

Remarks During a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

August 26, 2025

The President. Hello, everybody. How are you?

Hello. Thank you very much. Are you all set? You all ready? Nice group. Big group.

But I want to thank you all for being here as we prepare to celebrate Labor Day, when we honor the incredible, hard-working men and women of our country, which is doing very well, I have to tell you.

Every policy of the Trump administration is designed to lift up the American worker, promote great paying blue-collar jobs and to rebuild the industrial bedrock of our Nation.

It's also, obviously, for great defense. We have the greatest military in the world. We rebuilt it largely in my first term. Some of it was stupidly given away to Afghanistan. For what reason? Nobody can figure that one. But it was still a relatively small amount of what—you know, if you compare the—the concept of what they did, however, is just incredible.

But the country is doing well. We're respected all over the world like—like never before, probably.

We went to NATO, as you know, and they went from 2 percent to 5 percent of GDP—nobody expected that—and the difference is they didn't pay the 2 and they paid the 5. So—and as you know, we are selling a tremendous amount of equipment to NATO. We're not spending any money. We're making money. But I don't want to talk about making. I want to talk about: We're no longer involved with funding Ukraine, but we are involved with trying to stop the war or the killing in Ukraine.

So we're selling missiles and military equipment—millions and millions and, ultimately, billions of dollars to the NATO people, where I'm very friendly and we have great relationship. But that was an amazing trip. So they're funding the entire war. We're not funding anything. I think it's an important point to make, because a lot of people don't understand that.

And we will continue to do that, and we're trying to get as much as we can for them. They want the American product. The American military product is by far the best in the world, and that's what they want to get. They have lots of options, but that's what they want to get.

So we're—and the factories are doubling up and tripling up, where they make the Patriots and other—really, you could say defense and offensive weapons.

The wages for blue-collar workers are now rising at the fastest rate in 60 years, which is so important to all of us around this table. The average American worker has already seen a \$500 wage increase this year, and there's no inflation, because there's been decreases—tremendous decreases with—thanks to Doug and Chris and some of the people—the great job they've done with energy. Thank you very much. And, Chris, thank you very much. I see you're down close to \$60 a barrel, and you'll be breaking that pretty soon, and that has a huge impact.

So we have—groceries are down. Energy is way down. Energy is way down. And it was \$4 and \$5 for a gallon of gas. Think of that, for getting gasoline. And now it's probably \$2.25. There are some places it's \$2. It's even—it broke \$2 at a couple of locations in the South.

In places like California, where they charge such high taxes, it's higher, but it's still much lower than what it was a year ago.

So energy is way down. Groceries are way down. Eggs are way down. Thank you very much, Madam Secretary. You've done a great job. Appreciate it.

When we came in, the eggs were through the roof. They were four times higher than they've ever been, and my first question from you people, "What are you going to do with eggs?" I said, "I—what's the problem with eggs?" *[Laughter]* That was caused by Biden, or whoever was operating the autopen actually caused it, I guess, because I don't think he knew too much about eggs.

Factories are booming compared to before I took office. Domestic auto production is going to be—it's—oh, it's going to be so thrilling in 2 years when you see the numbers, because they're building plants all over the country. They're all coming in because of tariffs. They don't want to build—they don't want to pay the tariffs. And if they build their plant here, they don't pay the tariffs. And they're pouring into our country.

And you know about AI, and you know about other, but the auto plants, you know, that's the good, old-fashioned stuff that I love. The auto plants are pouring into the United States of America. They're coming from Mexico, they're coming from Canada, and they're coming from Europe—all over Europe—and it's been pretty amazing.

So factories are booming, and when they actually open—you know, right now, they're booming in terms of construction.

This is something given to me by Mark Zuckerberg, and you'll see this is AI now. These are—and I never understood. I said, "Wow," you know, because I built shopping centers, and for \$50 million you can build a very nice shopping center. So I never understood when they said \$50 billion for a plant. I said, "What the hell kind of a plant is that?" *[Laughter]* But when you look at this, you understand why it's \$50 billion.

So this is one he's building in Louisiana.

[At this point, the President held up a paper.]

That's Meta—Facebook, as people understand it to be. But look at that. Now, that's the size of Manhattan. So that's superimposed over the island of Manhattan. It takes up a big part of Manhattan. I think they say 81 percent of Manhattan.

So these are big things, and they're going up. A lot of them are going up now. I don't know that big. Actually, Mark is building four of them, and others are building similar places.

And when these things open up, I'll tell you what, our country—we're leading China now in AI—substantially leading China. And the reason is because we're letting them build their own electrical facilities.

We would need double the energy that we were—if you take all of the electricity that we produce right now in this country, you'd have to multiply it times two or maybe three times. So three times more than we have right now for everything—to operate your toaster and everything else. Okay? Three times more. And the way we are able to succeed: because China goes out and builds these massive plants.

They're right now building 58 coal—in this case, almost all coal-fired plants. And coal is back with this country too, by the way. You know, there's a reason they use it, because it's good. It works for them. And we call it "clean coal." We don't call it "coal." We call it "clean"—even "very clean coal." But we have coal going up.

We have nuclear going up. Nuclear is very much in vogue now. It's safe and inexpensive and great.

We don't allow windmills. We're not allowing any windmills to go up. I mean, unless there's a legal situation where somebody committed to it a long time ago, we don't allow windmills.

And we don't want the solar panels that I was speaking with the Secretary about, because they take up, you know, thousands of acres of our farmland. You see these big, ugly patches of black plastic that comes from China. And the solar is—you know, I like solar in some ways, but for firing up your big plants, it doesn't work. It's very unstable, but it really takes up your farm. The farmers are saying—you know, they're building these massive blotches in the middle of the fields all over the country. It's so crazy. It's so crazy. So we're not heavy into that at all.

And windmills, we're just not going to allow them. They ruin our—they're ruining our country. They're ruining everyone. If you look at—I hate to mention countries, but you look at the U.K.—what's happened in U.K.—they have energy costs have gone through the roof. It's because of wind. They want to do everything—close up the north—the northern parts of the country. They have oil. It's tremendous. And they close it up, and they're building windmills all over the place.

And I tell them: "You're my friends, but man, you're going to have a bad awakening very soon. You're going to—it's going to be very bad." They're ugly. They don't work. They kill your birds. They're bad for the environment. And if you look at them from a house, your house is worth less than 50 percent.

So I'm trying to have people learn about wind real fast. And I think I've done a good job, but not good enough, because some countries are still trying, and they're destroying themselves. Those are countries that are really destroying themselves. I hope they get back to fossil fuel.

Because right now, Chris, whether we like it or not, fossil fuel is the thing that works, and then you can add nuclear with it and other things. But fossil fuel is what works if we're going to fire up those big monster factories.

But the—if you look at comparing everything before I took office: Domestic auto production is up 18,000 cars a month, and we haven't even started yet because a lot of these plants aren't built. It's up 18,000 because Ford, General Motors, and a couple of others—Stellantis—they're taking their existing plants, and they're—as quickly as they can, they're adding on to them. So, when their plants open—because they're building big, modern, beautiful auto plants—but think of that, we're up 18,000 cars a month, and essentially all they've done is try and utilize their space correctly.

As their big plants open up, it's going to be—I hope they remember that it was this way. I hope this table gets a lot of the credit for what's happening—gets all of the credit, because this would have never happened. We were going out of business in every way.

We were losing. All the car plants were leaving this country. Now they're all coming back in, and they are coming from Canada, and they are coming from Mexico. But they're coming from Germany; they're coming from all over the world.

Domestic steel production is up by 100,000 tons of steels a week—steel a week. We are—we have a 50-percent tariff on steel, aluminum, and various other things—copper just got brought into the picture—and that means people are going to want to make steel here.

We just made a deal with U.S. Steel. As you know, we have a—an outside company come in, spend \$17 billion on building new plants, new everything. It's great. And it's—it stays right here in America. So we're doing amazingly well on steel.

And domestic oil production is up by more than 300,000 barrels a day. That's a lot of barrels. And you're going to be talking about that in a second, I think, Chris and Doug. These two people have done a fantastic job. And we have the oil price down to about \$62 a barrel.

So, just so you understand, because a lot of you like to talk about costs and prices, but I watch so much fake information: Product costs are down. Energy is way down. Energy brings things down.

You know, with energy, that's what happened with Biden. He stopped our program, and then he went back to it when he realized that it looked like you were going to be paying numbers that nobody's ever seen, like \$7 a gallon—you're going to play [pay; White House correction] \$7 a gallon. They were up to seven, 7½ dollars—so, then he immediately went back to the Trump plan that they terminated, but it was too late for them. It was too late. They blew it. They had a great thing going. I gave them something great, and they blew it.

Since the Inauguration, we've created over half a million new private jobs. And if you notice, when the numbers come out, government jobs are going down and private jobs are coming up. And that's what really fuels the country. It's easy to hire people and pay them for doing something that maybe is not very productive. But government jobs are down—actually, substantially down—and private jobs are way up. And these are the jobs that make money and create a better life.

Meanwhile, we've reduced the number of Federal bureaucrats by 84,000. So we got rid of 84,000, and I think the job numbers—you're going to see, the new job numbers are going to be through the roof because of all of the different businesses that are moving into our country.

And not just production businesses—autos and AI—but any business you can think of. In the world of furniture, as an example, North Carolina. I went there many times when I built a lot of hotels and things, and I'd go to North Carolina. I'd buy the greatest—they were the greatest, most talented people, and then China came along and took all of those jobs away.

If they would have tariffed them, China wouldn't have taken any of the jobs. But we had Presidents that honestly—and I like some of them, but they didn't know what the hell they were doing from a business standpoint, from running the country.

And North Carolina, the most talented woodworkers that you've ever seen. I could—I'd—I'd be there and I'd watch them. I'd say, "I'd like to have a rail on that chair, maybe can you fancy it up a little bit?" "How about this, sir?" Ji, ji, ji.

[The President made a hammering motion.]

And they'd hand me a thing. It was like they were artists. They were unbelievable.

And that business was stolen from us by others—not only China, but by others. All of a sudden, you're ordering your furniture from China, and it was not even close to being as good, but they couldn't compete with it. If we would have said, costs 100-percent or 200-percent tariff, you wouldn't have lost one job. It's so sad.

But we're going to rebuild North Carolina furniture and other places. South Carolina too to a lesser extent. They make furniture. But furniture we're going to put a very substantial tariff on. We've already announced it. It will be done pretty quickly.

And when that happens, everyone's going to start—and I just tell you, North Carolina, go out and start getting the grandchildren and the children, start teaching them. Because some of those incredible artists that I knew as young people, they're older people now, but they still have the talent and they have time left, but they're going to be teaching their sons and their daughters and their grandchildren, and it's going to be a beautiful thing to see.

It's going to happen like magic. It's going to happen without question. It's not like, "Gee, I hope it happens." It's going to happen.

The results of Ford that just announced it's going to create 4,000 new jobs—American jobs. Hyundai, 14,000 jobs. General Motors is moving production of the Chevy Blazer and Equinox from Mexico back to the United States, where it belongs.

