long way with you at your—in your diplomacy that has to do with economic development and commercial friendship.

Liberia has a lot of minerals. And one of the things we ask, as good friends a long time, is the opportunity to do a survey of our minerals.

And also, we are committed to peace. And we've been very lucky within our region. We had a country that've had a series of democratic elections, and our country had been cooling down. And also, we want to encourage American involvement in the investment in Liberia.

President Trump. Yes.

President Boakai. I would like to see that happen. We want to work with the United States in peace and security within the region because we are committed to that, and we just want to thank you so much for this opportunity.

President Trump. Well, thank you. And such good English.

President Boakai. Yes. *[Laughter]*

President Trump. It's beautiful. Where did you learn to speak so beautifully? Where were you educated? Where?

President Boakai. Yes, sir.

President Trump. In Liberia?

President Boakai. Yes, sir.

President Trump. Well, that's very interesting. It's beautiful English.

President Boakai. Sure.

President Trump. I have people at this table who can't speak nearly as well.

President Boakai. Very good, sir. Thank—*[laughter]*—

President Trump. They come from everywhere. So thank you very much.
Please.

[At this point, the audio feed dropped out briefly.]

President Teodoro Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema of Gabon. Hello?

President Trump. *[Inaudible]*

[President Oligui changed microphones.]

President Oligui. Hello?

President Trump. I think that was the news. They turned it off on purpose. *[Laughter]*

President Oligui. Mr. President Trump, it is——

[President Oligui adjusted his microphone.]

——it's a great pleasure to meet a great American President.

[President Nguema spoke in French; no translation was provided.]

Interpreter. No microphone for this speaker. No interpretation. There's no microphone for this speaker.

[President Oligui continued in French; no translation was provided.]

Interpreter. Still no microphone for this speaker.

[President Oligui continued in French; no translation was provided.]

President Trump. Could you turn that on? Yes. Just press that. There you go.

President Oligui. Yes.

[President Oligui spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for the success you had in reaching a peace agreement between Rwanda and the D.R.C. Africa is a vast continent that has many problems, and we truly count on you for your assistance in Sudan and in the Sahel, because no investment can be made when there is a war. For investment, you need peace.

The other heads of state who are here with me represent countries that are at peace, and that has been the case for some time. When—we also have raw materials, minerals, rare earths. We are not poor countries. We are rich countries when it comes to raw materials, but we need partners to support us and help us develop those resources with win-win partnerships. That is our wish.

I often listen to your remarks and speeches, Mr. President. We also want our raw materials to be processed locally in our countries so that we can create value and to create jobs for youth so that they stop dying. They are crossing the sea, the ocean, to go to other countries. That is what we want to have local processing of raw materials.

Gabon is a rich country. We have over 2 million inhabitants and a great deal of diversity, raw materials, oil and gas reserves, and we would like those resources to be tapped using an economic model that fits.

Since our liberation, we have changed how we do trade. We have focused on transparency and bids for anyone who wants to come invest in our country. If you follow the news, we have also worked on agreements with the European Union, and we wanted to review those because we didn't think that those were win-win opportunities. So our market is open.

We want to process manganese locally, which you purchase through a company called Eramet, and I'm sure that it's more expensive compared to when you can come and buy it directly from us. In order to do this local processing, we need 8 to 10 gigawatts of electricity. Again, this is an open bid. Any American company that wants to invest in electricity in Gabon is welcome to take advantage of that opportunity.

Now, looking at defense, the Gulf of Guinea is an issue. There is maritime piracy in that area, and we want to work together to stabilize it. You said you had the best equipment—the best military equipment—and that's what we'd like to have so that we can stop maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. We can't do it alone. We need a reliable and strong partner that is committed and that takes real steps, real action.

We also need to be pragmatic, and that's what you are. And I'm a general, and I am too; I'm pragmatic. I like it when things move quickly. Our country is free, open to one and all. You are welcome to come and invest. Otherwise, other countries might come instead of you. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you very much. Good job. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Okay.

