

The President's News Conference

August 11, 2025

The President. Thank you.

Wow. [Laughter] I've been up here a lot. I've never seen a crowd like this. I think we need a ballroom. [Laughter] And that's happening. It's going to be a beautiful ballroom.

This is really a lot of people, most I've ever seen in this room. And we're here for a very serious purpose—a very serious purpose. Something is out of control, but we're going to put it in control very quickly, like we did on the southern border.

I'm announcing a historic action to rescue our Nation's Capital from crime, bloodshed, bedlam, and squalor, and worse. This is "Liberation Day" in DC, and we're going to take our capital back. We're taking it back.

Under the authorities vested in me as the President of the United States, I'm officially invoking section 740 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act—you know what that is—and placing the DC Metropolitan Police Department under direct Federal control, and you'll be meeting the people that will be directly involved with that. Very good people, but they're tough and they know what's happening and they've done it before.

In addition, I'm deploying the National Guard to help reestablish law, order, and public safety in Washington, DC. And they're going to be allowed to do their job properly.

And you people are victims of it too, you know? You're reporters, and I understand a lot of you tend to be on the liberal side, but you don't want to get mugged and raped and shot and killed. And you all know people and friends of yours that that happened.

And so you can be anything you want, but you want to have safety in the streets. You want to be able to leave your apartment or your house where you live and feel safe in going to a store to buy a newspaper or buy something. And you don't have that now.

The murder rate in Washington today is higher than that of Bogota, Colombia; Mexico City—some of the places that you hear about as being the worst places on Earth. Much higher—this is much higher.

The number of car thefts has doubled over the past 5 years, and the number of carjackings has more than tripled. Murders in 2023 reached the highest rate probably ever. They say 25 years, but they don't know what that means, because it just goes back 25 years. Can't be worse.

Our capital city has been overtaken by violent gangs and bloodthirsty criminals, roving mobs of wild youth, drugged-out maniacs, and homeless people. And we're not going to let it happen anymore. We're not going to take it.

Just like we did on our southern border—nobody comes to our southern border anymore. Three months in a row, we had zero. I don't know if that's right, but the people that do the work—it's a very liberal group of people, actually. And they actually said zero for the last 3 months. Nobody thought a thing like that was possible.

And you know when you say—take a look at numbers. I just saw some—some charts. These are different cities throughout the world. Red is—okay?—the red is a place called Washington, DC.

Look at these. Baghdad is—we doubled up on Baghdad; Panama City; Brasília; San José, Costa Rica; Bogotá, Colombia—heavy drugs; Mexico City, I mentioned; Lima, Peru—all double and triple what they are.

So do you want to live in places like that? I don't think so. I don't think so. And I think the people in this room, if you wrote correctly, you'd see. Look at the kind of numbers we have. DC—41 per 100,000. Number one that we can find anywhere in the world. Other cities are pretty bad, but they're not as bad as that. Is that where you want to live—the reporters of the world?

Juvenile life offenders and crimes against persons, as they say—it's getting worse, not getting better. It's getting worse.

And we had a recent indication—there was a story about a man who was—he just left. He quit because he was asked to do phony numbers on crime, and we're going to look into that. I think Pam is going to be looking into that.

But he was asked by the city, I guess, that—"We don't want to show the real numbers. Let me do numbers so it looks like it's going down." Not going down.

And under Biden, it was a disaster. And nobody did anything about it. We're going to do things about it like you wouldn't believe.

Every American has a constitutional right to be able to access and petition their government in safety. And countless Federal officials and employees likewise have the right to carry out their jobs in peace without being shot.

As you know, I lost a very good person a while ago. He was shot waiting for his wife. He was in the car. They robbed his car. They shot him. They killed him like it was nothing to it. She was walking to the car. She was—it's a horror show.

This issue directly impacts the functioning of the Federal Government and is a threat to America, really. It's a threat to our country.

We have other cities also that are bad—very bad. You look at Chicago, how bad it is. You look at Los Angeles, how bad it is. We have other cities that are very bad. New York has a problem. And then, you have, of course, Baltimore and Oakland. We don't even mention that anymore. They're so far gone.

We're not going to let it happen. We're not going to lose our cities over this. And this will go further. We're starting very strongly with DC, and we're going to clean it up real quick—very quickly, as they say.

Days ago, a former member of the DOGE staff was savagely beaten by a band of roving thugs after defending a young woman from an attempted carjacking. He was left dripping in blood—he thought he was dead—with a broken nose and concussion. Can't believe that he's alive. He can't believe it.

In June, a 21-year-old congressional intern was tragically killed after being hit by a stray bullet in a drive-by shooting.

A former Trump administration official named Mike Gill—fantastic person—was murdered last year in cold blood in a carjacking blocks away from the White House—we all knew him; great person—waiting for his wife as she was walking to the car.

A Democrat Congressman was also carjacked at gunpoint not far from the Capitol. And in 2023, an aide to Senator Rand Paul was stabbed in the chest and head by a demented lunatic as he walked down the street, just absolutely for no reason. Horrifically, last July Fourth weekend, a 3-year-old girl was shot in the head and killed while sitting in a car near the Capitol.

It's becoming a situation of complete and total lawlessness.

And we're getting rid of the slums too. We have slums here. We're getting rid of them. I know it's not politically correct. You'll say, "Oh, so terrible." No, we're getting rid of the slums where they live.

Caravans of mass youth rampage through city streets at all times of the day. They're on ATVs, motorbikes. They travel pretty well. Entire neighborhoods are now under emergency curfews.

Just this past weekend, gunfire through—went through—and you saw that—the Navy Yard. I saw it this morning. They saw that they fought back against law—see, they fight back until you knock the hell out of them, because it's the only language they understand. But they fought back against law enforcement last night, and they're not going to be fighting back long, because I've instructed them and told them whatever happens—you know, they love to spit in the face of the police, as the police are standing up there in uniform.

They're standing, and they're screaming at them an inch away from their face, and then they start spitting in their face. And I said, "You tell them, 'You spit, and we hit.'" And they can hit real hard.

It's a disgusting thing. I've watched that for years—for 3, 4 years I've—I've watched them. The police are standing—and they're told, "Don't do anything under any"—so they're stand—and you can see they want to get at it. And they're standing there, and the people are spitting in their face, and they're not allowed to do anything. But now they are allowed to do whatever the hell they want.

This dire public safety crisis stems directly from the abject failures of the city's local leadership. The radical-left city council adopted no-cash bail.

By the way, every place in the country where you have no-cash bail is a disaster. That's what started the problem in New York, and they don't change it. They don't want to change it. That's what started it in Chicago. I mean, bad politicians started it. Bad leadership started it. But that was the one thing that's central: no-cash bail. Somebody murders somebody, and they're out on no-cash bail before the day is out.

We're going to end that in Chicago. We're going to change the statute. I spoke with Pam and Todd and everybody. We're going to change the statute, and I'm going to have to get the Republicans to vote, because the Democrats are weak on crime. Totally weak on crime. They don't know why—they want it stopped, because they get mugged too.

But we're going to change no-cash bail. We're going to change the statute and get rid of some of the other things, and we'll count on the Republicans in Congress and Senate to vote. We have the majority, so we'll vote. We don't have a big majority, but we've gotten everything, including the "Great Big Beautiful Bill." Got that done, and that's one of the greatest things that's ever happened to people in this country. They're starting to figure it out how good it is: biggest tax cut in history, so many things. But we'll be able to get that done.