Don't forget, we lost 55 percent of our auto production over the last 35 years. Fifty-five percent. We were the auto capital of the world, like there was nobody even thinking about challenging us. We lost 55 percent of it to Mexico, Canada, China—a lot to China—and other countries. And it's all coming back.

We will be bigger—a couple of years, we'll be bigger than we ever were. We'll be more dominant. We'll be bigger. We make great product too. We're starting to make really great product. We're going to be bigger than we ever were.

We're going to be at the level that it was when we were the only one that really—we sold to the world, and we're going to be back selling to ourselves and other parts of the world. It's not going to be the same, but it's going to be equally as important as it was in the heyday 30 years ago.

But we lost more than 50 percent of the automaking capacity. In fact, the unions—the auto unions, as you know, the top guy didn't know me, didn't like me, and now he likes me. He says, "Man, I can't believe what's—what Trump has done." But the autoworkers voted for me. They understood better than anybody else. The Auto Workers, the Teamsters, voted for me.

Teamsters are great. They all voted for me. They would—nobody—no Republican has ever gotten the support of the Teamsters and the Auto Workers, and now the head of the Auto Workers—I mean, it's so amazing. I watched him on television there. They can't even believe what happened. And I told them all what was going to happen.

We secured new market access for American agricultural exports all over the world. Our Secretary is doing a great job. Thank you, Brooke.

Secretary of Agriculture Brooke L. Rollins. Thank you, sir.

The President. And we have negotiated historic trade deals with the United Kingdom; China; Indonesia; Vietnam; the Philippines; Japan; South Korea, who was here yesterday; and the European Union. Foreign nations are now paying hundreds of billions of dollars straight into our Treasury, and numbers that nobody has ever seen before.

As you know, we made trade deals with a lot of countries, and many of those countries, just to be able to sit at the table, are paying us hundreds of billions of dollars. We made a trade deal with the European Union. They were rough on us for a long time, and now we have a very good deal. We made that with them. Trillions of dollars is coming into our country. Trillions. Far beyond billions, trillions of dollars.

Wouldn't you say, Scott?

Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. Yes, sir.

The President. And in a short period of time.

They have to buy \$750 billion worth of our energy product. Energy is great. We have more than anybody else, and we're using it.

But the European Union is a done deal, and Japan is done. And I heard there was a problem with South Korea, but we met yesterday, and they're done. We didn't do any—we just kept the same deal. He honored the deal. They wanted to see if he—well, I don't even want to say it, but they wanted to see if they could do something. But they honored the deal, which is nice.

And we cut the previous record-setting trade set—deficit I hear just came out. We cut it in half already. We haven't even set—we've only been here really for a few months, because, you know, takes you a little while to fix up the Oval Office and do those things—[laughter]—prepare for the—to prepare for the battle, right? So we really only been here for a very short period of time, and we cut the trade deficit in half.

Is that right?

Secretary Bessent. Yes, sir.

Secretary Rollins. Incredible.

The President. That's fantastic. I didn't think—I didn't even think we were going to do that.

And remember, these are things that are being built. These things are—you know, all these numbers I'm getting, they're not open yet. When they open——

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. ——you're going to see things happen in the United States that nobody's ever seen before, including our country in its heyday.

And I had the greatest economy in the history of our country my first 4 years, despite COVID, which was very a unfortunate situation for the whole world. We did a great job with it. Never got the credit for the job we did. Operation Warp Speed, people say, is the—one of the greatest achievements ever in politics or in the military, because it was almost a military procedure. But everybody, including Putin, said that Operation Warp Speed, "What you did with that, nobody can believe it." And we did a great job.

But it was still—it was a horrible, horrible pull over our country. We had a very dark cloud over the world. That was a very, very bad thing that came out of Wuhan, which I said it came out of Wuhan. That's where it came from. And China suffered greatly, but everybody did.

But we did a good job with that, as good as you can possibly do, and we came back, and now we're stronger than ever before.

If I didn't win this election, this country was gone. I'm telling you, economically, it was gone. None of the things that we're talking about would have happened, and the whole world was robbing us blind. Friend and foe, they were stealing our jobs, our money, our factories. They were stealing everything. We would have been a shell. We would have been a bankrupt, broken shell, and that's the way it is. But we're doing just the opposite, stronger than we've ever been.

Last month, in a landmark achievement, I also proudly signed the largest working class tax cuts in American history. So the bill that—I'm not going to use the term "Great Big Beautiful." That was good for getting it approved, but it's not good for explaining to people what it's all about.

It's a massive tax cut for the middle class. It's a massive tax cut for jobs, and it's—I mean, think of it: no tax on tips, no tax on Social Security. So, seniors, I don't know how you can vote for anybody else. And you know, just think of that. And no tax on overtime. So you work overtime, you don't have to pay tax on overtime. That's good.

The Democrats don't know what they're going to do, so they have, like, this sound bite. You know, they have all these sound bites. They send it out—I don't know, some guy sends out a word, and everybody uses it, including the fake news. Some of you are here right now. I'm looking at you.

And it's "death." They use the word "death." No, it's actually life. It's almost like a newborn life. It's not death. That's their sound bite: "The bill is death." It's not "We strengthen Social

Security. We strengthen Medicare, Medicaid." The job we've done on Social Security is—if the Democrats got in, Social Security is over, because the country is going to fail. There won't be any Social Security.

And I made that pledge to you: We're going to take care of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and we're doing that in spades, because the country is becoming so successful again. And it hasn't been this successful. I think, in the end, it will never have been this successful. I don't think it will even be close, with what's happening.

Every American is seeing a tax cut as a result of the bill. The average police officer will keep an extra \$1,000 a year, at least, in overtime, and the average waiter or waitress will keep nearly \$2,000 extra in the fact that they would have had to pay that kind of money on tips. And I never realized that the Government was so strong on that. But waitresses, waiters would tell me that the government would go after them. Like, it was horrible. That's how it all started with me. It just was incredible.

And the biggest thing was, again, the \$4 trillion that they found. I said, "Well, that was nice." They should have announced it. I could have told them that.

And I don't know, it should be simple, but a lot of people didn't understand it. Actually, a lot of good people didn't understand it. But now they're saying, "You know, Trump was right." They've never seen anything like this.

And I don't know what it is, Scott—they didn't understand what we were trying to explain to them was going to happen. Everybody is moving back to the United States because they don't want to pay a tax. If they don't—if they're not here, they have to pay a tax. And it didn't seem that complicated, but it's working at a level that nobody can imagine.

You know, this is working—\$4 trillion, but that's a big number. It's a number that nobody ever heard of before. But \$4 trillion is exciting, but that's nothing compared to what's happening, because these places haven't even opened yet. Some of them haven't even started hiring yet. They're under construction. So it's construction jobs, but it's not the big number, which—and the big numbers, when they open, they're going to be very successful. It's a revolution.

We're also working on things to ensure that the awesome power of artificial intelligence is used to benefit all Americans, including American workers and also American children. In that spirit, our wonderful First Lady has just announced a Presidential AI Challenge—it's going to be a very good challenge, I can tell you; she's put her heart into it—which will inspire the next generation to stay on the cutting edge of this vital technology.

This is the new internet, the new computer, the new television, the new everything, all put together in one. This is why, when I show you a picture like that—I mean, I show you this——

[The President held up a paper.]

This a factory superimposed over the island of Manhattan, and you have many of them being built right now all over the country or soon to start. Some of them have started. This one has actually started. That's in the great state of Louisiana.

But the first lady is working very hard on this, and it's an important initiative. And Melania, when she puts her mind to it, nobody could do better. There's nobody.

So every young person should go to AI.gov to learn more—AI.gov to learn more. And you'll see it's great challenge. I think it's going to be a very modern kind of a challenge. It involves AI, which is very exciting to people. So I want to thank her. Raised a lot of money for children.

We're putting America first, and we're going to be putting the America first—worker first. And you know, the Republican Party has picked up 4 million new people. Four million. The

Democrats have lost 2½ million. Other than that, they're extremely happy. No, they're very depressed. *[Laughter]* They're very depressed.

And their new box that they've fallen into is crime. There was a consultant on one of the shows this morning I was watching. I thought he was very good. He's a Democrat consultant, and he was screaming: "No, no, don't let him do this to you. Don't let—it's another trap. It's another trap." What he's talking about, like men playing in women's sports, they said that's an 80/20. No, it's a 97/3. It's 97/3. Like transgender for everybody. They fought for it. They're still fighting for it.

I saw a guy today, a politician that you all know very well, fighting like hell for men playing in women's sports. "You don't understand. They're human beings also." Well, I agree they're human beings, but you can't have a 7-foot guy playing basketball with the women. You know, it's just one of those little problems in life. *[Laughter]*

And we all have our place. That's okay. I've got my place too. *[Laughter]*

But this guy is screaming, "It's another trap, and this is the worst of all," he said: "because this is crime. Trump is saying he's against crime, and they're for crime." *[Laughter]* "No," he's going—it was funny. "No, it's a trap. Don't do it." *[Laughter]*

And then I saw this poor, stupid Chuck Schumer, the guy—he looks like he's aged a hundred years. And I don't like getting into looks. *[Laughter]* You know, looks don't mean anything, right? When you're in politics, looks don't matter. I—look at Pam. I would never say she's beautiful, because it's—that'd be the end of my political career. *[Laughter]* Lori——

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. ——Secretary.

Secretary Rollins. Thank you, sir.

The President. And—but I will tell you, this is the best of all, and they're going to fight me.

Like this slob of a Governor you have in Illinois. This poor guy got thrown out of his business by his family. I know the family. I was partners with the family. Nice family—I like the family, but he was no good. He was—they threw him out. He's Governor of Illinois. And he goes, about Trump, "We don't need his help." Chicago is the worst. These places are really bad.

Crime in DC was the worst it ever was. You know, they make up stories. Crime in DC was the worst ever in history. And now, over the last 13 days, we've worked so hard. We've taken so many—and there are many left, but we've taken so many criminals—over a thousand.

I watched a man from Maryland who said to me, at a meeting: "Sir, you're the greatest President. You're doing an unbelievable job. What a great job." Governor Moore—has anyone heard of him? He's another hopeful for President. I don't think so. But I met him, and I didn't realize it was on camera. He—did you see they caught him on camera? I was at a game. I don't know, like the Army-Navy game or something. And I met him in a hallway, and as usual—you do your job very well—one of these great cameramen had it on tape.

But I met this gentleman. I never met him before. "Sir, you're doing a great job. You're doing an unbelievable job." "Thank you very much." But then he goes on television, says: "Oh, Trump is a dictator. He's a dictator"—and a lot of people—*[inaudible]*.

So the line is that I'm a dictator, but I stop crime. So a lot of people say, "You know, if that's the case, I'd rather have a dictator." *[Laughter]* But I'm not a dictator. I just know how to stop crime.

And you would think that Illinois, where they have such a problem with crime, such a bad Governor—he should be calling me, and he should be saying: "Could you send over the troops, please? It's out of control."

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. It's out of control. In New York, it's out of control. Not as bad as Illinois, by the way. Not even close.