President Bassirou Diomaye Faye of Senegal. Thank you so much, Mr. President. I would like to thank you for this invitation. It is an honor for us to be here at the White House and to have this opportunity to speak with you about the new partnership that you are putting in place with Africa, particularly for investment.

I also wanted to commend you for your commitment to peace throughout the world and the incredible diplomatic success that you had with the D.R.C., as my colleagues mentioned. You said that this put an end to a long war that claimed many lives, and thankfully, you were here to put an end to this 30-year war.

I also wanted to express that Africa supports all efforts to bring back peace to Sudan, Libya, and in the Sahel. Mr. President, as you've seen, you can only do business when there is peace and security, and you build peace everywhere in the world so that there can be better investments. The entire world is grateful to you for this.

Now, with respect to my country, Senegal, I've been President for some 15, 16 months now, and I want to reassure all American investors about our country's political stability and our favorable regulatory environment, which we are continuously improving upon in order to attract more investment.

I wanted to speak about two projects that I think are an exceptional opportunity. I will speak about the U.S. ecological survey, which can help assess the potential of the minerals in our country. And thanks to American companies, we've been able to discover oil and gas—some 950 billion cubic meters of gas that we can tap into in order to support our economy. And, again, here we were able to do this with an American company.

Another project I'd like to mention—and again, I would like to invite American investors to take part in this—it's for a digital city. We identified a space within the city of Dakar. It has a view of the sea. It's on some 40 hectares, and this is a great opportunity for American tech companies to come in and make Dakar a tech city open to Africa.

I was wondering what your secret was for resolving all these complex crises, and I know you are a tremendous golf player. Golf requires concentration and precision, qualities that also make for a great leader. Senegal has exceptional opportunities to offer, including in the area of tourism. So perhaps an investment could be made in a golf course in Senegal. It would just be 6 hours by flight from New York, from Miami, from Europe, or from the Gulf, and that would be an opportunity for you to show off your skills on the golf course too.

Thank you for your attention, sir.

President Trump. Thank you. Thank you very much. It's very nice. It's some way to show off my skills. It's a long trip to show off my skill, but that's really nice.

And he's led a very interesting life. He looks like a very young person. He's a little older than he looks. But a fantastic job. He was treated very unfairly by his government, and he prevailed.

And so congratulations on that. Really, congratulations—it was a great job. And you've all done a fantastic job. And so, we'll be talking to you as we have the meal.

Do you want to ask any questions, please? Where is my reporter from Africa? There you are. How are you?

Q. Thank you, Mr.—I'm fine. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Trump. She's very famous in Africa. Okay?

Africa/Economic Development

Q. Thank you. Thank you. I hope. Yes. Thank you.

Mr.—I have one question for the African presidents and one question for President Trump.

As you can see, Mr. President Trump, all the African Presidents are very happy with your efforts to bring peace in the Democrat Republic of the Congo. My question to you is, today, you are making history by receiving five African Presidents and showing the interest of the United States to collaborate and to work close with the African nations. African Continent is watching. African youth is watching. And this new approach that your administration is taking to deal with African nations—not only based on help, but in doing business that everybody can win—is really much appreciated for all the Africans.

My question is, are you planning, Mr. President, in the future, to travel to Africa to see firsthand all those countries in Africa, all those potential that those countries have?

And for the African leaders, my question is—as you can see, President Trump is working to bring peace, not only in Africa, but also in the world—are you all considering to nominate President Trump for a Nobel Prize Peace?

President Trump. That's a very nice reporter. *[Laughter]* I got to meet her 2 weeks ago when we had the Congo and Rwanda, and we had some other people up from Africa, and that was the first time. But that's very nice. I appreciated the questions. Very nice, actually.

Would you like to—I—at some point I would like to go to Africa. Absolutely. We're going to see what the schedule is, but at some point, I would like to do that very much.

Would you like to give a fast answer, please?