So, Todd, if you and Pam can draw up things working with the people, we will—I'll get it passed. We'll get it passed with Republicans. Probably won't get—think of this, probably won't get one Democrat vote, because they have no idea what they're doing. That's why they want men playing in women's sports. That's what they why they want transgender for everybody. Everybody transgender.

And they just got walloped in an election in a landslide, and they haven't changed one thing. I saw the other day, the certain gentleman who's very well-known politician, Democrat, was fighting like hell that men should be allowed to play in women's sport. They just don't get it.

They said it's an 80/20 issue, and I think it's a 97-to-3 issue, and I don't know who the three are. I've never heard anybody come—nobody's ever come up to me: "Sir, you have to let men play in women's sports. You have to do it, sir." Nobody's ever approached me. I don't know where this issue even comes from. Never seen anything like it.

But they turned our Nation's Capital into a sanctuary jurisdiction. That's the other thing: We have to get rid of sanctuary cities as quickly as possible. We're going to do it too. We have to, because it's sanctuary for criminals.

Releasing illegal alien gang members onto the streets—in 2022, nearly 70 percent of criminals arrested in Washington went unprosecuted. That's not going to happen with the group we have standing aside and standing behind me. And, at the Metropolitan Police Department, it's now reached a small number, relatively, compared to what it was, but it's thousands of people.

You know, we have thousands of police. I was told today, "Sir, they want more police." I heard a number: 3,500 police. That's a lot of police—3,500. I thought they're going to say, "We only have 30 police men or women." They said: "We have 3,500. We need more." You don't need more. That's so many. I'd never heard—that's like an army. How could you need more than 3,000—it just happened 2 minutes ago. "Sir, they've requested more police." "Oh, what do they have?" "About 3,500." I said, "3,500?" This is not a big area. It's ridiculous.

What you need is rules and regulations, and you need the right people to implement them. And we have the right people here, that I can tell you.

Look at the border. Biden said there's nothing you can do. Kamala was the border czar. She never called one of the Border Patrol agents, who are great. ICE is great. Never spoke to anybody, never went there, but she was the border czar. And everybody said it was impossible to fix.

I fixed it in 3 months. No, really, I fixed it the first week, but really fixed it over the last couple of months and, I mean, literally to a point where, as I said, zero illegals entering our country in the last 90 days. Pretty amazing.

It's time for dramatic action. We're going to do the same thing over here. It's going to be a very safe city very soon. We're not looking to take years, because a lot of people die in years. And we've got incredible people in this country, except we have to allow them to do their job. And that—we will deliver like nobody's ever delivered before.

I actually think it's easy. You know, if you're competent, it's easy. If you're incompetent, it's impossible. But I'm very competent.

Last week, my administration surged—surged 500 Federal agents into the district, including from the FBI, ATF, DEA, Park Police, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Secret Service, and the Department of Homeland Security.

You know, a lot of nations, they don't have anything like that. They got some—some police, and they're rough police. They don't have a DEA, ATF, FBI, Park Police, U.S. Marshals Service, Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security. They've got some police, but they're rough police, and they do their job. They don't have crime. We're not going to have crime either.

They made dozens of arrests, and that's what starts to happen.

Again, cashless bail. Watch what we do with that.

Today we're formally declaring a public safety emergency. This is an emergency. This is a tragic emergency, and it's embarrassing for me to be up here. You know, I'm going to see Putin. I'm going to Russia [Alaska; White House correction] on Friday.

I don't like being up here talking about how unsafe and how dirty and disgusting this once-beautiful capital was, with graffiti all over the walls—it's another part of it, by the way—because we're talking about safety, but we're also talking about beautification. We have the most beautiful, potentially, capital in the world. We always had.

But people come from Iowa. They come from Indiana. They come and then they get mugged. Not going to happen.

Keep coming, because within—by the time you get your trip set, it's going to be safe again, and it's going to be clean very quickly. We're going to replace the medians that are falling down all over the roads. We're going to replace the potholes. We're going to put a nice new coat of asphalt over the top, knowing we don't have to rip the road out and spend 7 years building a new road because they cut everything they—because some designer said, "Well, we need a quarter of an inch more turn for safety reasons." No, we're going to do it right. We're going to get it done quickly.

So, today, we're declaring public safety emergency in the District of Columbia, and Attorney General Pam Bondi—who's fantastic—is taking command of the Metropolitan Police Department as of this moment. And I'll be making the appropriate notifications to Congress and to the mayor.

Our new DEA Administrator—who's one of the top in the country. He'd better be, Terry. If you're not, I'm going to get rid of you so fast. *[Laughter]* Terry Cole. Terry, thanks. Very good. We just got him. Highly—most highly recommended person. And you'll be designated as the interim Federal commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Department. Okay?

Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration Terrance C. Cole. Yes, sir.

The President. And you run them tough. They're good. You have a lot of good people. You have people that shouldn't be there. You also have people that shouldn't be there. They got in there because of woke. But you have a lot of great police, and those people are the ones that want to help you.

This city will no longer be a sanctuary for illegal alien criminals. We will have full, seamless, integrated cooperation at all levels of law enforcement, and we'll deploy officers across the district with an overwhelming presence. You'll have more police, and you'll be so happy because you'll be safe when you walk down the street. You're going to see police or you're going to see FBI agents. We're going to have a lot of agents on the street.

And you're going to have a lot of, essentially, military, and—and we will bring in the military if it's needed, by the way. We're going to have National Guard, but Pete Hegseth will tell you about it. We will bring in the military if needed. People say: "Oh, that's so terrible. He's going to bring in"—it's been used many times over the years.

I don't think we'll need it. I think we've got so many great people, including the people that are in the police department with proper leadership.

They'll immediately begin massive enforcement operations targeting known gangs, drug dealers, and criminal networks to get them the hell off the street, maybe get them out of the country, because a lot of them came into our country illegally. They shouldn't have been allowed in. They come from Venezuela. They come from all over the world. We're going to get them the hell out. They won't be here long.

But some of these people—a lot of them—are homegrown criminals, and these are bad people. These are rough people.

And this is just a list of some of the people that were given to me today that were criminals removed from the DC streets this weekend. They were rough—rough and tough, but we're rougher and tougher.

Look at these people here. Nothing to—you know, they're not going to be your local schoolteacher. Look at this guy. He has killed people numerous times. They're not going to be an asset. They will never be an asset to society. I don't care. I know we all want to say, "Oh, they're going to be rehabbed." It's not going to be rehabbed.

I'm going to ask Doug Burgum to come up and say a couple of words, because he's in charge—as you know, he's Interior, but he's in charge of the U.S. Park Police.

And I have heard so many great things about the Park Police. They're proud of it. They've been there for a long time. Their families oftentimes grow into the roles. They love the country. They love this area.

So, Doug, could you say a few words please?

Secretary of the Interior Douglas J. Burgum. Thank you, Mr. President. On behalf of the U.S. Park Police, this is the oldest federal police force in the nation. They were formed in 1791 by none other than President George Washington. They've got the awesome responsibility of protecting our nation's most sacred monuments: the National Mall, Washington Monument, Jefferson Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Statue of Liberty, and out west, the Presidio and the Golden Gate area.

These folks in—have tens of millions of visitors a year—the kind of people that President Trump is talking about—that come from around the country and around the world to see our sacred—and learn about our history and our sacred monuments.

[At this point, Secretary Burgum continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

And, President Trump, they thank you. The rank and file is so happy to be enforcing the law again. Thank you for your leadership. And they're excited about the announcement you're making today.

The President. Thank you. Very good. Great job you're doing. Thank you very much.

Pete, could you say something—

Secretary of Defense Peter B. Hegseth. Yes, sir.