In California, you would have not had the Olympics had I not sent in the troops, sent in the National Guard. They did a fantastic job.

We have the Olympics. We have the World Cup coming. I got them in my first term, and I was really sad, because I said, "Oh boy, I got them, and I won't be President." And little things happened. Thank you, God. Thank you. *[Laughter]* No, little things happened. I got—think of it: I got—you could ask Gianni. Gianni would tell you. He's the head of World Cup. He's a great guy too. Great commissioner. But he's the head of the World Cup. He said, "Trump is the only reason we're doing this."

And the sad part is that I was not going to have it. I would have to be—probably I wouldn't have even been invited to the game, depending on who's President, right? And I got that.

I did not get 250. Okay? The 250th anniversary, I did not get. I'd like to claim it, if I might. *[Laughter]* But I didn't get that. That was—whether I was President or not, it was still 250. *[Laughter]*

Secretary Rollins. That was George Washington.

The President. I'd like to take credit for it.

What I will take credit for is, we're going to have a better celebration under Trump than you would have had under some stiff. *[Laughter]* That I'll take care of.

Secretary Rollins. Yes, absolutely true.

The President. We're going to have a safer place, Kristi, because of you and Tom Homan and everybody. Right?

Participant. Yes.

The President. But—so we have 250 coming up; we have the World Cup coming up, which is like having 45 Super Bowls; and we have the Olympics coming up.

Secretary Rollins. Amazing.

The President. So we're going to have a very exciting 3½ years remaining. We're going to have a very exciting—it's going to be done properly.

So I just want to tell you, our country is in incredible shape. Our military is strong and powerful and respected. Our—we had some fantastic decisions from the Supreme Court that let us put the people into the military and other businesses that are best for the job, as opposed to some woke reason that that was killing our country. That was a very strong, very powerful—you can now go into a company based on your ability, as opposed to being forced in based on some factor that cannot make our country great. That was a big decision—very, very big decision.

And we've had a lot of great decisions, and we've all made some great decisions sitting around this table.

I want to thank Scott. Unbelievable what's happening, financially, with you and Howard.

And Vice President is involved in everything, and he's been great.

And Marco has been—really, I think you're born for this job. I don't think he should ever run for another office, actually. *[Laughter]* I don't think you should. Really, you're so good at this. He is so good, and everybody likes him. You know, everybody likes him. But everybody, much more importantly than like, I think you would say, is respect. They respect Marco. They respect all the people around the table.

So what I'd like to do is, I'd like to go around the table. You seem to like it. Your audience seems to like it based on ratings.

And I want to mention, you know, about crime, because we have a young lady here, Iris, of Epoch Times. You're Iris, aren't you, huh?

Q. Yes, I am.

The President. And I heard you were very savagely mugged in the city, and we're not going to let that happen under this administration. That was last year.

Q. It was 2 years ago.

The President. And would you like to mention what happened?

Public Safety Concerns in the District of Columbia

Q. Of course. So, first of all, thank you, Mr. President——

The President. You want to listen to this?

Go ahead.

Q. ——for having me here to share my story to the room and to the broader public. My name is Iris Tao. I'm a White House correspondent for NTD, the sister media of the Epoch Times.

So, more than 2 years ago, it was a Saturday morning in broad daylight.

The President. Mm-hmm.

Q. I was on my way to work, and a young man with a black ski mask pointed a gun in my face and threatened me to hand over my phone, my wallet, my laptop, and everything else. And when I refused, he used the butt of his handgun to strike me across the face, on the cheek—or what some people would call "pistol-whip" me—before running away. And that has deeply traumatized myself and my family. Ever since, I've never dared to walk in the street of DC at night ever, and my family was extremely worried.

So, Mr. President, thank you so much for what you're doing right now——

The President. Thank you, Iris, for being honest.

Q. ——because such incidents involve not just me but also my family. If he had shot me, I could have died right there in the middle of nowhere without my families or my friends knowing—at the age of, back then, I think, 23——

The President. Right.

Q. ——just starting my career here in DC without even starting a family. But now I'm very blessed to have this opportunity to stand before you.

The President. So you had a gun pointed at your head, and you probably figured that he's going to pull the trigger, because these are animals that don't know what the hell—they don't—they couldn't care less. The pulling the trigger to him is a very minor event, and I'm sure he's done it before.

So how did you—and you did refuse to give it——

Q. Correct.

The President. —which would—probably, maybe somebody would say that was not the right decision, right? [*Laughter*]

Q. Right, my friends did call me crazy afterwards.

The President. But you refused, but I understand that. [*Laughter*] So—and then he hit you real hard.

Q. Yes.

The President. It's really amazing that you weren't shot, though. Isn't it?

Q. I'm very blessed. And that's why having this opportunity to stand here to share my story today—one, I'm very grateful for God for allowing me to still survive to this day, but also to Mr. President, thank you for now making DC safer—

The President. Thank you very much.

Q. —for us, for our families, for my parents, my—on my—behalf of my parents, and now my—my baby on the way, thank you so much.

Secretary Rollins. Oh, that's awesome. Congratulations.

Q. Thank you very much.

[*Epoch Times Washington correspondent Iris Tao shook hands with Secretary Rollins.*]

The President. And there are other reporters and journalists and good people, and you don't have to say it, but that have also been attacked violently—and not violently too, but pretty badly.

But—and I'll bet you see a big difference in the streets right now. And this is only 12 days, but people are telling me they're going out to dinner now. They're—they haven't—I told the story of my friend, but I have a lot of friends that are going out to dinner all the time now in DC, and they weren't. They weren't doing it. Twelve days ago, they would never even think.

One of my friends went out five times. It was four times the last time I told; now it's five times. He said, "I love going out to dinner," and restaurants are starting to open again. A lot of them closed because, you know, they weren't—nobody wanted to go into a restaurant. Nobody wanted to get to a restaurant or even sit in the restaurant.

But you see a big difference now, don't you?

Q. I do. I do pass by Union Station every day on my way home, and I do feel lot safer seeing the trucks right outside, seeing the National Guard troops—members right outside. It does make me feel like I'm hopeful about DC again. And one day, hopefully, we can raise our family here.

The President. Thank you very much. That's nice.

And those are tough troops too. Those are not politically correct troops. We don't have politically correct anymore. We have tough guys, tough people, including some tough women. But we have tough people, and when you look at them—I tell you, they showed one scene where a bunch of Tren de Aragua guys or whatever—maybe MS-13, maybe—maybe MSDNC—okay?—because, to me, they're worse. [*Laughter*] I think they're worse. MSNBC maybe is worse than Tren de Aragua. [*Laughter*] You know, real scum. Real scum. Real dishonest people.

But anyway—but they went into this gang—I think it was Tren de Aragua, Venezuela—and they weren't nice to this group of people. They were—the gang was calling them "sir." "Yes, sir. Yes, sir." "Get out of here. Get the hell out of here. You're no good. Get out of here." And: "Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Yes." These are people that beat up people all day long, and they're calling these—

these soldiers—that's what they are, they're real soldiers. There's no games. I said, "You don't have to be politically correct."

And you know the way they used to spit in the face of the soldiers, where the soldiers stand like this? And you'd have some guy—or some woman, sometimes—screaming at them from one inch away. They're standing there, and they're told, "You cannot do anything." And they start spitting—actually spitting in their face. And I said, "You spit, we hit," and they're totally authorized to do that—all of those things.

But your story is great. And there are other stories here, but they don't have to tell them. But some people are ashamed to tell them. They don't want to tell them, but it's—it was like a jungle, and it's not a jungle anymore. And it's going to get so good that this will be the safest Capital there is. It will be one of the safest places in our Nation, anywhere. And right now it's one of the most unsafe places, but not now. Twelve days ago, it was the most unsafe place in our nation.

And they have to stop issuing false crime numbers, because—I mean, I heard the Mayor, and I like the mayor, as you know, fine. I don't care if I like her or not. If she did her job—I wish you were a horrible person who did her job. But she's probably nice, I guess, I think. I don't care. I want her to do her job.

But they issue false numbers. She said, "Crime is down," you know, before we got in. Now they can say crime is down. Crime is very much down, but what they did is, they issued numbers: "It's the best in 30 years." It's not the best. It's the worst. It's the worst. It's much worse. And they gave phony numbers, and then they fired the man who didn't want to write the phony numbers. He got fired. And I guess that whole situation is under investigation, because it's a very important thing, Pam.

I mean, if they're going to give these phony numbers, it's a false feeling that you get crime, you have to do something about it. And you can't go around saying, "Oh, Washington, DC, is safe" if it's not. It's going to be very safe very soon.

It's very safe right now. You're going to go out, have dinner. People are going out all over the place. They're walking—people that—I have people that work in government—strong, tough cookies. They can take care of themselves. But it doesn't have to—it doesn't help to have big, strong muscles and "I work out. I this"—if a guy is over there with a gun shooting you in your face. You can be the strongest guy in the world. A guy has a gun, shoots you in the face, it doesn't matter how much you've worked out, how many weights you've lifted, how much—how hard you work.

And so we have the toughest guys, and we have the best guys. And I'm willing to go to Chicago, which is a big trouble, but we have a Governor that refuses to admit he has problems—huge problems.

Baltimore—Wes Moore was telling me he wants—"I want to walk with the President." Well, I said, "I want to walk with you too someday, but first you got to clean up your crime, because I'm not walking"—[laughter]—"I'm not walking in Baltimore right now."

Baltimore is a hellhole, and this guy—I don't even think he knows it. He's another candidate for president. Between him and Newscum, you got some real beauties, I'll tell you.

But if we didn't go into Los Angeles, you wouldn't have the Olympics. In my opinion, you wouldn't have the Olympics. We went in, and the sheriff, the boss, said, "Thank God they're here." You could see his tape. He said, "We were not able to control what was happening." That was the sheriff, and he said it loud and clear.

And you know, they're suing us for going in and cleaning up crime. And yet, their own sheriff said—on the first or second night, he said, "We could have never handled"—that was

going to be—you were not going to have the Olympics because—or the World Cup, because that would be—there wouldn't be anything left.

They shouldn't have lost 25,000 howers—you know, houses. The water was turned off from the Pacific Northwest. And I was after them in my first administration, "Turn on the water. Turn it on." Nobody could have believed this could have happened. But they had no water in the fire hydrants. They had no water in the sprinkler systems that people put up in their ceilings. There was no water.

And yet, we have tremendous amounts of water. They send it all into the Pacific Ocean trying to protect a certain little fish. It's not doing well, because it doesn't do well without water either. And it's not—it shouldn't be a protected because they have—it shouldn't be a protected species. But I think that's actually just an excuse. I actually think—these people are sick. There's something wrong.

So we send hundreds of millions of gallons of water a day into the Pacific Ocean. They turn a valve, and the valve heads out, and we turned the valve back. I actually had to do it using force. We turned the valve back, and now they have water, but not as much as they should have, because they should—and I'm telling Gavin Newscom by this conversation right now: Turn the rest of the water on. Turn it on.

So things are done that are so sad in this country.