President Embalo. Thank you very much. Of course, we are support of this——

Interpreter. Microphone, please.

President Trump. Microphone, please.

President Embalo. Oh. Of course, we are in favor of this dynamic for peace. We are very committed on peace. I am the first head of state who went to Russia and who went to Ukraine—both—since the start of the war. I was—I held the Presidency of ECOWAS, and I went to see Mr. Putin. We spoke for 4 hours, and then I went to Ukraine. I spent 12 hours on a train to speak to President Zelenskyy.

But now the weight of President Trump is something else altogether. We are with you. We are behind you to see what we can do to help bring peace back. No one wins when there's war.

President Trump. That's right.

President Embalo. So you have our support——

President Trump. Thank you.

President Embalo. ——so that we can bring peace back. Thank you.

President Trump. Very nice. Thank you very much.

President Embalo. Thank you.

President Trump. Appreciate it.

Go ahead, please.

President Oligui. Thank you, Mr. President Trump. Thank you for your questions.

A Nobel Peace Prize—well, I don't see any problem with it. I think that President Trump deserves it for all the efforts that he's worked on. And he brought peace back in the CEEAC region. That is my region, the region where D.R.C. and Rwanda signed a deal. And so, he is now bringing peace back into a region where that was never possible. So I believe that he does deserve a Nobel Peace Prize. That is my opinion on this.

President Trump. Well, thank you very much. That's very nice. Thank you. I didn't know I'd be treated this nicely. This is great. *[Laughter]* We could do this all day long. Thank you very much.

Please, go ahead.

President Boakai. Mr. President, we—I believe that we have to continue to support Americans in the strength to be able to bring about peace in the world. America is a melting pot and also a country that we all look forward to. And I want to encourage you, because without peace, we can't have a world to live in.

President Trump. That's right.

President Boakai. And we stand with you on that.

President Trump. That's right.

President Boakai. *[Inaudible]*

President Trump. Thank you. Well said.

Please.

President Ghazouani. Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for your question. Very important question indeed.

Forgive me for saying this, but unfortunately, I don't really understand—I don't know how things work when it comes to Nobel Prizes, but I can guarantee you that Mauritania would never be opposed to President Trump receiving a Nobel Peace Prize, because he's already working very hard in favor of peace throughout the world, with no distinction, no regard to what continent it's on. And he's working on areas where there are tensions everywhere, and he's committed towards peace. And our world needs more peace. Thank you.

President Trump. Thank you very much. Thank you.

President Faye. Thank you very much.

The jury will decide. It's not a matter of voting amongst our countries. But what is for sure is that the results and the work has been done in such a short amount of time show that you would be a good recipient. And I'm sure that the jury sees that, and the rest of the world sees it as well and understands it.

When the time comes, I think everyone will see that it is a deserved prize. Congratulations on what you've done so far. If we took a poll, I think you would be very far ahead in those polls.

President Trump. Thank you very much. Very nice. All of you, thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Peter.

Former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey, Jr./Former Central Intelligence Agency Director John O. Brennan

Q. Thank you, President Trump. James Comey and John Brennan now under criminal investigation related to the Trump-Russia probe. Do you want to see these two guys behind bars?

President Trump. Well, I know nothing about it, other than what I read today. But I will tell you, I think they're very dishonest people. I think they're crooked as hell, and maybe they have to pay a price for that. I believe they are truly bad people and dishonest people. So whatever happens, happens.

Iran/Threats to President Trump's Personal Safety

Q. And now, a few weeks after the strikes that you ordered on the nuclear facilities in Iran, there is an Iranian facility—an Iranian official who says, you, President Trump, have "done something that he can no longer sunbathe in Mar-a-Lago. As you lie there with your stomach to the sun, a small drone might hit you in the navel. It's very simple." Do you think that's a real threat? And when is the last time you went sunbathing anyway?

President Trump. I've—been a long time. [Laughter] It's been a long time. I don't know. Maybe I was around 7 or so. I'm not too big into it.