The President. —about the military, if you want.

Secretary Hegseth. Well, Mr. President, it's an honor to be here. And at your direction, this morning, we've mobilized the DC National Guard. It will be operationalized by the Secretary of the Army, Dan Driscoll, through the DC Guard. You will see them flowing into the streets of Washington in the coming week.

At your direction as well, sir, there are other units we are prepared to bring in: other National Guard units, other specialized units. They will be strong, they will be tough, and they will stand with their law enforcement partners. This is nothing new for DOD.

[Secretary Hegseth continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

We will work alongside all DC police and Federal law enforcement to ensure this city is safe, this city is beautiful.

And as I always say about President Trump to the troops, he has their back. And my message to the National Guard and Federal law enforcement in Washington is: We have your back as well. Be tough. Be strong. We're right behind you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Pete.

Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi. Thank you, Secretary.

The President. I'm going to ask Pam, because she's now—as you heard me say, she's really in charge of a lot of what we're talking about. She's done an incredible job, and people are going to start to see the fruits of her labor.

And, Pam, maybe you could say a few words about what we're talking about here.

Attorney General Bondi. Sure, President.

The President. Go ahead please.

Attorney General Bondi. Let me be crystal clear. Crime in DC is ending and ending today. We are going to do—use every power we have to fight criminals here.

President, thank you for caring about our capital. Families come here every summer. Our museums are free. We have the National Zoo. We have the National Gallery. DC should be a place where everyone can come and feel safe.

Behind me and to my side, we have some of the best career law enforcement and prosecutors in the country who are ready to take this on.

As the President said, Terry Cole is going to be supervising the Metro Police Department. Gady Serralta, our U.S. Marshal, is going to be supervising command and control, the entire operation. Our Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche and I will be working with them closely, along with our great FBI Director, Kash Patel.

[Attorney General Bondi continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

The President of the United States is going to clean up DC, and we're going to be there to help him, and we're going to be successful.

Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Pam.

Kash, talk about Northern Virginia if you would.

Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kashyap P. "Kash" Patel. Sure.

The President. Northern Virginia, we had a big success.

Director Patel. Thank you, Mr. President; thank you, Attorney General Bondi, for your leadership; Deputy Attorney General and the rest of our interagency partners.

Mr. President, the following is what happens when you let good cops be cops. And I just want to highlight that before I get into Northern Virginia.

This year alone, under President Trump's administration, we've had over 4,000 child victims identified and found. That's a 33-percent increase from the same time period last year—33-percent increase. We've had a seizure of 1,500 kilograms of fentanyl this—up to this date. That is a 25 percent increase since the same time period last year. And just to put it in perspective, 1,500 kilograms of fentanyl is enough to kill 115 million Americans—115 million Americans.

[Director Patel continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

And that simplicity in law enforcement is what's coming to Washington, DC. When you let good cops be cops, when you give them the intel they need, when you work with our Homeland

Security Task Force, when you work with Terry—and Gady and I go way back to Miami. These guys are great leaders of their respective departments and law enforcement capacities. And when you have the DOJ and President Trump driving behind this mission, we are going to clean up Washington DC, and we're going to do it the right way, the lawful way, and we're going to make sure Washington, DC, is safe again.

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Attorney General.

The President. Great. Thank you very much. Good job. Thank you, Kash.

So the process begins right now. It actually started over the weekend, and we confronted a lot of very bad people. But it's going to be something that will be pretty amazing to you as you watch it. And I think most of you will say it will—it's a beautiful thing to do it right.

We're going to be removing homeless encampments from all over our parks—our beautiful, beautiful parks, which now a lot of people can't walk on. They've been very dirty, very—we've got a lot of problems. But we've already started that. We're moving the encampments away.

Trying to take care of people. Some of those people, we don't know how they even got there. Some of those people are from different countries, different parts of the world. Nobody knows who they are. They have no idea. But they're there.

We're getting rid of the people from underpasses and public spaces from all over the city. There are many places that they can go, and we're going to help them as much as you can help, but they'll not be allowed to turn our capital into a wasteland for the world to see.

The Metropolitan Police Department and the federal authorities will be supported in the effort—a really big effort. The 800 DC National Guardsmen that we'll put on—and much more, if necessary. Much more.

It's—you remember I said—I offered 10,000 once. Remember? I said to a certain person—a person who I thought always was highly overrated, not very competent. But I said, "If you need them, we'll give you 10,000 of the military or the National Guard." They turned me down.

But, if necessary, we're going to move servicemembers directly to joining the guardsmen. And that will take place very rapidly, and that will be done in conjunction with Pam and with Pete and everybody else.

Washington, DC, should be one of the safest, cleanest, and most beautiful cities anywhere in the world, and we're going to make it that. We're going to make it safe. We're going to make it smart. We're going to make it beautiful—so beautiful.

Some of the buildings—we're going to add to it. You see what we've done at the White House. This White House is a whole different building. I do that in my part time, because it's a natural instinct, as a real estate person. I was very good at that. You know, I was very good at fixing things up. I like fixing things up.

You see what's happening? The marble floors are being reinstalled, renovated, fixed. The whole place is becoming very beautiful. We're going to be adding a magnificent ballroom—the most beautiful ballroom, I think, anywhere. We need it. I would have certainly loved to have had it today. I think we would have filled it up. A lot of you are standing outside. Can't get in this room.

I have never seen the room like this, which tells me that you want to talk about—I mean, this was a DC news conference. It tells me that you want to talk about crime in DC and beautification of DC, but I'm going to put that—that's easy. And I think, frankly, fixing the crime—with the pros, fixing the crime is easy too.

A person who I've known for a long time, and she's been incredible—she was a fantastic—one of the best-ever district attorneys in New York. She was in Westchester, and she became a judge—a very successful judge. And then she went into showbiz because she was such a good DA and such a good judge. Tough judge, but fair. Always fair. Nobody ever complained about that. But she was tough. And because of that and her reputation, she went into showbiz.

So a lot of people don't—you know, they think of Jeanine as showbiz. Actually, showbiz was not her thing. It was—and she did great. She was on—along with a couple of other of my friends, on the number-one show, and she did great. But this is what she loves doing. This is really her baby. What she's going to do is going to be incredible.

And I'd like to introduce to speak for just a few seconds on what she has in mind, what she wants to do.

We're going to be appointing some judges. You know, we have some open spots, and we're going to take people, because the judges are letting killers out. They just say, "Go. That's okay. Don't worry about it." So we're putting some—Pam recommended, Todd recommended some judges that are great. Jeanine recommended—Jeanine has given me three great candidates already. We've got 10 open spots, and we can probably create some more. We need them.

Jeanine, would you say a few words, please?

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Jeanine Pirro. All right. Thank you very much, Mr. President, and thank you, Madam Attorney General, and to all my partners here.

We all want the same thing. We all want a safe city. We want a safe Capital. We want to be able to bring our families here. We want to be able to come and enjoy the history that makes this place great. And unfortunately, we are not in that position right now.

And, Mr. President, I want to thank you for taking the step that we need right now to make criminals understand that they are not going to get away with it anymore.

[U.S. Attorney Pirro continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

And my final note is this. These kids understand that the jurisdiction is through the State attorney general, Brian Schwalb. I did a poster of the young man from DOGE who was beaten bloody—with a severe concussion, a broken nose. And then I did a poster of what happens to those kids, because I can't arrest them. I can't prosecute them. They go to family court, and they get to do yoga and arts and crafts.

Enough. It changes today.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Jeanine.

U.S. Attorney Pirro. You're welcome.

The President. Great job. Thank you.