A lack of common sense. I like to say the Republican Party is the party with common sense. We're smart. We're sharp. We're this and that. They're smart, but they're radical-left people, and they can't help it. They're very smart, but they're radical left, and they're destroying our country. But they're not going to destroy it anymore.

So we picked up millions of people in the Republican Party. They lost millions of people. And I think we're going to do very well in the midterms.

And I just want to say one other thing, and that's medicine. The cost of medicine all over the world is much cheaper than the United States, because for years, the world pushed us around, including our friends.

And you go to Germany, you go to England, you go to different places, and you go to a store, and it's sometimes 10 percent of what we pay in the United States, because they said, "No, we're not paying any more. You charge the United States." This went on for 25, 30 years, and I invoked favored nations. I said, "I want to pay the same as they pay."

And Bobby Kennedy is doing a good job, and Dr. Oz is doing a good job. And I—I asked them—I mean, other than the basics that they're doing on autism, another thing which—we've got to solve that problem, because it's crazy what's happening. It's out of hand.

But this is their most important thing that can be done is favored nations, Bobby. And we're not talking about a 25-percent cut or a 50. We're talking about a 1,500 percent cut, because people go to Europe to buy drugs, and they come back with drugs—prescription drugs, normal, not—I don't mean the bad, bad drugs. I mean prescription drugs, because you can buy them for 10 percent, 15 percent, 20 percent of what—so they're going to go up in price. And I told the countries—and I get along good with all of them. I mean, you could ask anybody—I get along good with all of them, but I said—you know, I told them, I said, "You're going to go up a little bit," because it's the world. It's the world. So more people in the world than we have.

We're going to go down a lot, and they're going to go up a little. And it's called equalization. We're going to have equalization, so we pay the same price as the lowest drug sold anywhere in the world.

And I think, Bobby, that's going to happen pretty soon.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Yes.

The President. The companies are ready for it. They had a go for years. I was with a very great gentleman from Eli Lilly. I think he's an incredible executive. I mean, I'll mention the company, and I'll mention him, because we had this argument my first term, and then we had it in my second term.

And my second term, I wouldn't stop until I won the point. And he threw up his hands. He says: "You're right. I can no longer defend it. I can no longer defend that a pill that's made by Johnson and Johnson in a factory—in the same factory in the United States versus a place in Europe or other places," including Canada, by the way, you could buy it for 10 percent or 15 percent or 20 percent the cost of what we're paying, where we'd pay five, six, seven times more money. He said: "It's the hardest part of my job defending that. I'm not going to do it anymore." I'm saying, "Then we have to get down to business."

And that's a great company. He's done a great job, and I appreciated it. And it really broke the ice, because they were sending—"Well, we have to do research and development." Well, you have to do it for Germany and all these other countries too. "Well, they think the United States should bear it." I mean, I heard this stuff for—and I finally said, "It's over."

Now, you have to have somebody that can get these countries to do it. I told them, "If you don't do it, we're going to charge you a 25-percent tariff on everything you send into our country." That's much more money than what we're talking about. Then we have to get the drug companies to do it, and they'll do it because we have tremendous power over the drug companies too.

So we're going to get it done. I just hope we get it done fast, Bobby, because this thing should go fast.

But we're going to get—the cost of medicine is going to be a thousand percent—think of that, not 2 percent.

And I'll just tell this last story. When I was in my first term, in my last year, I was so proud of myself, because drug prices went down for the first time in 28 years under my administration. You know how much it went down? One-quarter of 1 percent, and I was so proud of that. And I held a news conference, I think you'll be able to find it, congratulating myself and my administration—[laughter]—because for the first time in 28 years, drug prices went down one-quarter of 1 percent. That little tiny—but it still went down. And I thought it was great.

And then I realized, you know, it's a very complicated business and formula. You've got to be very smart. I said: "We're really getting ripped off by the whole world. The whole world is ripping us off."

And what happened is, I got on this kick, and I got the drug companies to agree, and I got countries to agree—countries to agree. And they're not agreeing because they think I'm a nice person. They're agreeing because I will put charge and—charges and costs and tariffs onto them that will be many times more than what they're going to be paying.

So the companies are there and the countries are there. And we've got to get it done, Bobby. We've got to get it done. And we're going to have the biggest price of it—now, that's going to lower Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid. This is going to look—lower everything, because drugs go for everything. It's going to have the biggest impact, I think, of anything that can possibly be done.

But you're going to—your costs are going to be going down—for medicine, for prescription drugs—will be going down at levels that nobody ever thought possible, and that's going to happen in a matter of a very short period of time.

Secretary Kennedy. Very short.

The President. And we're all set with the countries, and we're all set with the companies. It's all you need, the two.

And the middleman gets cut out. Under this scenario, the middleman doesn't exist anymore. That was the other thing. They always blamed the middleman. I said, "Who are the middlemen?" Nobody knew who the middleman was. You know, they——

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. They had the most complex formula. It was genius, but they didn't get away with it.

So I'm counting on Bobby. Do you want to start, Bobby? Maybe we'll start with you. You can start with that, and then go on to——

Secretary Kennedy. Yes.

The President. ——what we're talking about.

Secretary Kennedy. We are deep into MFN negotiations—most-favored-nation status negotiations with 14 companies.

Howard Lutnick is a breath of fresh air, and I think he's going to help us get across the finish line with the—with the leverage that we have from tariffs.

The President. You hear that, Howard? Come on. Let's go, Howard. They're going to——

Secretary Rollins. It's true.

The President. They're smart. Don't let them get away with it, Howard. [*Laughter*]

Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick. Well, the combination of Bobby's MFN and the 232 pharmaceuticals, which we launched together——

The President. Right.

Secretary Lutnick. ——when you put those two together, it really gives Bobby the tools to go execute your plan. So I'm supporting Bobby as he executes his plan.

The President. Good. Right?

Secretary Kennedy. Yes.

The President. Good.

Secretary Kennedy. And we were—this Cabinet meeting is supposed to be about working Americans, bringing jobs back to this country, and, particularly, rural America.

And I want to mention the "Big Beautiful Bill." Right now we spend 7 percent of Medicaid dollars on rural hospitals. So they're getting the short end of the stick. It's about \$19 billion a year. Under the Rural Transformation Program, we give them an extra \$10 billion a year. So we're raising——

The President. Good.

Secretary Kennedy. ——an infusion of cash to rural hospitals and rural communities by 50 percent. It's going to be——

The President. That's good.

Secretary Kennedy. —the biggest infusion in history, and it's going to restore and revitalize these communities.

The President. That's so good.

Secretary Kennedy. And we can't survive as a nation if we don't honor our rural communities. They're a source of our values, our virtues, our character, our economy, our food.

And you are bringing that back. You are bringing those communities back.

I wanted to talk—because you mentioned the wind farms. We now have an interdepartmental coalition team, which is Doug Burgum and Howard Lutnick and Chris Wright and Pete Hegseth. We're all working on this issue——

Secretary of the Interior Douglas J. Burgum. And Lee.

Secretary Kennedy. And Lee. Sorry, Lee.

We're all working together on this issue. We're meeting together.

There are, right now, 11 wind farms planned that were launched during the Biden administration. Between Maine and Virginia, it's 1,130 towers. These towers are twice the size of the Washington Monument. The blades on them are——

The President. Oh, they're massive. It's really—so crazy.

Secretary Kennedy. The——

The President. Go ahead.

Secretary Kennedy. The blades are 350 feet long, one blade.

Secretary of Education Linda E. McMahon. Wow.

Secretary Kennedy. One of these blades blew up on Nantucket last summer, and the water was filled with shards of glass—of sharp glass, so it was dangerous to swim. They had to close the beaches and—but they have indemnified themselves so the local communities can't sue them.

None of these projects are bonded. If you build an oil derrick in the Gulf, you've got to put a bond down. There's no bond for dismantling them, and that is one of the tools that Doug is now using to challenge some of these projects.

None of the cost of energy from these projects is 39 cents a kilowatt-hour. The average cost in this country is 17 cents per kilowatt-hour.

The President. And natural gas is 3 cents.

Secretary Kennedy. Right. So it is the most expensive energy.

Now, I've been representing commercial fishermen for 40 years. They are so excited about what you're doing, Mr. President, because their fisheries are being wiped out. As soon as they begin construction, the groundfish fisheries just disappear. The fish leave the area.

[*Secretary Kennedy continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

So we have now increased FDA inspections of shrimp to make sure that Americans are not——

The President. Great.

Secretary Kennedy. —eating contaminated—buying and eating contaminated shrimp and putting our shrimpers out of business.

I talked just about—very briefly, we have an historic agreement on preauthorization. We brought together 80 percent of the insurance industry, which has agreed to—for 80 percent of diseases and injuries, they give immediate preauthorization, so that when you go to your doctor's office and he prescribes you a new knee or whatever it is, you will immediately know whether your insurance company is going to pay for it.

This is an historic agreement. People have been trying to do it for decades, and we, because of your leadership, brought the insurance industry together and got them to voluntarily agree to do this.

Similarly, we made another historic agreement with personal health records. The 60 biggest tech companies in our country have all agreed to allow Americans, for the first time, access to their personal data, which they own, which these companies have been monetizing without permission. You're going to be about to see, by next year, all of your health records on your cell phone. It's going to save lives. It is going to fuel an infusion of technology into that space where people can access those records, they can compare their diet to what they personally need, and we'll have personalized medicine.

We are doing trice—price transparency. You passed this during your first term, and then the Biden administration refused to enforce it. We've now brought, at HHS, under your leadership and my leadership, more enforcement actions during—than during the entire 4 years of the Biden administration.

The President. Great.

Secretary Kennedy. So we're going to have that kind of price transparency.

I'm working with Linda on forcing medical schools and the MCATs—the people who administer the MCATs, the people who do accreditations, to put nutrition into medical school education. Right now 25 percent of the doctors in this country do not feel competent to give nutritional advice. Seventy percent of diabetes cases can be reversed or ended if you just change people's diets, and the doctors don't know how to advise it. They only know how to prescribe the drugs.

We are going to change that. And so, if you come out of a medical school under the Trump administration, you are going to know about diet.

And then, finally, most importantly, the Pete and Bobby challenge. [*Laughter*] I want to give an update. Pete got—or I got 5 minutes and 48—it's 100 pushups, 50 pullups, and you try to do it within 10 minutes. I got 5 minutes and 48 seconds. Pete beat me—I'm still bitter at that—[*laughter*]*—5 minutes and 25. The Cabinet leader is Scott Turner—*

Secretary Rollins. Let's go.

Administrator of the Small Business Administration Kelly L. Loeffler. Wow.

Secretary Kennedy. —who got—[*laughter*]*—despite a—*

The President. You beat these guys, Scott.

Secretary Kennedy. Despite his dislocated arm.

Secretary McMahon. Scotty T.

The President. That's great.

Participant. You beat me.

Participant. With the arm?

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development E. Scott Turner. Yes.

Secretary Kennedy. He got 5 minutes and 15 seconds. I'm waiting for reports from the rest of the Cabinet.