Yes, I guess it's a threat. I'm not sure it's a threat actually, but it—perhaps it is.

Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. And on one other subject. Two Democratic Senators now, Cory Booker and Alex Padilla, have a new bill out. They want to require CBP and ICE officers to have legible IDs, and they don't want CBP or ICE officers covering their faces. Would you ever sign that?

President Trump. Well, they wouldn't be saying that if they didn't hate our country, and they obviously do. I'm surprised that they would do it, knowing a little bit about them. I don't know them well.

But these officers are doing a tremendous job. They're great patriots. If you expose them—because of, you know, statements like have been made by Democrats and others on the left, usually—mostly—I think probably exclusively—you put them in great danger. Tremendous danger.

And it's sort of funny, when people picket in front of Columbia, in front of Harvard, and they have masks on—more than masks, I mean, you can't see anything—nobody complains about that. But when a patriot who works for ICE or Border Patrol puts a mask on so that they won't recognize him and his family so they can lead a little bit of a normal life after having worked so hard and so dangerously, there's a problem with that.

So they have their—this is why—this is the problem with the Democrats. They have—they have a lot of bad things going on in their heads. They're—they've really become very—they've lost their confidence, number one. And they're really—they've become somewhat deranged.

I want to do whatever is necessary to protect our great law enforcement people, and they are right at the top of the list.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. And your Agriculture Department also announced this week that they are going to start limiting Chinese ownership of American farmland. Why do you think that the Chinese have been buying up all this farmland in our country so close to military installations?

President Trump. Well, I don't want to get into that. I have a very good relationship with President Xi. We're going to see. And I'm going to—you know, they're going to be making a recommendation to me.

But we have a very good relationship, as you know. We—they're paying a lot of tariffs to the United States now. And so I'm not going to get into that right now.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President——

President Trump. Yes, please.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Thank you. Yesterday the Wall Street Journal reported that the White House was weighing whether to send another Patriot air defense system to Ukraine. Can you confirm that reporting?

President Trump. They would like it. They've asked for it. They're very rare indeed, you know, because a lot of systems have been sent to Ukraine. But they would like to—I know they made the request. We're going to have to take a look at it. Very expensive——

Q. And also, yesterday——

President Trump. ——very expensive system.

It's a shame that we have to spend so much money on a war that would have never happened if I were President. That's a terrible, terrible war over there, and it's really a shame. It's very sad.

You know, when you talk about a system like that—highly sophisticated, tremendous amount of money, and they're doing it because they want to prevent death. They're getting hit hard. Very hard. So we're looking at it.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Ukraine/Russia

Q. And after your comments yesterday, sir, as well, Ukraine was hit by over 700 drones sent by Russia last night. What's your response to that attack?

President Trump. Well, I've been sort of letting people know I'm not happy about what's going on. It's a war that should have never happened. It should not happen now. They're losing—now it's up—I've been saying 5,000. Now it's up to 7,000. Think of it: seven thousand people a week on both sides. Seven thousand people, young, mostly military people. Young souls are dead and dying, and it should be stopped. It should be stopped. Very sad to see what's happening.

Yes, please.

Tariffs/Brazil

Q. Sir, can you explain how you calculated your latest round of tariffs? Was there a formula that was used?

President Trump. Yes.

Q. And do you expect any of these countries to face tariffs as well?

President Trump. The formula was a formula based on common sense, based on deficits, based on how we've been treated over the years, and based on raw numbers. And we're going to have a couple of more coming out today.

Brazil as an example, has been not good to us. Not good at all. We're going to be releasing a Brazil number, I think, later on this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

But they're based on very substantial facts and also past history. You look at the past history: We've been—we never had anybody in the White House that understood the numbers or were into it like I have. You know, we've taken in hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs. Hundreds of

billions. And we haven't even started yet, and it's going to be a great thing for our country. And I think it's going to be a fairer thing for the world.