If I could, I just signed some executive orders. I'd like to have Will, please, come up, and we'll let the people know what we signed.

Do you want to put them down?

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

The President. Go ahead.

Staff Secretary Scharf. A short while ago in the Oval Office, President Trump signed two crucial executive actions to deal with the emergency crime conditions we currently face in the District of Columbia.

The first of these was an Executive order, as President Trump said before, invoking his powers under section 40 of the Home Rule Act to take Federal control of the DC Metropolitan Police Department. Along with that Executive order, President Trump signed the statutorily required notification letters to Mayor Bowser and to the relevant House and Senate committee leaders.

The second major executive action that President Trump signed was a Presidential memorandum directing the secretary of Defense to utilize the National Guard to address the conditions we see on our streets here in DC. It also authorized the Secretary of Defense to work with State Governors to utilize their National Guard units, if necessary, as well.

These are bold, decisive steps intended to combat the out-of-control crime conditions we've seen on DC streets for far too long. And I, for one, am deeply proud to be part of an administration that's finally coming to terms with these issues, sir.

The President. Thank you very much.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Yes, sir.

The President. Thank you.

So, just to conclude, Washington, DC, should be one of the safest, cleanest, most beautiful places anywhere in the world. It was, years ago.

We had one problem that was a pretty big problem: The radical left got out of control, and they started trying to rip down statues. And I said: "Let's go pass a law real fast. We're going to do it real fast." But we were blocked by the Democrats, who do not want safety.

Nobody gets it. I don't get it. They don't get it, because they can't get votes. I don't know how they can win an election with this, but they don't want safety.

And I found an old statute—very old, early 1900s—that said if you so much as touch or even think about destroying a statue or a monument in Washington, DC, you go to jail for 10 years—with no probation, no anything. In other words, slightly different than we have today. Today, we have cashless bail. So you get jailed 10 years. No curtailed sentence. Ten years.

And we just—we took it out. Nobody used it. It was never used because, you know, it's harsh. And you remember, they started to rip down the statue of Abraham Lincoln. I said, "That's a tough one to rip down." That's—he's—he was pretty good, Pam. I think he was pretty good.

When they—when the ropes started going around Abraham Lincoln to pull him down, Andrew Jackson, others—and they were heading to the Jefferson Memorial—Thomas Jefferson—they were going to do a big number there—I said, "It's time," and I signed that statute immediately.

We had it updated. We made it—used the same language—all passed by Congress. And I announced it's 10 years in jail—no probation, no anything—10 years, no curtailed sentence if you touch—so much as touch a statue in Washington, DC. And it was an amazing sight, beautiful sight: Everybody just left.

The ropes were hanging around Andrew Jackson, and there were two ropes around Abraham Lincoln. They left the rope. But everybody just left, and that was the last problem we ever had—you know, that was the last problem that we ever had with the statues.

They were going wild, and we—somebody came to me and said, "Sir, in 1910"—I don't want to give you an exact, because you'll say, "Donald Trump gave us wrong dates." Around, like, early on. You know, if I'm slightly off, they make you sound a little bad, so I won't be—I won't put myself in that position. I won't put you in that position, because I think everybody agrees with what we're doing today.

But when I signed that thing, it was like a miracle. Everybody left. They were gone. They were starting to march down. They started the march toward Thomas Jefferson, and I figured he was always going to be safe, but they found something with him, and they found something with Abraham Lincoln. And even in the name George Washington, in California, numerous places changed the name of George Washington High School and various other places. They took George Washington's name—this was a sick woke culture that I think we've largely ended, and a lot of those people that were woke are now turning out to be the opposite—I won't go so far as to say MAGA; that's a very special category—but they've gotten out of that.

But we have—we have people that love this country, and they love this really beautiful Capital. It is. I flew over it the other day and I said, "What a beautiful place." But what—if there's crime all over the streets when you get there, it doesn't look so beautiful, but we're going to make it beautiful again.

We're going to fix it with crime, and we're going to also—as we're doing that, we're going to start doing things that we know how to do—that I know how to do better than anybody, I guess, because of my experience from previous life.

But not only are we stopping the crime, we're going to clean up the trash and the graffiti and the grime and the dirt and the broken marble panels and all of the things they've done to hurt this city, and we're going to restore the city back to the gleaming Capital that everybody wants it to be. It's going to be something very special.

All of these people are really tough—can I shake your hand, Gady, please? You're going to be so important here. You are going to be——

U.S. Marshals Service Director Gadyaces S. Serralta. Mr. President.

The President. You're going to be that guy. I hope I don't have to fire him in two weeks because he's too soft. [*Laughter*] I don't think he's too soft. If I do, I will, though. Is it okay? If you do——

Director Serralta. Yes, yes. [*Inaudible*]

The President. If you're soft, weak, and——

Director Serralta. If I'm soft, fire me.

The President. ——pathetic, like so many people, I will fire——

Director Serralta. Fire me.

The President. ——you so fast. [*Laughter*]

You're not going to have to worry about that. No, I think you're going to do a fantastic job.

Director Serralta. Thank you.

The President. And everybody in this room, they may not express it, but they all want that to happen. You know, they want to be safe, and they have families too.

So it's an honor to have such a large group. I've done this for years now. Hard to believe. I've never seen this room so packed. In fact, I'm sure it's a violation of every fire code ever. [*Laughter*] But we'll let you stay anyway. You're taking a chance.

And with that, we'll say, maybe if you could—oh, wow. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President——

The President. We could be here all day long. If you could—if we could—if we could keep the first questions, perhaps, to this subject, and then we'll go on to a few others.

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

Please.

National Economy/The President's Foreign Policy

Q. Mr. President, thank you so much. Can you talk about how personal of an issue this is? You said—you talked about flying over the Washington Monument and seeing, like, the pride of what DC is. And do you believe that the status of the city, the cleanliness, the way that crime is low is a direct reflection on how the country is run at a certain point?

The President. Yes, I do. I think the Capital—look, everyone comes here. They all—they're all coming. All the leaders, they're all wanting to come.

And I say it—I've said it again, but I'm really just quoting other leaders from NATO, from the Middle East, King of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, U.A.E. I was over there. We brought back \$5.1 trillion of investment into our country. But I was—a month and a half ago, I was at NATO. We had a great—I think they've agreed to put up 5 percent instead of 2 percent. Two percent they didn't pay. Five percent is already paid. We had a great meeting.

And they all said the same thing. They said our country was dead. They thought our country was gone. "One year ago," they said, "your country was dead, and now you have the hottest country anywhere in the world." We do. We have the hottest country in the world right now.

The tariffs have helped. It's given us—not only the money—it's billions—trillions of dollars of money—but it gives us great power over enemies.

We solved five wars. With Pakistan and India, with the—we just solved one, Azerbaijan and—as you know, and Armenia, who's got—war was raging for 37 years. And the two leaders got up, and they said, "We never thought this would be solved." Russia tried to solve it. They all tried to solve it. It was a very tough situation, but we got it done. And got it done.

And I said to the two men—I said, "Are you guys friends?" And they had a hard time. [*Laughter*] You know, they've been killing each other for 37 years, right? One was there five years. One was there for 22 years. He said, "My whole life, I've been fighting this war, and you got it solved."

But we did many of those. We did—in the Congo and Rwanda. That's been going on for 30 years. Eight to nine million people killed that they know of, but it was raging, and we got that solved. We got a lot of them done. It's a great honor.

But you want to have—when they come—the leaders come to our country to sign documents that the war is over or whatever or for other reasons. They come for trade. And you want them to come through so beautifully. You ride down those roads, everything should be perfect. You shouldn't have medians falling down into the roadway.