The only exemptions currently existing is if you can hit a 50 at Bedminster, which President Trump did with Bryson DeChambeau, so he's the only one exempt in this room. [Laughter]
Everybody else we can report.

The President. That's great, Bobby.

Bobby, autism, if I could. Just—I don't want to go too long, because we have a lot of people, but the autism is such a tremendous horror show, what's happening in our country and some other countries, but mostly our country.

How are you doing on that?

Secretary Kennedy. We are doing very well. We will have announcements, as promised, in September.

We're finding interventions—certain interventions now that are clearly, almost certainly, causing autism, and we're going to be able to address those in September.

The President. It's such a big day. I'm looking forward to that day, because there's something wrong, when you see the kind of numbers that you have today versus 20 years ago. And those numbers—what are those numbers, Bobby?

Secretary Kennedy. Oh, in 1970, the biggest epidemiological study in history was done in Wisconsin. They looked at 900,000 children, and they were looking for autism. They knew what it looked like, and they were very, very precise about it. And they found an incident rate of 0.7—in other words, less than 1 per every 10,000 children.

Today, our most recent numbers are 1 in every 31 kids. It's probably actually much worse than that, because California, which has the best collection system, is reporting 1 out of every 19 children—among American children has autism—1 in every 12.5 boys. So it's gone from 1—less than 1 in 10,000 in 1970 to 1 in 12.5 boys today.

The President. Think of those numbers. There's—so there has to be something artificially causing this, meaning a drug or something. And I know you're looking very strongly at different things, and I hope you can come out with that as soon as possible.

Secretary Kennedy. We will.

The President. So 1 in 10,000, and now it's 1 in 31 or 34 or 12, if it's a boy. Can you imagine that? One in twelve. That's for a boy.

Secretary Kennedy. One in every twelve-point-five boys.

The President. It's not even believable that that could be, and that was 1 in 10,000 not so long ago. I've been hearing these numbers that—and they get worse and worse every year. There's got to be something. I think there's nothing—including favored nations and everything else, there's nothing that can be—if you can find out the reason that that's happening. And I know we're going to—we're going to do some things. I think it's—

Secretary Kennedy. We will have that—

The President. I think—

Secretary Kennedy. —answer for you.

The President. I think we maybe know the reason. And I look forward to that press conference—to be with you in that press conference. That's going to be a great thing.

Thank you, Bobby. You're doing a great job.

Secretary Kennedy. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Linda, how about it? I—we want nothing less than \$500 million from Harvard. *[Laughter]* Don't negotiate, Linda.

Secretary McMahon. All right.

The President. They've been very bad. Don't negotiate.

Secretary McMahon. We're—we——

The President. Go ahead.

Secretary McMahon. All of that's working.

Well, Mr. President, thank you very much.

Since we are focusing today on Labor Day—and I know that Kelly and Lori are both going to echo some of the things that I'll say as well—we are really focusing, you know, on our workforce. But what I'm finding, with great joy, around the country is that states really are being innovative and working more with middle schools and with high schools to make sure that we are having hands-on learning. There are pathways to jobs that are happening now.

And if we see more and more of our community colleges working with our middle schools and our high schools so that high school students are graduating not only with a diploma, but a certificate that they have worked with—perhaps with a Toyota or another company that is coming in—public-private partnerships—and they are learning on the job so that, when they graduate from high school, they're ready to go into the workforce. Because we know—with all of these wonderful jobs that are coming back into the country through AI, through just our normal jobs—that we need electricians, HVAC operators, et cetera. If we don't have this training, we're not going to have the workforce we need for all of these wonderful jobs.

So Governors are really excited about this prospect. I have been now to several States and visited community colleges and tech schools with Governors, and they're just all on board for getting this done. I think it's one of the best things that we're hearing relative to the job market. So we're just kind of focusing on that for today.

The President. So we're bringing education back to the States, to put it in a more simple fashion. We're going to let the States educate our children again.

And you know, we're rated—out of 40 countries, we're 38, 39, or 40. So, obviously, it's not working, what they've been doing for the last 30, 40 years. And if you go back, the best are, like, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, some of the other—Finland. They're very highly rated.

If you go back to—just take a look at anything you want to do, you just look at us in the past. If we gave Iowa or gave Indiana or gave—and I don't say every one of them. You know, a guy like Gavin Newsom is not going to do well. Certain States won't do well. But even California, you'll cut it up into sections. You have Riverside, you have this, you have that. You cut it into five sections, and, you know, if you had a good Governor, you'd be able to do well.

But certain states will be able to compete with Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and everyone. It'll be just as good. So I figure you'll have close to 40 of those States——

Secretary McMahon. Mm-hmm.

The President. —and then you'll have 10, you'll have 5 that won't be very good. You'll have five disasters, and we'll have to work on those disasters.

But for the most part, we will have education that will go zooming up in those charts, just like we have in everything else we've done. And I think it's one of the most important things we're doing at this table.

So, bringing education back to the States——

Secretary McMahon. Back to the States.

The President. ——where you have the parents running it, where you have the school boards—they're local. We have people running from Washington that have never even been to the State that they're in charge of. They've never even been there, and I don't think they care about it.

So we want to close up the Washington buildings, sell the buildings off, let somebody else get rich with the real estate, because it will be a crime-free city.

By the way, speaking of that, anybody murders something in the Capital, capital punishment. Capital, capital punishment. If somebody kills somebody in the Capital, Washington, DC, we're going to be seeking the death penalty. And that's a very strong preventative, and everybody that's heard it agrees with it.

I don't know if we're ready for it in this country, but we have it. It is—we have no choice. So, in DC, in Washington—States are going to have to make their own decision—but if somebody kills somebody, like you could have been killed—very lucky you didn't get killed—it's the death penalty. Okay?

Fantastic job you're doing. Thank you, Linda.

Secretary McMahon. Thank you, sir.

The President. Very much appreciate—how are you doing with the colleges, by the way? You're doing some pretty good work in terms of getting them to treat people fairly.

Secretary McMahon. Well, interestingly enough, since we've been negotiating with some of the Ivy League schools, I have presidents of universities calling every single week. They want to sit down and talk to us about all of the——

The President. It's true.

Secretary McMahon. ——steps that they are taking, because they would like to not come under the same investigative, you know, program. [*Laughter*] And so it is having its desired effect.

The President. That's great.

Secretary McMahon. So, if you fire a shot across the bow on the big guys, you know, people kind of step in line and know you mean business and we have teeth in these agreements. And I'm proud of the work that we're doing there.

The President. Well, they misbehaved.

And some of these schools are getting billions and billions of dollars, and they misbehave. So that's it. And so one way or the other, we're going to win that whole thing.

Secretary McMahon. Yes.

The President. It's going to straighten them out. Okay? Thank you very——

Secretary McMahon. Thank you.

The President. Great job.

Secretary McMahon. Thank you.

The President. Lee, please.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee M. Zeldin. Mr. President, the—the Trump EPA has a special Labor Day message to America's workforce, especially our autoworkers, our coal miners, our steamfitters, our pipe fitters, and the list goes on.

See, what a difference a year makes. A year ago, the way that the Environmental Protection Agency was operating, the choice was made: To protect the environment, we would have to strangle the economy. That's the way that the EPA operated for years. There was a binary choice. We had to choose one or the other. The Trump EPA completely rejects that.

[Administrator Zeldin continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

What we are accomplishing now, again, wouldn't be possible if not for your leadership. I'm grateful to the American people for electing you and our amazing Vice President. I was just in Mexico City announcing a—and signing on behalf of the Trump administration an agreement with Mexico for a permanent solution for the Tijuana River sewage crisis——

Secretary Kennedy. Wow.

Administrator Zeldin. ——which you have been so——

The President. Yes.

Administrator Zeldin. ——outspoken and passionate about in our conversations. It would not be possible if not for Secretary Rubio, Deputy Secretary Landau, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Johnson. The team at the State Department has been incredible.

[Administrator Zeldin continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

Thank you for putting this entire team together. It's an honor to be at the Trump EPA, where we choose to both protect the environment and grow the economy. It's a very happy Labor Day for America's workforce.

The President. And, Lee, in Los Angeles, if you could, because of the fires—Lee was there, and, as you know, we have very strict Federal rules having to do with the rebuilding of those houses. And Lee was able to get the approvals done for everybody immediately. It was so fast. Nobody could believe it. And the mayor and the Governor still haven't gotten them their approvals, and they're going to have riots out there for that reason.

These are great homeowners. They want to build their house, they can't get approved because you have the mayor, Bass, who has no idea what she's doing. And you have a Governor who is just such a bad Governor, and the people are unable to build their house.

The toughest permit to get was the Federal permit, by far. And yet, he got them all in a short period of time after the fire.

How long did it take?

Administrator Zeldin. Well, Mr. President, you came in, signed an Executive order, and told the EPA that we had less than 30 days to complete our hazardous material removal—*[laughter]*—which the initial response, once all of our heart rates went down a bit, was just to figure out how to get it done. We got it done in just less than 30 days.

The Army Corps of Engineers then comes in for the debris removal. The Federal Government, in clearing over 13,000 properties that were destroyed because of these wildfires,

it—we've gotten to the point today where—where property owners all across Los Angeles, they're grateful to the Trump administration, they're happy that we did our part, but they are desperate to rebuild. And there is not a single green light, approval that they are waiting for from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers proudly have done our work. It's important for those local officials to let these property owners build on their land. It's their property. It doesn't belong to the mayor of Los Angeles. And they need to represent their people better. They're ready to build.

The President. When will they have their permits from Los Angeles?

Administrator Zeldin. Well, here's the problem, Mr. President, is that they have been ready since the moment we were done with the Federal part. I mean—well, I was visiting a week after. Actually, I thought my first trip was going to be to Los Angeles. However, the moment I got confirmed, the Vice President said, "You're going to East Palestine right away." [Laughter] So, that actually ended up being the first visit because the Vice President is so passionate about that, from the great State of Ohio.

Then we went to Los Angeles from there. We're talking about the beginning of February, where we were meeting with property owners already ready—they were already all set up. They had the contractors. They—it was the beginning of February, and they were waiting for green lights from Los Angeles to be able to go onto their property and start rebuilding.

Some of the same people who were waiting for a green light, ready with the contractors at the beginning of February, are still waiting now in the middle of August. Let these Californians rebuild.

The President. And they're talking about also taking away some of the properties and building low-income housing on those properties.

Secretary McMahon. That's right.

Secretary Turner. Yes.

The President. They're going to have problems like they've never had before. These people don't know what they're doing.

So we have all our permit—everything the Federal Government has to do was done long ago. They should have been—I went to a town hall with Lee, but we were there, and the mayor was saying it would take 2 years, maybe 3 years to get this approved. I say: "No, no, not 2 years. Two days. They should have it in 2 days."

And I toured the site, and I met a hundred homeowners, all standing in front of this site a couple of days after the fire. And they were ready to go right then. They wanted to just build right then, and the city won't let them do it. Los Angeles—it's—I don't think it's that they won't. I think they're incompetent—okay?—to be honest with you. I think they just don't know how to go about it.