And we really haven't had too many complaints, because I'm keeping them at a very low number—very conservative, as you would say, number. And we haven't had—I'm sure they will be complaining at certain points, but we haven't had complaints.

We've been treated very unfairly by both friend and foe.

Q. And do you——

President Trump. And friend has treated us very badly. [*Laughter*]

I—it's not even believable that for so many years—you know, I was using tariffs in my first administration. We had the most successful—financially—administration that there's ever been. This is going to be much better. But we got cut short with the COVID, because I didn't think it was appropriate when, you know, Italy, Spain—you saw the horror show that a lot of the countries went through. So I cut it a little bit short.

But we took in hundreds of billions of dollars, and we had the most successful term ever from a President, financially. But this is going to be much more successful.

Yes, please.

Q. And do you expect any of the countries here to face tariffs as well?

President Trump. I haven't thought of it, but I—maybe. I don't know. Let's see, I like him, him, him, him, and him. [*Laughter*] No, I don't think so. Not too much. It's very good. These are friends of mine now.

Q. Thank you——

President Trump. Yes, please.

Q. Thank you for taking our questions, Mr. President.

President Trump. Okay.

Tariffs/Domestic Manufacturing Investment/Artificial Intelligence

Q. You talked about the amount of external revenue the country has brought in——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——thanks to your tariffs. Can you talk about how these hundreds of billions of dollars that are getting brought in will help grow the country, and what do you hope to put it towards?

President Trump. Well, bigger than the tariffs, actually, are the fact that when you charge the tariffs, at a certain point, they say: "Well, we can't pay those tariffs. It doesn't make economic sense." These are wealthy countries, and they or their companies will come into our country and build, and that's what's actually happening.

If you had a very low tariff, there'd be no incentive to do that. If you have no tariff, like we used to have—which is so stupid, it's not even believable—but then, obviously, they make their product—the product in their country. They have the jobs. They have the income. They have the taxes. They have everything. And they just send it in to us, and it's jobs that we wouldn't get.

Now the wheel is turned. And what we're doing is, we're—I mean, more important—we're taking in hundreds of billions of dollars, money that we've never seen before—but more important than that, we have a lot of people that would rather not have to pay that, so they're coming in and they're building plants.

AI—I mean, we're leading everybody, including China, by a lot with AI. They're building their own plant. You heard me say yesterday, they're building their own electric-generating plants to go along with the factories or plants that they're building. If they want to do that, we're getting them fast approvals, very fast turnarounds.

They're using mostly natural gas to start off, but they're using coal. They have the right to use coal. They have the right to use nuclear. Nuclear has become—come a long way in the last 5 years. So we're getting them very fast approvals.

We have factories and plants building at a level that we've never had in this country before.

Yes.

News Media/Inflation/Gasoline Costs/Interest Rates

Q. And secondly, a study from the Council of Economic Advisers—you put it on Truth Social yesterday. It showed that your assessment that tariffs would slow inflation was accurate and that the prices of imported goods since February has fallen——

President Trump. That's right.

Q. ——that your assessment was right; the critics were wrong. Why do so-called experts continually misread your economic policies, sir?

President Trump. Well, it's not the experts. It's the fake news and a combination of that and the Democrats.

I saw an ad on television today, on Fox, and it was some ad about, "Oh, Trump has raised costs." It's the opposite. I actually put out a statement. I brought down costs. I brought down the cost of groceries. I brought down the cost of energy—tremendously, energy. Tremendously, groceries.

If you remember, my first week in office, the press was screaming at me about the cost of eggs. They were four times higher than they were just a short time ago. That was caused by Biden and stupid policies, and—and we got that down. And by Easter, it was normalized, and now it's actually even at a lower price.

So, when I see an ad like that, it's always good to respond, I feel. I feel you have to respond. It was an ad that "things are more costly." No, they're much less costly.