Median, you know, the metal things that are always—somebody had a great—a great lobbyist, because I've never seen them look good. I've been looking at those things with the little—right? They're always broken and bad, but here they're really bad, and we're going to either put new or fix it, and it's not expensive. It's not really expensive.

And we're going to fix our roads a little bit. We're going to clean up our sidewalks.

You have countries where, every Saturday, the people go out, and they wash their sidewalks in front of their stores or their houses. They scrub. They scrub their sidewalks. So we aren't quite at that level yet, I don't think. Gady, we're not quite there yet, but maybe we will. They go out and they scrub. I think it's so beautiful to hear that and to see those stories, but we're going to make it clean.

But just to finish with your question, it's a very strong reflection of our country.

And when they see a bad city—you know, my father always used to tell me—I had a wonderful father, very smart, and he used to say, "Son, when you walk into a restaurant and you see a dirty front door, don't go in, because if the front door is dirty, the kitchen is dirty also." Same thing with the Capital. If our Capital is dirty, our whole country is dirty, and they don't respect us. So it's a very good question, actually.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Potential Reclassification of Marijuana/Crime in U.S. Cities/Wildfires in Los Angeles, California/Border Security

Q. On crime—on crime. Sorry. Question for you on this specific issue. Do you expect more cities to follow DC's path if this goes through? So the idea is that Chicago, LA, San Francisco—would they expect similar action to what we've seen in DC?

And the other question, sir. There is reporting that the administration is going to reclassify marijuana. Would that send mixed messages that if marijuana is okay, drugs are—some drugs are okay, but we're trying to clean up crime? How do they go hand in hand?

The President. We're only looking at that. That's early. But you know, somebody reported it, which is fine. We're looking at it. Some people like it. Some people hate it. Some people hate the whole concept of marijuana, because if it does bad for the children, it does bad for people that are older than children.

But we're looking at reclassification, and we'll make a determination over the next—I would say over the next few weeks. And that determination, hopefully, will be the right one. It's a very complicated subject, the—you know, the subject of marijuana. I've heard great things having to do with medical, and I've had bad things having to do with just about everything else. But medical and, you know, for pain and various things, I've heard some pretty good things. But for other things, I've heard some pretty bad things.

The other part of your question—I mean, we're just going to see what happens with—with it all. You're going to have—we're going to have a tremendous success in what we're doing.

Other cities are, hopefully, watching this. They're all watching, just like everyone's watching here. They're all watching. And maybe they'll self-clean up, and maybe they'll self-do this and get rid of the cashless bail thing and all of the things that caused the problem.

I mean, if you go back, this whole thing with cashless bail is a disaster. So many problems came that we—we never had before.

So they're watching us today. And if they don't learn their lesson, if they haven't studied us properly—because we're going to be very successful. I have zero doubt about that. It's going to be—it's a question of will it be really fast, like the border.

You know, everyone said—they used to say—Biden used to say, "I need legislation. I need"—you didn't need—I didn't get any legislation. I called up our people, and we did a great job.

Tom Homan was great. Our—as you know, our secretary did a great job. They did a great job. There's no games. They didn't play games. And we're going to have the same thing here.

But then I'm going to look at New York in a little while. Let's do this. Let's do this together. Let's see. It's going to go pretty quickly.

And if we need to, we're going to do the same thing in Chicago, which is a disaster. We have a mayor there who is totally incompetent. He's an incompetent man.

And we have an incompetent Governor there. Pritzker is an incompetent. His family threw him out of the business, and he ran for Governor. And now I understand he wants to be President. But I notice he lost a little weight, so maybe he has a chance. *[Laughter]* You know? You never know what happens. But Pritzker is a gross incompetent guy. Thrown out of the family business.

But when I look at Chicago and I look at L.A.—if we didn't go to L.A. 3 months ago, L.A. would be burning—like the part that didn't burn. If he would have allowed the water to come down—which I told him about in my first term. I said: "You're going to have problems. Let it come down."

We actually sent in our military to have the water come down into L.A. They still didn't want it to come down after the fires, but that was it. We have it coming down.

But hopefully, L.A. is watching. That mayor also—the city is burning. They lost like 25,000 homes. I went there the day after the fire. You were there. And I saw people standing in front of a burned-down home. It was—their homes were incinerated. They weren't, like—even the steel was literally—it was all warped and literally disintegrated because of the winds and the flame and the whole thing. It was like a blow torch.

They were standing, on this beautiful day—maybe a couple of days after. We gave it a little time, because they—what they had suffered. Almost 25,000 homes. And you see what's happening now. They didn't give their permits. I went to a town hall meeting. I said, "We're going to get you the Federal permits"—which are much harder—"almost immediately."

Lee Zeldin is a star. He did an incredible job. They have all their Federal permits. They don't have their city permits. And the mayor said to me, "We think we can have them in 2 years."

I was walking down the street, and I met with firemen and police. And I was saying hello to many people that were standing in front of their homes with yellow tape. You can't go in. You can't go onto the lot. And those people wanted to start rebuilding their homes then and there.

And the mayor said, "We should be able to get them the permits within 2 years." I said: "That's a shame. Two years, are you kidding? I'm going to get them the Federal permit, like, almost immediately. Two years?" And she draw—she drew it back. "Well, maybe 1 year." The place was booing her out of the place.

They don't have their permits to build their homes, and now they're talking about putting—this is among the most beautiful areas—was—in the country. Now they're talking about putting low-income housing there. Can you believe this?

I love low-income housing. I made money with low-income housing. I built low-income housing. I know more about low-income housing than luxury housing. I know about everything real estate.

They want to replace some of those homes with low-income housing. They haven't gotten their permits yet. We've gotten all the Federal permits, which are much tougher to get, and it was done almost immediately through Lee Zeldin and Federal environmental.

And I watched the other day. Those people are angry. And now—you know, they had tremendous—they love that area. They love the whole big area—different places. But they loved it. It was all luxury stuff and beautiful stuff. And some wasn't that luxury, but the level of love for that neighborhood—their neighborhoods—was incredible.

And you know what? I watched people on television there. They want to go. They want to leave. They've lost their spirit. They've lost their heart. Because the mayor is incompetent, and Gavin Newsom is incompetent. He's got a good line of bullshit, but that's about it. He's incompetent.

And you have—Los Angeles is—you know, it's amazing. You know, I called—the first thing I did—I called—I got the Olympics to go there. I was the one that got it. And by a rare thing that happened, I'll be the President. I was very upset because I got the Olympics, and I said, "I won't be President when it comes."

But bad things happened, and illegal things happened—really illegal things happened. Now, it turns out one good thing was I'm going to be the President for the Olympics; for 2050—for 250, which is going to be fantastic; and also for the World Cup. So, we have a lot of good things. And I hope 250 is going to be—the 250th anniversary is going to be the best.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. But when I looked at those people and I saw, last night, on television that they still don't have their permits, it's a disgrace what's happened in Los Angeles.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Yes, thank you. The China tariff deadline is tonight. Do you plan to extend that?

The President. We'll see what happens. China has been—we've been dealing very nicely with China, as you probably have heard. They have tremendous tariffs that they're paying to the United States of America. And we'll see what happens.

They've been dealing quite nicely. The relationship is very good with President——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

——with President Xi and myself.

Go ahead, please.

Russia/Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned your upcoming meeting with President Putin.

The President. Yes.

Q. Can you tell us what you hope to get out of that and whether you'll consider inviting President Zelenskyy to join.

The President. So you have to understand, this is a war that should have never happened. This is a war that wouldn't have happened if I were President. It would have never happened. It wasn't—it was the apple of his eye.