It is so badly run by Newscum and by Mayor Bass. Mayor Bass, she was in Africa during the fire. She knew the fire was starting to rage, and she decided to take a trip to Africa. These people are just—they're just bad.

You know, you talk about make America great again. They can never make America great again, but we are doing that.

Congratulations. You found some interesting things, Tulsi. Huh? [Laughter]

Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Yes, sir.

The President. She's becoming a bigger and bigger star every day. She found a lot of good things.

Go ahead.

Director Gabbard. Thank you, sir.

As we approach Labor Day weekend here, this is just such a great opportunity, really, to recognize your leadership as a true champion for working people. And I know we'll hear, as we go around the table here, how your focus singularly on putting the well-being and interests of the American people first is that common thread that we're seeing in your policies being implemented across your administration.

For ODNI, number one, our focus is and must always be making sure that our intelligence community is focused on our mission: keeping the American people safe, secure, and free.

[Director Gabbard continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

We will continue focusing on our core mission in keeping the American people safe and appreciate your leadership and your focus on this most critical task.

The President. And you've also found many bags of information—I think they call them "burn bags." They're supposed to be burned, and they didn't get burned—having to do with how corrupt the 2020 election was.

And when will that all come out?

Director Gabbard. Mr. President, I will be the first to brief you once we have that information collected.

But you're right. It's—we are finding documents literally tucked away in the back of safes in random offices in these bags and in other areas, which, again, speaks to the intent of those who were trying to hide the truth from the American people and trying to cover up the politicization that was led by people like John Brennan and James Clapper and others that have caused really immeasurable harm to the American people and to our country.

The President. Great job. Thank you.

Director Gabbard. Thank you, sir.

The President. We look forward to hearing it.

Director Gabbard. Thank you, sir.

The President. The public looks forward.

Director Gabbard. Yes.

The President. Thank you very much.

Administrator.

Administrator Loeffler. Thank you, Mr. President.

Well, everyone knows there's no stronger advocate for hard-working American families than you, sir. Thank you for the largest tax cut in American history for working families. The average family of four is going to save about \$10,000 take-home pay more a year.

And what we're seeing is an increase in the child tax credit, the increase in the standard deduction. The hard-working families are going to benefit from this bill. And small businesses. There's no bigger beneficiary than Main Street, because small business makes up 99 percent of all businesses in this country.

[Administrator Loeffler continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

And your domestic economic agenda is amplified through small businesses, which is why small-business optimism is above its 53-year average, finally.

The President. Yes.

Administrator Loeffler. And so Main Street appreciates it.

What Main Street wants now is a rate cut. They feel burdened by high interest rates. They would grow higher and expand more if they could, but the interest rates are really hurting them.

And finally, I want to say thank you for your Executive order on debanking. We're about to announce a major investigation on debanking. It happened to you and your family. It happened to me. It happened to thousands and thousands of Americans—and unfortunately, disproportionately on those that had conservative values, on Christians, on pro-life, on 2A businesses.

And so we're going to be talking to the banks about that. The SBA operates the largest Government business loan program in the Federal Government. We have a network of 5,000 banks, so we're going to be making sure that that never happens to anyone again.

The President. Great job. You're doing a great job.

Administrator Loeffler. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much.

Administrator Loeffler. Thank you.

The President. Kristi.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem. Well, Mr. President, first of all, thank you for the opportunity to work for you.

And you committed when you ran for President to make America safe again. And today, the average family and individual that lives in this country is safer than they've been in years because of what you've done.

We've got 3 months in a row now with zero illegal aliens coming into this country, and I want to thank Pete and the Department of Defense for all of their help. They're down at the border with us still, helping us keep that border secure and make sure we know who's coming into this country.

[Secretary Noem continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

So we're continuing to be accountable to taxpayer dollars but, sir, focused on doing the mission of what you've committed, and that's to keep us safe and to make sure we put Americans first.

The President. Well, great job. And great job on the border. We had millions and millions of people coming in. To think, 3 months in a row: zero.

Secretary Noem. Yes. It's incredible.

Secretary Rollins. Amazing.

The President. That's some job. Thank Tom and everybody.

Secretary Noem. Big Tom.

The President. And, Pete, good job.

Secretary of Defense Peter B. Hegseth. Thank you, sir.

The President. Not surprised. Thank you very much.

Chris, please.

Secretary of Energy Christopher A. Wright. Pass to Kristi.

[*Secretary Wright coughed.*]

Sorry about that, Mr. President.

Like Secretary Noem, I'm thrilled to be here to work with you on the simple platform you were elected on, which was to bring back the American dream, to bring jobs and opportunity for families across the country, and to lower their costs so they can live their lives and expand the choices they have.

You led off today talking about gasoline prices. I'll throw in diesel. If you correct for inflation, they're at multidecade lows. This is a huge expense. This is a huge constraint on people's lives. We should celebrate that.

[*Secretary Wright continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

I could go on about this stuff forever, but let me say—talk about one specific area of energy: electricity. That's in the front of people's minds.

The President. Right.

Secretary Wright. When—the day you were inaugurated, we get hold of all the data, and we can look at the resource plans of utilities across the country. What you inherited when you arrived was a plan, over the next 5 years, to close a hundred gigawatts of reliable electric generation. So that's a hundred large power plants.

[*Secretary Wright continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Your tireless campaign and your relentless messaging made people realize the American dream isn't dead. It's just been smothered, and we're unsmothering it and setting it loose.

God bless your efforts. God bless your assembly of this team around this table. We're bringing the American dream back.

The President. Yes. Thank you, Chris, very much. Great job you're doing. Appreciate it.

Lori, please.

Secretary of Labor Lori M. Chavez-DeRemer. Mr. President, everybody here who has spoke works at the Department of Labor, clearly—[*laughter*—which I love. They have all the correct talking points, but I think that's a testament, again, that we are all working together every single day. We talk to each other often.

And the workforce—the skilled workforce, the education factor, retirees—it's been so important, because they all touch the Department of Labor, and I have the opportunity to work with every single one.

[*Secretary Chavez-DeRemer continued her remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Many things have been mentioned about consumer confidence up, unemployment is holding steady, and more than 2 million net jobs for native-born Americans——

The President. Yes.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. ——has been key. Under your leadership, 84 percent of the workforce and jobs has been produced by the private sector. I think that was the mission of this administration and the Department of Labor.

And I will continue to say for a little bit longer, until I heard you today, the "One Big Beautiful Bill," because it equals one big, beautiful workforce. And Congress passed this legislation. It probably will be the single most important bill that they did sign, because it is protecting our American workforce by expanding Pell grants and childcare——

The President. Right.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. ——and reduction in taxes so that they can keep more of their hard-earned dollars.

I am, at the Department of Labor, announcing \$30 million in grants for our skilled workforce that I have an MOU with Secretary McMahon. I have an MOU with Administrator Loeffler. That's important to share the data points on how important this is.

[Secretary Chavez-DeRemer continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

Mr. President, I couldn't be more excited to ring in Labor Day in Erie, Pennsylvania, for the Labor Day parade. I will be there to welcome it. It is an honor to serve this country. It is an honor to serve under your administration as the Labor Secretary.

And we will kick off, and Republicans will own Labor Day again, not Democrats. We will own it because we are and you are the President of the American worker.

So thank you for everything that you've done.

The President. Thank you very much, Lori.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. Absolutely.

The President. You're doing a fantastic job. And I will tell you that Lori was recommended by the Teamsters. *[Laughter]* And I said, "That doesn't really work, does it?" And it turned out to be one of our best choices.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. Thank you.

The President. So I just want to thank you and Sean——

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. Thank you.

The President. ——who, as you know, recommended you very strongly. And you've really turned out to be a gem. Thank you.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. I was able to talk to the President on the phone the other day. He called, and we visited, and he said, "But I know that you were, you know, a little bit middle of the road and not so sure." I said, "Mr. President, I have been a Republican." *[Laughter]* He's like, "What? I have—wait, what? Now I like you even more." *[Laughter]* So thank you, Mr. President.

The President. You're doing a great job.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. I appreciate it.

The President. Thank you, Lori.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. Thank you.

The President. Thank you.

Pam.

Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi. President, I'm working with everyone around this table almost daily on legal issues that we're winning on.

But today, because it's Labor Day, President Trump, if I could focus on public safety, not only domestic, but from our foreign adversaries.

And, Secretary McMahon, I know you know: Kids are out of school this weekend. It's Labor Day.

And, Secretary Duffy, you know: Our highways are going to be packed with travelers coming to not only our Nation's Capital but all over this country. We're also going to have boaters, Secretary Duffy—right?—on our waterways.

It is illegal to be under the influence and on a boat, so get a designated boater if you're out on our waterways. *[Laughter]* Whether it's the Potomac or the Gulf of America or the Pacific——

The President. Right.

Attorney General Bondi. ——wherever you're out this weekend, people need to be safe.

The President. Right.

Attorney General Bondi. And on an international level, Secretary Rubio, thank you for all your help on everything we're doing, and everyone around this room. But yesterday there was a big, big win. El Mayo pled guilty, and he was the cofounder of Sinaloa Cartel with El Chapo, and there's even a "Narcos" Netflix series about these guys. Well, now we know the ending: He's going to die in an American prison.

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

So thank you, President Trump, for your leadership and for letting Americans know that it's now a safe place to go. But parents also have to know, college kids have to know to be vigilant and not take this trash.

The President. Yes.

Attorney General Bondi. Because you could be thinking you're taking a Xanax, an Adderall, anything, and it could be laced with something very lethal. So——

The President. It's a great message.

Attorney General Bondi. ——thank you, President Trump.

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance. Great.

The President. A great message.

Attorney General Bondi. Thank you, President Trump.

The President. And you've been fantastic this last 12 days in DC. The job you and your whole group has done is——

Attorney General Bondi. All of us.

The President. Everyone's talking about it all over the world. I hate to have to talk about that, but we have to. It's becoming a very safe place again. And the work—I've seen how hard you worked the last—well, from the beginning, in all fairness—but this focus on DC is so important for the country. So great job.

Attorney General Bondi. Thank you.

The President. And to everybody, great job.

Attorney General Bondi. And, President, it's a team around. We're all working hand in hand, side by side, all of our agencies together to make America safe and DC safe.

And, Iris, congratulations on your baby.

Q. Thank you.

Attorney General Bondi. And I'm so glad that you're safe now.

Q. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Pam, very much. Great.

Mr. VP, would you like to say something?

Vice President Vance. Yes, sir. I'll be brief, but I want to congratulate you and the entire team on all the things that have been accomplished. You'll hear about a lot of it. You've already heard some of it.

But I thought it'd be helpful, Mr. President, just to take stock not just of what we've accomplished, what we will accomplish, but of the mess that we inherited, because I think it makes this first Labor Day a bigger and more special occasion.

[Vice President Vance continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

We've made great strides and great progress already, but to the American people who are listening, there's a lot more to do. We're going to keep on working hard at it. But it's an honor to do this job under the President's leadership and with this very great team that you've assembled.

So we've done a lot, but there's a lot more work to do, and we're very cognizant of it. Thank you, sir.