Yesterday \$1.99 a gallon—there's two States—three States were selling gasoline at \$1.99. You haven't seen that for a long time. And I brought costs way down. Just about every cost. I can't think of a cost that went up. But just about every cost.

So what they do is, they lie. I mean, they take ads. You'd almost think that the—the advertising station would stop it because they know it's wrong. It's such an—it's such a lie. All you can do is say, "It's a lie," and explain it. I guess I have the ability to explain it at conferences like this, so I like to take advantage of it and do it.

But costs are substantially down under the Trump administration. And, as you know, Biden had the highest inflation, I believe, in the history of our country. They say 48 years. But regardless, I think it was, really, the highest in the history of our country. And they were up to numbers that nobody ever saw before.

And we have inflation now totally under control. We have a Fed Chairman that, if he was doing his job properly, would lower interest rates, but we're bulling through even that. We're doing so well. It's not having that kind of an impact on us.

But you want to see a rocket ship? We should have the lowest interest rates, because, without us, there's nothing. And we have a strong country now, and we're taking in a lot of money. And other countries aren't even complaining.

They got away with murder. They took advantage of a lot of very stupid people that sat in this seat—very stupid people—or people that didn't understand business or something—or something was going on. But hard to believe that they got away with it for so many years.

But now—and I'm treating them very fairly. Again, we have countries with tremendous deficits with us, where we have—you know, where we essentially lose a lot of money. And we are changing that around very rapidly. And I think it's about time somebody did it.

Q. Sir—President——

President Trump. Yes, please.

Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Sir, yesterday you said that you were not sure who ordered the munitions halted to Ukraine. Have you since been able to figure that out?

President Trump. Well, I haven't thought about it because we're looking at Ukraine right now and munitions. But I have—no, I have not gone into it.

Q. What does it say that such a big decision could be made inside your Government without you knowing?

President Trump. I would know. If a decision was made, I will know. I'll be the first to know. In fact, most likely, I'd give the order, but I haven't done that yet.

Yes, please.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Sir, could I ask how your meeting with Netanyahu went over the last couple of days? And how realistic do you think a cease-fire is this week?

President Trump. Well, we're talking about Gaza, for the most part. I think we have a chance this week or next week. Not definitely. There's nothing definite—you know, definite about war and Gaza and all of the other places that we all deal with so much. But there's a very good chance that we'll have a settlement, an agreement of some kind this week and maybe next week, if not.

African Growth and Opportunity Act

Q. And on Africa, as well, sir. The African Growth and Opportunity Act, which has been central to many sub-Saharan countries having access to the U.S. market, that's due to expire in September. Are you hoping to extend that beyond it?

President Trump. Well, we'll take a look at that.

Yes, please.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson L. Greer. Thank you. That's up to Congress to take a first crack at. We know that program has been in place for about 20 years. And at the end result of that, we see a lot of other countries operating in Africa. We still see a lot of tariff and nontariff barriers in Africa. So I think anything—any discussion about that act would also have to think about how we address those kinds of barriers.

Q. Thank you, Jamieson.

President Trump. Yes, Peter.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Murder Rate

Q. President Trump, in Alvarado, Texas, a few days ago, 10 people wearing all black allegedly set off fireworks outside an ICE office——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——to lure the officers out so they could ambush them, shoot at them. They had guns and vests and two-way radios. Do you think that this was an isolated incident, or do you think there is a national threat of a left-wing militia that is targeting ICE and CBP?

President Trump. Well, I think you have some very stupid people in the left who have some money that are making it available to these people. Because you look at the guns they had, they were brandnew. You look at even the clothing they were wearing, it looked like it just came out of some military shop. So you have some very stupid people that, if anything ever happened, they'd be the first to go. They don't understand that. They'd be the first to go. They'd be the first ones hit.

But they are—there is money being put behind people. When you look at the weapons they have—the newness of the weapons—rifles that just came out, and they have the latest model. So there's something going on, and we'll get to the bottom of it.

Q. And what do you think the penalty should be for these people who are—if they are found guilty, for people who——

President Trump. Very stiff.