I got along very well with President Putin. But if you look, under President Bush, they took a lot of territory. Under President Obama, they took a lot of territory. Under Biden, they essentially took the whole thing. You know, it's just a question of time.

Under Trump, you know what they took? Nothing. Nothing. I was the one that said, "You can't build your pipeline" that was half built. I came in. I stopped the pipeline.

It was called—called "Nord Stream 2." Nobody knows that. You know? Nobody ever heard of Nord Stream 2. You might have not even heard of it. Biggest pipeline in the world. I stopped it.

I was not a friend of Russia, but I got along well with Putin. It's always good to get along with other countries if possible. But that doesn't mean your—you roll over like Biden did. Biden came in, and he immediately approved the pipeline. I couldn't believe it.

Then they say, "Trump wasn't tough on Russia." I wasn't tough? I was the toughest. Putin said: "You're—if you're not tough, I would hate like hell to see—[inaudible]."

I stopped the biggest economic development job, the biggest job that Russia had ever built. I stopped it. It was dead. And this low-IQ President came in, and he let them build a pipeline and supply oil and gas all over Europe, you know.

So this is really a feel-out meeting, a little bit. And President Putin invited me to get involved. He wants to get involved. I think—I believe he wants to get it over with.

Now, I've said that a few times, and I've been disappointed, because I'd have, like, a great call with him, and then missiles would be lobbed into Kyiv or some other place, and you'd have 60 people laying on a road dying. I said: "That's cold. That's cold."

But it's a violent war. Five to seven thousand people a week are dying. And you know, there's—there's nobody from here. They're all Russian and Ukrainian people, and some people from the cities—a much smaller number—but still, those missiles do damage, and they kill a lot of people, but mostly soldiers. And they're young soldiers. Although, in the case of Ukraine, they're getting much older. They're drafting 60-year-olds now. It's a terrible thing to witness, and I think I have an obligation.

Look, this is Joe Biden's war. This is not my war.

I made a deal with NATO a month ago—you covered it very accurately, actually—where we don't pay anything anymore. You know, we're not paying anything. They are buying things from us, and NATO is paying us. I got it raised from 2 percent of GDP to 5 percent. And they're paying us for everything that we send. We're not paying. But Biden approved \$350 billion. Europe has spent \$100 billion. The money that's been spent and the death is incredible.

It's the worst thing that's happened—by far the worst that's happened since World War II.

So I'm going in to speak to Vladimir Putin, and I'm going to be telling him: "You've got to end this war. You've got to end it." And he wasn't going to mess with me. He was—this war would have never happened. You know, we had a discussion about it one time, and we never had that discussion again. It would have never happened.

And when the election was rigged, and then Biden took office, which was—barely took office; the autopen took office—bad things started happening. Bad things. Stupid things were said, and it ended up in a war.

And you know, the big—the—and I don't believe this will happen anymore, because I have that pretty well covered—this could end up in a third world war. This could have been a third world war. I don't think that's going to happen now.

But I thought it was very respectful that the President of Russia is coming to our country, as opposed to us going to his country, or even a third-party place. But I think we'll have constructive conversations.

Then, after that meeting, immediately—maybe as I'm flying out, maybe as I'm leaving the room—I'll be calling the European leaders, who I get along with very well. And, you know, I have a great relationship, I think, with all of them. And I get along with Zelenskyy, but, you know, I disagree with what he's done—very, very severely disagree. This is a war that should have never happened, wouldn't have happened. But I'll be speaking to Zelenskyy.

The next meeting will be with Zelenskyy and Putin or Zelenskyy and Putin and me. I'll be there if they need, but I want to have a meeting set up between the two leaders.

I was a little bothered by the fact that Zelenskyy was saying, "Well, I have to get constitutional approval." I mean, he's got approval to go into war and kill everybody, but he needs approval to do a land swap.

Because there will be some land swapping going on—I know that through Russia and through conversations with everybody—to the good—for the good of Ukraine. Good stuff, not bad stuff. Also some bad stuff for both. So there's good and there's bad, but it's very complex, because you have lines that are very uneven, and there'll be some swapping. There'll be some changes in land. And the word that they will use is—you know, they—they make changes. We're going to change the lines, the battle lines.

Russia has occupied a big portion of Ukraine. They've occupied some very prime territory. We're going to try and get some of that territory back for Ukraine, but they've taken some very prime territory. They've taken, largely, ocean—you know, in real estate, we call it oceanfront property. That's always the most valuable property. If you're on a lake, a river, or an ocean, it's always the best property.

Well, Ukraine—a lot of people don't know that Ukraine was largely a thousand miles of ocean. That's gone, other than one small area—Odesa. It's a small area. There's just a little bit of water left.

So I'm going to go and see the parameters.

Now, I may leave and say, "Good luck," and that will be the end. I may say, "This is not going to be settled." I mean, there are those that believe that Putin wanted all of Ukraine. I happen to be one of them, by the way. I think if it weren't for me, he would not be even talking to anybody else right now.

But I'm going to meet with him. We're going to see what the parameters are, and then I'm going to call up President Zelenskyy and the European leaders.

Q. Afterwards?

The President. Right after the meeting, yes. And I'm going to tell them what kind of a deal—I'm not going to make a deal. It's not up to me to make a deal. I think a deal should be made for both. I think Russia has to get back into building their country. It's a massive country. I think they have 11 time zones, if you can believe it. It's a massive—it's a—by far—from the standpoint of land, it's by far the largest.

They have tremendous potential in Russia to do well. They're not doing well. Their economy is not doing well right now because it's been very well disturbed by this.

It doesn't help when the President of the United States tells their largest or second largest oil buyer that we're putting a 50-percent tariff on you if you buy oil from Russia. That was a big blow. And then they say, "Gee, he wasn't so tough." Nobody else would have done that.

And I haven't stopped there. I mean, look, I was all set to do things far bigger than that, but I got a call that they'd like to meet, and I'm going to see what they want to meet about. I'd like to

see a cease-fire. I'd like to see the best deal that could be made for both parties. You know, it takes two to tango, right?

So, ultimately, I'll have a meeting next week. I had a great relationship with him, considering the fact that, you know, I was not nice to him, because of the pipeline. I ended the pipeline. I also gave the Javelins. Do you ever hear of a Javelin? Javelin is called a "tank-buster." They say that Obama gave them sheets, and I gave them Javelins. If it weren't for me, all those tanks that were destroyed at the first days of the war—because the tanks got stuck in the mud. Some commander made a better—you know, they would have been in Kyiv in four hours, going down the highway, but a Russian general made a brilliant decision to go through the farmland instead.

And they just had torrential rains, and the rains were so bad, and it was mud, and those tanks got stuck in the mud. I don't know who that general is, but knowing Vladimir, he's probably not around any longer. Because all those tanks were stuck in the mud, and they went along with the Javelins.

I got—I gave them the Javelins. You know that, right? I gave them Javelins. They gave them sheets.

But I'm going to—I'm going to meet with President Putin, and we're going to see what he has in mind. And if it's a fair deal, I'll reveal it to the European Union leaders and to the NATO leaders and also to President Zelenskyy. I think, out of respect, I'll call him first, and then I'll call them after. And I may say: "Lots of luck. Keep fighting." Or I may say, "We can make a deal."

Q. If not—if there's no——

The President. I will tell you this. I've seen a poll coming out of Ukraine: 88 percent of the people would like to see a deal made. And if you go back 3 years, everybody was gung ho for war. You know, everybody is gung ho for war until you have it. It's an amazing thing.