The President. Great job. Thank you, J.D.

Secretary Rollins. Very well said.

The President. Scott.

Secretary Bessent. Sir, as we've said very often, economic security is national security, and our country has never been so secure, thanks to you. You have brought us back from the edge. You have the overwhelming mandate from the American people. You're restoring confidence in Government.

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

Your efforts on tax, trade, and deregulation have boosted paychecks for American workers while slowing the pace of inflation and lowering the cost of energy. Inflation has plummeted to just 1.9 percent since you took office, and the economy rebounded with real GDP surging 3 percent last quarter.

Secretary Rollins. Amazing.

Secretary Bessent. The blue-collar boom coincides with a CapEx comeback. In anticipation of your "One Big Beautiful Bill," the coming law, CapEx increased by American businesses by nearly 14 percent in the first half of this year. And as you and I talk about frequently and as that chart or that photo attests, we are going to see a—I believe, a bigger CapEx boom from here. This is just the beginning. Just the beginning.

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

Thank you for reclaiming Labor Day for the American people. You're growing the economy for everyone, especially the middle- and lower-income households, who suffered disproportionately under the last administration. And it's an honor the—to do this under your leadership.

The President. Great job. You're doing great. Thank you very much, Scott.

Secretary Rollins. Yes.

The President. Brooke.

Secretary Rollins. Sir, I dropped my second son off at college last week, and I wasn't planning to say this, but just listening to everybody, I want to put a little bit of a personal touch on—on this work. He started his freshman year yesterday at Texas A&M, for all my SEC friends in the room. Thank you for saving college football, by the way. We're all very grateful.

The country just feels different. It just feels different. There's such a optimism and a love. There's a faith movement going through, especially with our younger Americans. And for those of us with kids in college, I know we feel it, and I experienced it firsthand last week moving him and my other older son in as well.

[Secretary Rollins continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

I'll finish with this. This morning we had a working group with six of our Cabinet members: Bobby Kennedy, representing health care; Linda McMahon, Education; Lee Zeldin, deregulation; Kelly Loeffler, Small Business; Lori Chavez-DeRemer, Labor; and Scotty Turner, Housing—and how you, leading the way and your vision—how that will return the golden age to rural America, to the very fabric of our country. And whether it's better hospitals, better education, more opportunity, less government, better and bigger small businesses, better opportunities for our workers, and better housing, and, of course, the agriculture piece of that through the "Big Beautiful Bill"—the bill—what it did: the greatest investment in rural America in history.

And now, the opportunity to effectuate that is, again, a game changer, a country saver, and what a joy to be able to do it under your leadership.

The President. Good.

Secretary Rollins. So thank you, sir.

The President. Really good. Thank you.

Secretary Turner. Good, Brooke.

Secretary Rollins. Yeah, thank you.

The President. Wonderfully stated. Thank you very much.

Secretary Turner. Really good.

Secretary Rollins. Yes, thanks.

The President. Scott.

Secretary Turner. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President.

I'm so grateful to be here to celebrate Labor Day with the greatest team in America. And it is football season, so I'm happy about that. *[Laughter]*

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Douglas A. Collins. Go Dawgs.

Secretary Turner. But, Mr. President, I want to say thank you for, as Brooke said, reclaiming Labor Day. And you've been a tremendous champion for the American worker.

I come from a hard-working family, as many people around this table do, and so thank you for helping us to change the conversation. And I believe we are changing the conversation around the kitchen table.

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

And you know, 1 million people, Mr. President, were lifted out of poverty because of opportunity zones. Ninety billion dollars of private money was invested in opportunity zones: urban, Tribal, and rural. And now that they've been made permanent, we're looking for millions more to be lifted out of poverty, a hundred billion dollars to be invested, hundreds of thousands of jobs to be created, hundreds of thousands of units of housing to come on line.

And so, sir, I sit here very excited about the future of this country. I'm very proud to be at this table, humbled to do so. And HUD, we're on a good path.

So thank you for all your support——

The President. Thank you.

Secretary Turner. ——and helping us, sir.

The President. Thank you very much.

Secretary Turner. Okay. God bless you.

The President. And I want to give credit to Tim Scott, a great Senator——

Secretary Turner. Yes, sir.

The President. ——from a place called South Carolina that we love, right?

Secretary Turner. Yes.

The President. And Tim really came up with opportunity zones.

Secretary Turner. Yes.

The President. And we did a good job of working with him. And together, we created something that nobody speaks of very much, but it's probably the most successful——

Secretary Turner. Yes.

The President. ——thing that's ever been done of its kind. It's been amazing.

Secretary Turner. Yes, sir.

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. So Tim Scott deserves a lot of credit for that.

Secretary Turner. Yes, sir, he does.

The President. Okay? Thank you.

Secretary Turner. Thank you.

The President. So, Russell, go ahead.

Office of Management and Budget Director Russell T. Vought. Thank you, Mr. President. And I get the opportunity to go hand by hand with all of these people as they move their deregs through the Office of Management and Budget.

And I wanted to zoom out for a second. In the first term, you gave us a goal of two for one, and then we outperformed it through your leadership. We came in at around five and a half, six for one. And then, as you're running for your second term, you put out a goal that, when you put it out, I was thinking to myself, that's going to be a pretty ambitious goal. You said 10 for 1.

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

So every single one of these agencies is doing incredible work when it comes to deregulatory, and when you add that to the work being done to get us going on energy, reduce spending, we're going to lower costs for the American people. We're going to be able to have innovative jobs and get them back to work.

So thank you for your leadership, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Great job, Russell. Appreciate it.

John. "Central Casting," I call him. *[Laughter]* He's central casting.

Central Intelligence Agency Director John L. Ratcliffe. Well, Mr. President, I'm grateful to be with everyone today, and as we're talking about jobs and workforce, at CIA, consistent with your directives to all of us, we've embraced your mantra for a leaner, more effective, more efficient workforce.

But, at CIA, Mr. President, we had an additional challenge, because, as you know, at times, our workforce had been misdirected. Its focus put on political narratives—some that even worked against you and always worked against the American people.

The President. I heard about that. *[Laughter]*

Director Ratcliffe. But under your leadership and your direction, we have been focused back on the core mission of what CIA is supposed to be doing, which is to provide you and this entire incredible team around the table with a decisive strategic advantage in accomplishing your goals. And your success in that regard, the examples are clear and many.

With regard to Iran, everyone knows that our DOD partners executed that mission flawlessly. But flawless military operations are subject to flawless intelligence. And as you know, Mr. President, CIA was the backbone in terms of its intelligence operations in providing that flawless execution that allowed you and your team to obliterate Iranian nuclear facilities and set back the nuclear program by years.

The President. Right.

Director Ratcliffe. Likewise, with regard to your ability to prevent and to preempt wars between India and Pakistan, between Armenia and Azerbaijan, between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo—in all those cases, CIA intelligence supported you and your entire team in making that possible.

It's not just you. It's folks around this table—Secretary Bessent, Secretary Lutnick, Trade Representative Greer and their great, successful negotiations on trade and tariffs—again, was a CIA workforce working to enable them to accomplish your goals.

So, as we roll into Labor Day, I tell you that the CIA workforce at the Trump CIA is grateful to be focused on what it's supposed to be, which is helping you prevent and end wars and to make America safer.

The President. Thank you very much. You've been really fantastic. But I'm not surprised. *[Laughter]* I've known John a long time. I'm not surprised at all.

Thank you very much, John.

Director Ratcliffe. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Steve, please.

U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Steven C. Witkoff. Mr. President, working for this Government, for you, is the greatest honor of my life. I tell it to everybody, and I really do feel

that way. And I thank you, because it's a privilege to go out there and represent you in your humanitarian effort, in your—in your goals of solving conflicts all over the world.

I think there were actually more than seven conflicts that you've put to bed in the last 8 months. And I hear these—I travel all over the world. In Hostage Square, they talk about you reverentially. It's really quite amazing. I sometimes wish that I had a cam recorder with me and I could put you right there as I listened to it.

[Special Envoy Witkoff continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

Your team is nothing short of incredible. And there's only one thing I wish for: That that Nobel committee finally gets its act together and realizes that you are the single finest candidate since the Nobel Peace——

Secretary of Transportation Sean P. Duffy. A hundred percent.

Special Envoy Witkoff. ——this Nobel award was ever talked about——

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

Special Envoy Witkoff. ——to receive that reward.

Secretary Rollins. Amen.

Special Envoy Witkoff. Beyond your success, it is game-changing out in the world today, and I hope everybody one day wakes up and realizes that.

Secretary Duffy. Hear. Hear.

Secretary Rollins. Amen! Well said. Well said.

The President. Thank you, Steve.

Jamieson, please.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson L. Greer. Mr. President, I like to think of Labor Day as the Trump trade policy day—[laughter]—because everyone around this table and everyone listening knows that one of the major reasons why American workers and organized labor voted for you is because of your trade policy and the policies you've had and advocated for for 40 years or more. You have reset global trade policy in the past few months, and it shows that it's been working for American workers.

When you look at President Biden, in the last quarter of 2024, median weekly earnings fell 2.1 percent. In the first quarter of your term, they went up 3.3 percent. And that's why we're doing the trade policy we're doing. It's to help the workers of the United States of America.

And they're the best in the world, but they can't do it without a level playing field, and you have flipped the script. For many years, the other countries had high tariffs and high nontariff barriers, while we were open to——

The President. That's right.

Ambassador Greer. ——right?——to——

The President. That's right.

Ambassador Greer. ——to all of their labor and services and goods and capital. You flipped it. Now we have the tariffs, and they have lowered their nontariff barriers, and we couldn't have done it without you and the leverage you've created.

So, between the tariffs and the deals, the hot streak continues for the workers of America. So thank you.

The President. Thank you very much. Really good job, by the way. He's good negotiator. [Laughter] Good negotiator.

Thank you.

Please.

Secretary Collins. Okay. Well, Mr. President, you've—I feel like, as everybody here has talked about, how great working with this team is and all, but I do feel a special need that I—you've given me the privilege of working with the best of America.

I get to take care of the veterans. I get to take care of the veterans who have—Labor Day really finds its roots in, if you think about it. We wouldn't have Labor Day if it wasn't for men and women who would leave their jobs and go fight this Nation's battles to keep us free and independent, so that they would have jobs to come home to.

Secretary Duffy. That's right.

Secretary Collins. And over the past few years, they've been coming home to, many times, a Government that was keeping them back, holding them back, taxing them, regulating them. And now we have veterans who represent the bill—the "Big Beautiful Bill"—they're the beneficiaries of it.

And I get to see them all the time, because they're receiving the benefit, because they see the jobs, they see the care that they're being given. And these veterans can look at their country with pride knowing that we're taking care of them, just like you told me to do.

[*Secretary Collins continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

That's what it means to be in the Trump administration. That's what it means to take care of veterans. That's what it means for Labor Day, because you can't forget the ones who fought for us to be at this table today. And it's all because of what you've done and the promise that we've made.

Secretary Duffy. That's right.