Q. ——shoot at ICE officers?

President Trump. Very, very stiff. Very stiff.

Q. How stiff?

President Trump. A long time in jail—a long time.

Q. And one other thing——

President Trump. And one got hit yesterday, in the neck, and he, fortunately, is going to be okay. But he got hit yesterday in the neck. No good.

Q. And what would you think if I read you a quote from a lawmaker who says—about ICE—"to abolish it, to treat them as criminals, or anything, that is inappropriate and outrageous"—and I told you that that was Democrat John Fetterman?

President Trump. Wow, it's—by the way, I assume, when you read that—because you paused in the middle—you're going to have to read that again without the pause. Could you read that again, please?

Q. "To abolish it, to treat them as criminals, or anything, that's inappropriate and outrageous."

President Trump. So he's saying that to treat the people that did the shooting is——

Q. To treat ICE officers that way.

President Trump. Oh, okay. Good. Because the way you read, it really was the opposite.

Q. Apologies. That's copy-paste.

President Trump. That's okay. That's all right.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I think that's what he meant. No, the new John Fetterman is exactly what you said. He's right. He's right. And we have to protect our police officers, and we will, and we have been. If you saw the stats released by the FBI the other day, the murder rate is way down—the lowest it's been in a long time—and that took place over the last 6 months.

For the last 6 months—murder, it's a hell of a subject to have to talk about—but murder is way down at almost—getting to be modern-day records. So that's despite the fact that we have a lot of people that came into the country that shouldn't be here.

Q. Sir——

Q. Mr. President. Mr. President.

President Trump. Yes, please.

Q. So, two questions. One on tariffs. The other on the IRS.

President Trump. Yes.

Africa/China

Q. On tariffs. China is reportedly softening their impact on U.S. tariffs in Africa, announcing last month that they would halt charges on imports for nearly all of its African partners.

President Trump. Good.

Q. Does this move by China influence your thinking, your approach to tariffs on the continent?

President Trump. Well, we treat Africa great in many different ways, including with tariffs. But you know, parts of Africa charge us tremendous tariffs, as you know, and they're going to be dropping those tariffs. They've already informed me they're going to be dropping those tariffs. But we treat Africa far better than China or anybody else—any place else. Yes.

Internal Revenue Service/Tax-Exempt Organizations/Religious Freedom

Q. And, on the IRS. The IRS says that churches can now endorse political candidates. What's your reaction to this? And do you expect—how do you expect this to influence some of the work that's afoot on the continent? There's a lot of American churches that are missionaries, doing——

President Trump. Yes.

Q. ——missionary work on the continent. Do you support that?

President Trump. I love the fact that churches can endorse a political candidate. I think so. Because we have a lot of respect for the people that lead the church—for the pastors and the ministers and the rabbis and the—all different leaders, all different religions. And people respect those people. And I think there's nothing wrong—you know, it was a very big penalty if that happen—took place just a little while ago. They had a thing called the Johnson Act, and it was a very big penalty.

I think it's great if a pastor, minister, priest, rabbi—and we can very much go into your—your religion, by the way, which is something that people have a great respect for throughout the world. If somebody of faith wants to endorse, I think it's something that I'd like to hear, and I'd also—I can guarantee you, the people that they're with every Saturday or Sunday or whenever it is they're with, they want to hear from these people.

And it was a very severe penalty. Those people were not allowed to speak up. Now they're allowed to speak up. No, I think it's terrific.

Harvard University

Q. Mr. President——

Q. One—one——

Q. ——your administration took new actions against Harvard University today. Are you still optimistic about reaching a deal with the university?

President Trump. Oh, yes, I think so. Harvard has been very bad, totally antisemitic. And yeah, they'll absolutely reach a deal.

Peter.

Q. I just got a text from our colleague, John Roberts [Fox News]. He says that we are now reporting the guy who was arrested in the Alvarado, Texas, incident for tampering with the evidence was a green card recipient under the Biden administration and a prior DACA recipient.