I had it with a couple of countries where—I couldn't get a deal done with one particular country, and—I just couldn't. The guy is great. He's a friend of mine. Great. Good leader. Tough as hell. I couldn't get the deal done, and then he went into war for a short period of time. You know where I'm talking about—first term. And it was nasty. Guys being killed all over the place.

And he went through 1 week of war, and I was able to get the deal done. [*Laughter*] He said, "This is nasty."

Yes, please.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine/The President's Meeting With President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. Yes, just to—just to follow up on what you were saying there. First of all, Volodymyr Zelenskyy is not invited on Friday?

The President. He wasn't a part of it. I would say he could go, but he's gone to a lot of meetings. You know, he's been there for 3½ years. Nothing happened.

Q. And what is the definition——

The President. I mean, do you want somebody that's been doing this for 3½ years? What's the definition of a good deal? I'll tell you after I hear what the deal is——

Q. No, I was going to ask you——

The President. ——because there could be many definitions. You know, you're talking about a very large and complex situation.

Now, I tell you, the war that I just settled with Azerbaijan and with—as you know—and Armenia was almost as complex as this one, having to do with routes——

Q. So what's the definition of a successful meeting——

The President. ——trade.

Q. ——on Friday with Vladimir Putin?

The President. Well, we're going to have a meeting with Vladimir Putin, and at the end of that meeting, probably in the first 2 minutes, I'll know exactly whether or not a deal can be made.

Q. How will you know that?

The President. Because that's what I do. I make deals.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes, please. Go ahead.

Semiconductor Manufacturing

Q. Yeah. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm going to ask you two questions—one about China, one about Russia—if I could. On China, your administration agreed to send the most advanced—or advanced Nvidia and AMD chips to——

The President. No, obsolete. No.

Q. Obsolete chips. Well, and then 15 percent of the profits come back——

The President. You mean the 20s. No, no. That's—this is an old chip that China already has. And I deal with Jensen, who is a great guy, and Nvidia. The chip that we're talking about, the H20, it's—it's an old chip. China already has it in a different form, different name, but they have it or they have a combination of two—will make up for it and even then some.

Now, Jensen also has—Jensen is a very brilliant guy, and Jensen also has a new chip: the Blackwell. Do you know what the Blackwell is? The Blackwell is superduper advanced. I wouldn't make a deal with that. Although, it's possible I'd make a deal—a somewhat enhanced, in a negative way, Blackwell. In other words, take 30 percent to 50 percent off of it.

But that's the latest and the greatest in the world. Nobody has it. They won't have it for five years.

But the H20 is obsolete. You know, it's one of those things, but it still has a market. So, I said, "Listen, I want 20 percent, if I'm going to approve this for you, for the country"—for our country, for the U.S. I don't want it myself. You know, every time I say, like—like 747, "I want." I want, yes, for the Air Force. That's—so I just want to—so, when I say, "I want 20," I want for the country. I only care about the country. I don't care about myself.

And he said, "Would you make it 15?" So we negotiate a little deal. So he's selling a, essentially, old chip that—Huawei has a similar chip, a chip that does the same thing. And I said: "Good. If I'm going to give it to you"—because they have a—you know, they have a stopper—what we call a "stopper." Not allowed to do it. A restrictive—it's really known as a restrictive covenant. And I said, "If I'm going to do that, I want you to pay us, as a country, something, because I'm giving you a release." I released them only from the H20.

Now, on the Blackwell, I think he's coming to see me again about that. But that will be a unenhanced version of the big one. Like, I don't know if you know, we will sometimes sell fighter jets to a country, and we'll give them 20-percent less than we have. You know what I mean, right? That's the same thing.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/China-U.S. Trade/Tariff Revenue

Q. Do you see a time, Mr. President, when there could be normal trade between the U.S. and Russia, should your meeting go well, should there be peace?

The President. I do, yes. Russia has a very valuable piece of land. If Vladimir Putin would go toward business instead of toward war—you know, it's a warring nation. That's what they do. They fight a lot of wars. A friend of mine said, "Russia is tough because they just keep on fighting." They beat Hitler. So did we. And they beat Napoleon. You know, they've been doing this for a long time.

I asked a question to a very, very smart man that some people like and some people don't like: Viktor Orbán—right?—from Hungary, the head of Hungary. And he's in that same area and knows the two countries very well. I said—this was before Biden didn't—didn't do anything to get us out of it. He could have gotten us out of that. It would have never happened.

I said, "So can Russia be beaten by Ukraine?" He looked at me like, "What a stupid question." He said, "Russia is a massive country, and they win their country, and they win their life through wars." They fight wars. That's what they do. He said, "China beats you with trade. Russia beats you with war." That was a very interesting statement.

China is not beating us with trade, not when I'm in charge. But they were beating Biden with trade, but they never beat us with trade. Don't forget, China had to pay 400 billion dollars' worth of tariffs when I was—last time. That was last time. And if we didn't have COVID, all of this stuff would already—we would be loaded. We—you know, we're finding hundreds of billions of dollars of cash is pouring into our country now because of tariffs, and all we're doing is we're doing what they do to us. It's so beautiful to see it.

They find—they found, last month, as you saw, \$25 billion of excess cash flow. And they're saying, "Where did it come from?" I said: "I'll tell you where it came from. It came from a place called tariffs." And we're doing very well. We're really doing well.

But I expect to have a meeting with Putin that I—I think it'll be good, but it might be bad. And I have—hey, I'm here for one reason: to get rid of a war that somebody else started. Should have never happened. And if I could end it, great. Complex war. A lot of bad blood. A lot of bad blood.

But Zelenskyy has been there for 3½ years. So I—if you put them in a room—now, I will say this: Ultimately, I'm going to put the two of them in a room. I'll be there, or I won't be there. And I think it will get solved.

Yes, please. Behind.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Thanks, Mr. President.

The President. Excuse me. I'm going to suggest, because unless—could you—do you have any other questions——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

——wait—on DC? Because I—I don't want them—I don't want them to be——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Wait, wait, wait. These are incredible people. I don't want them to be standing up here——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

——on subjects that——

Does anybody have a question of them? And then——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

And then you guys can leave.

Attorney General Bondi. Thank you.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Okay. A question—Brian [Brian Glenn, Real America's Voice], go ahead.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. All right. This——

The President. And by the way, this is only on DC, and then they're going to leave, because it's unfair to have them stand up here all day long.

Brian.

Q. I agree. I've got two questions for you. First, about DC. This is personal for me as well. Last year, I was robbed on the streets by one of these teenage thugs. Had a gun, got away with it. Let's talk about the effort that between law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges, because it's a—you know, recycling belt. Like, these kids go—they don't fear the police. They know—if you talk about how we've got to get these judges and put these kids behind bars——

The President. Right.

Q. ——adult crimes deserve adult penalties.

And my second question, I'll—I will—after you answer that, please.

U.S. Attorney Pirro. Do you want me to answer it?

Q. Oh, whoever wants to take it.

U.S. Attorney Pirro. Okay. Okay. It's real simple—do you want me to answer it?

The President. Go ahead. [Laughter]

U.S. Attorney Pirro. Here's the problem. Assuming that they're 17 years—older than 17 years old, I can get the case. If they're under 18 years of age, I can only get the case if it's murder, rob one, rape. Even if they shoot a gun but don't kill you, I can't get it. So, the law has to be changed.

As the president said, cashless bail—that has to be changed.

All right. Then, even assuming I get the case, I get jurisdiction, I get a conviction, the DC Council has given the judges the ability to give probation on shootings. And so, then it's up to them. All of these things—the Youth Rehabilitation, Incarceration Reduction Act, and now they want to seal records. So, if we work hard and we get a conviction, they want to wipe it out. So that needs to all be changed.

Q. Okay. Missed the question——

U.S. Attorney Pirro. That's all.

The President. Pam, would you answer that also, if you would?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Attorney General Bondi. Yes, and just back to—back to that topic—let's be clear, though: We're going to charge them, and we're going to track every single thing they do throughout every step of the court process and report back to you and let all of you know what's happening to them, because the people who are prosecuting them, the judges who are trying them, they also need to be held accountable.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, you also made the comment—you made the comment when you walked out here: This is the most people we've ever seen in this briefing room.

The President. Ever. I've never seen——

Q. Ever, right?

The President. I've never seen any—where's Karoline? Where's—where's my superstar?
[Laughter] Karoline—is Karoline in the back?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Where's Karoline? Come here, Karoline. Come here, Karoline. Come here.

Is she doing a good job, by the way? Come here, Karoline. Is this the largest crowd we've—

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. Yes.

The President. ——that you've ever seen here?

Press Secretary Leavitt. This is definitely the most packed briefing, and I think all of you would agree. I think it's why we need to build a ballroom. *[Laughter]*

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, I have a better idea.

The President. Good.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

All right. Brian, go ahead.

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room/Russia/Ukraine

Q. My question is this. You're building the big, beautiful ballroom.

The President. Yes.

Q. Could we build a big, beautiful briefing room? Updated technology, more seats——

The President. No, I don't want to do that.

Q. No, no. And we'll—we'll call it the——

The President. I don't want you to be comfortable. *[Laughter]*

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. No, Mr. President, we'll call it the Transparency Room.

The President. I'm sorry. So—so——

Q. The Transparency Room.

The President. No, I don't want to make—I don't want to make life comfortable.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

So, look—look—look, let's just do this. Let's do this. It's going to be a big thing. We're going to Russia. That's going to be a big deal. What happens happens. I'll let you know what happens. You'll be the first to know.

I'll be calling the European leaders. I'm going with—totally, I mean, we have a lot of talks. They're great people. They're great leaders, actually. And they want to get back—honestly, as one of them said, "I've OD'd on trying to settle Ukraine." They've OD'd, meaning they've overdosed on the settlement of Ukraine. Not a nice expression but, boy, is it accurate.

They're tired of it. They want to get back to spending money on their countries. You know, they're in—we're in for—Biden gave them \$350 billion. Europe gave \$100 billion. It should be much more than that. Shouldn't have been that kind of—they should have had equalization, but they didn't.

But you know what? Still a lot of money. They want to get back to building their own countries. They really want it resolved.

My relationship with the European leaders, as you saw, is extremely good. It—like, it's—I—it's perfect; it's beautiful.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Wait. Wait, wait, wait. And we're going to try—they'll—I'll be in touch with them. They—I have five of them call me. And you think it's easy. They—there are a lot of European leaders, but they rely on me. Very much rely on me. If it wasn't for me, this thing would never get solved until the last person breathing is dead.

The President's Consultation With European Leaders

Q. Would you talk to them before meeting with President Putin?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Yes, I do. I'm talking to them right now. So I'm talking to the European leaders. I'll be talking to President Zelenskyy. I'm going to get everybody's ideas. I go into that thing fully loaded right up there, and we're going to see what happens.

Now, I think one of two things is going to happen. It's going to be a good meeting, and we'll go a step further. We'll get it done. I'd like to see a cease-fire very, very quickly—very quick. I'd like to see it immediately, but I'd like to see it very quickly.

And we're going to be dealing with the European leaders, and we're going to be dealing with President Zelenskyy, and hopefully we're going to have a great success.

As far as this, what we did today—and I think you were here for DC more so than even Russia, because Russia will be—you know, coup—we have a couple of days to go, but the Russia is going to be very interesting.

But to me, what is very exciting—and we're going to take back our capital. We're going to make it beautiful again, but we're going to make it, more importantly, safe again. It's going to be so safe. It's going to be a model.

And then we'll look at other cities also, but other cities are studying what we're doing. And you have some capable people in other cities. They can do it too. But we have a great group of professionals. We're going to have a safe, beautiful Capital, and it's going to happen very quickly.

Thank you all. Thank you all very much.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Will the Justice Department appeal the Epstein decision today, Mr. President?

Q. How long will the takeover of DC police last?

Q. Karoline, where——

Press Secretary Leavitt. We'll see you guys tomorrow. We'll have another briefing.

Q. Which neighborhoods will see the National Guard on their streets?

Q. All of them.

Q. Will we get more prisons out of this, sir?

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:38 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Kristina Gill, wife of former Commodity Futures Trading Commission Chief of Staff Mike Gill, who died on February 3, 2024, from gunshot wounds sustained during a carjacking in Washington, DC; Social Security Administration employee Edward Coristine, in his former capacity as an employee of the U.S. DOGE Service; Rep. Enrique R. Cuellar; Phillip Todd, a former staffer for Sen. Randal H. Paul; Glynn Neal, who was charged in the stabbing of Mr. Todd; Honesty Cheadle, a 3 year-old who died on July 7 following gunshot wounds sustained in a shooting in southeast Washington, DC, on July 5; former Vice President Kamala D. Harris; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Mayor Muriel E. Bowser of Washington, DC; Rep. Nancy Pelosi, in her former capacity as Speaker of the House of Representatives; King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar; President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates; President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan; Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago, IL; Mayor Karen R. Bass of Los Angeles, CA; Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California; and Jensen Huang, founder, president, and chief executive officer, NVIDIA Corp. He also referred to Executive Order 14333.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : News conferences, August 11.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Aliyev, Ilham; Bass, Karen R.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blanche, Todd; Bondi, Pamela J.; Bowser, Muriel E.; Burgum, Douglas J.; Bush, George W.; Cheadle, Honesty; Cole, Terrance C.; Coristine, Edward; Cuellar, Enrique R.; Gill, Katrina; Gill, Mike; Harris, Kamala D.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Homan, Thomas D.; Huang, Jensen; Johnson, Brandon; Leavitt, Karoline; Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan; Neal, Glynn; Newsom, Gavin C.; Obama, Barack; Orbán, Viktor; Pashinyan, Nikol; Patel, Kashyap P. "Kash"; Paul, Randal H.; Pelosi, Nancy; Pirro, Jeanine; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Scharf, William O.; Serralta, Gadyaces S.; Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir; Todd, Phillip; Xi Jinping; Zeldin, Lee M.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Armenia, Prime Minister; Armenia, relations with Azerbaijan; Attorney General; Azerbaijan, President; Azerbaijan, relations with Armenia; Border security; California, Governor; California, wildfires in Los Angeles area; China, President; China, trade with U.S.; COVID-19 pandemic; Criminal justice system, reform efforts; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; District of Columbia, Metropolitan Police Department; District of Columbia, U.S. attorney; Deputy Attorney General; Drug Enforcement Administration; Environmental Protection Agency; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Federal court nominations and confirmations; Hungary, President; Illegal immigration; Illinois, Governor;

Marijuana, decriminalization efforts; National Guard; News media, Presidential interviews; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Qatar, Amir; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, oil supply and refining; Russia, President; Saudi Arabia, King; Secretary of Defense; Secretary of the Interior; Semiconductor manufacturing; Tax Code reform; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. Marshals Service; U.S. Park Police; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; United Arab Emirates, President; White House Border Czar; White House Press Secretary; White House Staff Secretary.

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