President Trump. Hmm. Wow.

Q. What do you think of that?

President Trump. It's very sad. It's very bad. A lot of them are here. We came in—and 21 million—I think it's higher than that, by the way—but they say 21 million people came in. Many of them are criminals. Many of them are murderers. 11,888—is what they say—are murderers. And they came in through open border policies, no checking, no vetting, no nothing. And we have a lot of that. And despite that, we have crime down, which is pretty amazing.

Q. And this is a long meeting, so——

President Trump. And say hello to John. Say hello to John Roberts. Yes.

Q. I will. I'm sure he's watching this right now.

Cease-Fire and Hostage-Release Deal Between Israel and Hamas

A lot of news has broken since we've been in here. Axios says a secret White House meeting between Steve Witkoff, Ron Dermer, and a Qatari Envoy on Tuesday led to significant progress in the negotiations over the Gaza hostage and cease-fire deal. What can you tell us about this secret meeting?

President Trump. It's very possible. I will tell you, we're getting very close to a deal. I don't know if it's secret or not secret, but——

Q. Secret's out.

President Trump. ——doesn't matter to me. Secret is fine if it gets us to where we want to be.

We want to have a cease-fire. We want to have peace. We want to get the hostages back. And I think we're close to doing it. Okay?

Thank you all very much. Thank you very much.

Q. Thank you, President Trump.

President Trump. Thank you, Peter.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of State of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and Francophonie Therese Kayikwamba Wagner and President Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombohe of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Minister of Foreign Affairs and

International Cooperation Olivier J.P. Nduhungirehe and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda; Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell; and Sen. John K. Fetterman. Reporters referred to Mohammad-Javad Larijani, senior adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei of Iran; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; Daniel Rolando Sanchez-Estrada, who was charged with conspiracy to tamper with evidence when Federal officers were executing a search warrant in connection with the shooting of a police officer at the Prairieland Detention Center in Alvarado, TX, on July 4; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff; Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer of Israel; and Prime Minister Muhammad bin Abd al-Rahman Al Thani of Qatar. President Ghazouani spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. President Embalo spoke in Portuguese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. President Oligui and President Faye spoke in French, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on July 10.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : African leaders, working lunch.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Boakai, Joseph; Booker, Cory A.; Boulos, Massad; Brennan, John O.; Comey, James B., Jr.; Embalo, Umaro Sissoco; Faye, Diomaye; Fetterman, John K.; Ghazouani, Mohamed Ould Cheikh; Greer, Jamieson L.; Kagame, Paul; Kayikwamba Wagner, Thérèse; Nduhungirehe, Olivier J.P.; Oligui Nguema, Teodoro Brice; Padilla, Alejandro; Powell, Jerome H.; Tshisekedi Tshilombohe, Felix-Antoine; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: Africa, economic growth and development; Africa, trade with U.S.; African leaders, working lunch with President Trump; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Border security; Brazil, trade with U.S.; China, President; China, relations with U.S.; Congo, Democratic Republic of the, President; Congo, Democratic Republic of the, relations with Rwanda; Congo, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, and Francophonie; COVID-19 pandemic; Egg prices; Electricity capacity, expansion efforts; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Federal Reserve System; Gabon, President; Gabon, relations with U.S.; Gasoline costs; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Guinea-Bissau, President; Guinea-Bissau, relations with U.S.; Illegal immigration; Inflation; Interest rates; International Development, U.S. Agency for; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Liberia, President; Liberia, relations with U.S.; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Massachusetts, ; Mauritania, President; Mauritania, relations with U.S.; Murder rate; Nuclear energy, expansion efforts; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Rwanda, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Rwanda, President; Senegal, President; Senegal, relations with U.S.; Tariffs; U.S. Border Patrol; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. foreign aid programs, funding and policies; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Trade Representative; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; White House Senior Adviser for Africa.

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