The President. Well, you've done a tremendous job, and I hear it all the time. We have a 93-percent approval rating at the VA now, and you know what it was before? It was, like——

Secretary Collins. Yes, sir.

The President. ——horrible.

Secretary Collins. Yes, sir.

The President. So thank you very much.

Secretary Duffy. Mr. President, I—there's been some conversation about the Pete and Bobby Challenge. [Laughter] I would just note that I don't think Pete or Bobby could hold these sticks for 2½ hours like these guys have. [Laughter]

Secretary Collins. Exactly.

Secretary Duffy. If they want that to be the challenge, so be it, but I think 50 pull-ups and a hundred pushups might be easy compared to the——

The President. You know, it is impressive, come to think of it. [Laughter]

Secretary Duffy. It really is.

Secretary Collins. They are pretty good.

The President. You didn't have this problem with Biden. [Laughter]

Secretary Duffy. They're not shaking.

The President. He was in and out very quickly.

Secretary Duffy. So kudos on Labor Day to the audio team that's holding the sticks.

But, Mr. President, it's pretty great to celebrate Labor Day with a builder who loves labor—

The President. That's right.

Secretary Duffy. —who loves the men and women who built this country, the people that sweat, that have great skills. They have grit. They do the dirty jobs of America that have made this country great. And you know them very well, because you have worked with them. The great Trump projects have come from the very men and women we're going into this weekend to celebrate.

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

Real quickly—so, we have a safety mission at DOT. I don't know that you'd think of the transit unions in the greatest cities of the country—New York, maybe being one of them—that support us. But they do, because the violence in the subways and on our busses across the country, the transit workers are the ones who take the most abuse.

Secretary Collins. They do.

Secretary Duffy. And they're grateful for the mission of everybody around this table fighting to make their communities safer. So I appreciate everyone's help on that. But they—again, the transit unions love the effort that all of us have put in together.

One quick—FAA?

The President. Go ahead.

Secretary Duffy. We are—we are about to put out a request for proposals for our "Big Beautiful Bill." We got—build, not bill—build. We got \$12.5 billion in the "Big Beautiful Bill." We need more, but this is a great start.

I expect the middle, till the later part of July, we'll get through the process to bring the proposed integrators to you for selection. So we're looking forward to that. We will have the most—I'm learning from you—we're—this is going to be the greatest contract ever crafted in the Federal Government for this build for air traffic control. Really, we're—it's innovative, and we have unique tools at FAA. It's going to be a great contract.

Bobby, left me out of the windmill conversation, Bobby, but I—so, there was a study done in the last administration that said, if you build windmills 1.2 miles—within 1.2 miles from a roadway, it can mess up the automation and technology on a car. Same thing 1.2 miles from rail.

The last administration buried that report, Mr. President. And so, now what we've said is—

Secretary Lutnick. Jesus Christ. [Laughter]

Secretary Duffy. —what we're going to do is say, "Listen, I'm sorry. It's—it is a safety risk to build windmills this close to roads."

By the way, they want to build them by roads and by rail. We're going to say, "No more. It is a safety risk."

The President. Great.

Secretary Duffy. And we have a report to show that.

The President. You hear that, Lee?

Secretary Duffy. And just real quick, we're——

The President. That's a good idea.

[*Administrator Zeldin gave a thumbs-up.*]

Secretary Duffy. See—see——

The President. That's great.

Secretary Duffy. ——good team effort. I wasn't invited to the party, but you know, I'm still going to try to get into the party. [*Laughter*]

Secretary Rollins. Maybe next time.

Secretary Duffy. Maybe next time, Bobby.

One last thing, we have this Mars to Moon mission at NASA. No—Moon to Mars mission, sorry about that. But if you think—sometimes people think that space doesn't matter to them, but if you look at every rocket that's launched, the machinists, the truck drivers, the electricians, the welders that build these rockets and the—and the industry that has developed over the course of the last 10 years in space, it's truly remarkable.

It's not just, you know, rich guys sending up rockets in partnership with NASA. There is a whole industry of working men and women, who we celebrate this weekend, that build, refurbish, design the rockets that are making America the leader in space.

So thank you for your leadership, and happy to celebrate——

The President. Thank you very much, Sean.

Secretary Duffy. ——this weekend with you, Mr. President.

The President. Really great. And he is doing a good job at NASA too, and we are—I think we'll have some pretty exciting announcements.

Secretary Duffy. Yes, we do.

The President. And you enjoy it.

Secretary Duffy. It's been fun.

The President. I said, "How about temporary?" He said, "Well, can I go a little bit longer?" He loves it. [*Laughter*] He loves it, and he's doing a really good job. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Secretary Duffy. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Howard, please.

Secretary Lutnick. So making America great again is one of the key statements, and people don't always understand what you mean. So we always talk about 1870 to 1913, but in the mid-1980s, America owned more of the rest of the world than they owned of us. We owned \$140 billion of the rest of the world net of what they owned of us. And when you came into office this time, the rest of the world owned \$24 trillion more of our assets than we owned of theirs.

And so, when people argue with you about——

The President. That's interesting.

Secretary Noem. It is.

Secretary Lutnick. —you know, "The trade deficit is nothing." The trade deficit sends 1.2 trillion of our dollars to them, and what do they do with it? They buy the great America.

Because when we learned in college—what we learned was that if you keep printing these dollars, they're supposed to devalue. But the problem is, we're too smart. We invented the light bulb, the transistor, the GPU, so they keep buying us. And the only President ever to understand that—and you understood it in the eighties and the nineties. And I used to, you know, see you on TV, and you'd say, "God, what are these people doing?" And finally, we've changed it.

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

So a couple of other things. Four days before you took office—4 days before you took office, the Commerce Department, which had the CHIPS money, they set up this thing called Natcast, which was a make-believe not-for-profit, and they signed contracts to wire them \$7.4 billion. This was just nonsense.

So we stopped the payment. We've got the money. It's an illegal thing to try to set up a department that's not the Department of Commerce that kind of acts like the Department of Commerce. And what was it filled with? All these people who worked for the Biden administration. I mean, it's the exact corruption that you talk about. \$7.4 billion now clawed back.

Last week was the most fun.

The President. It's amazing.

Secretary Lutnick. In 1 week, Intel came in. Right? The Biden administration had given \$11 billion to Intel. Given it to them. Done. Corporate, just, gift. And you turned that into—really, you know, it was, like, less than 5 minutes of conversation—*[laughter]*—and Intel agreed to give us 10 percent of their company, which, of course, was worth \$11 billion.

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

So—*[laughter]*—we're having fun together. This is the greatest Cabinet working for the greatest President, and I just want to say thank you. I'm having the time of my life working for you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. That was—yes, that was very well stated, wasn't it? *[Laughter]* Some things people don't think of too much.

Thank you very much. Great job.

Pete.

Secretary Hegseth. Sir, well, amen to what Howard said.

And I would just say, heading into Labor Day, from the American military, sir, we happen to be the largest employer in America. We like to think we have a different form of employees—

The President. Yes.

Secretary Hegseth. —who need to be the toughest and the strongest and the most well trained and the most lethal.

And under the previous administration—and for decades, frankly—it was social justice, it was political correctness, it was divisive ideologies seeping into the ranks and changing how well we do the—our job. No more.

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

And I wish everybody could—there were two meetings yesterday that I think tell the story. One was—because today happens to be the 4-year anniversary of what happened in Abbey Gate in Afghanistan. And, Mr. President, you had the families in—who you've met with multiple times—who, when the cameras were on and not on, acknowledged, sir, you were the only one that gave them a proper greeting, that recognized what they gave—their sons and daughters—in the debacle that was the withdrawal in Afghanistan, that we will bring accountability for at the Defense Department through our investigation.

The President. Good. That's good.

Secretary Hegseth. But, at the same time, the world sadly took notice. Whether it was Israel, whether it was Ukraine—those wars never would have started if you were President. Instead, they looked at the foolishness of Joe Biden.

Under your military, your Pentagon, we are restoring deterrence. Whether it's Midnight Hammer and those beautiful B-2s—37 hours straight. Whether it's counterdrug operations in our own hemisphere. Whether it's the border, working with Kristi and the national security team. Whether it's L.A., whether it's Washington, DC—you name it. Whether it's Europe—our Allies paying 5 percent. Now, our allies in the Indo-Pacific stepping up to do the same. That's a recognition that American leadership is here.

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

And so, whether it's "Secretary of War" or Secretary of Defense, that warrior ethos is changing. We're going back to basics. Our drill instructors can be drill instructors again, sir. So, from the minute of the tactical of standards to the strategic of B-2 bombers, we're focused on what matters.

Had a meeting yesterday on Golden Dome for America, which is on track to deliver strategically for the American people; munitions and the Deputy Secretary making sure we're—our stockpiles are overflowing. That's our job.

I'm honored to be a part of it, sir. Thank you for your leadership.

The President. That's great.

I think I like Department of War better, but we'll make that decision, right? *[Laughter]*

But you've been great. Thank you very much.

Secretary Hegseth. Thank you, sir.

The President. So, Marco, go ahead.

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. Well, Mr. President, first of all, everyone's made this comment already. It needs to be echoed again. You were elected as the President of working Americans, and that's why this Labor Day is so meaningful.

For me, personally, this is the most meaningful Labor Day of my life, as someone with four jobs. And so—*[laughter]*—

Secretary Rollins. He's so funny.

The President. It's true. It's true.

Secretary Rubio. And—but on the point of—you made it very clear from the outset: Even in foreign policy, everything we did has to be pro-American. It has to make America stronger or safer or more prosperous.

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

You're not—you've redefined our border. It's no longer just our physical border. We are doing things ahead of time to prevent this from happening and getting cooperations from countries that we've never seen before.

And last, I would say—and Steve touched upon this—who, by the way, is doing a phenomenal job.

The President. Mm-hmm. It's true.

Secretary Rubio. Steve is both a great negotiator, and he's also a nice guy, which are two tough things to pull off together. *[Laughter]* But it's incredible.

But we both work for the peacemaker in chief. Think about it: how fortunate we are as Americans to have a President who has made peace a priority.

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

And then on a point of personal privilege—I wasn't even going to raise it. I haven't even talked to you about this. It's a little controversial, but I think I need to bring it up at this time of year. This thing about people getting married on Saturdays during college football season is a scourge, Mr. President. *[Laughter]*

Secretary Rollins. Agreed.

Secretary Rubio. It's dividing families.

Secretary Rollins. Agreed.

Secretary Rubio. And I don't know if we can have an Executive order on this. Just saying—but it's really difficult. There's—you know, there's 7 other months of the year that people can get married. So I just wanted to say that because it's——

Secretary Rollins. I second—I second that.

Secretary Rubio. ——it's very, very difficult. *[Laughter]*

Secretary Rollins. Yes.

Secretary Rubio. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much. Fantastic, Marco. Thank you very much.

Doug, please.

Secretary Burgum. Well, Mr. President, you've heard from around the table how people are grateful to have an opportunity to be a part of this team, have an opportunity to work for you, and have an opportunity to serve the American people.

And I would say, as we head into this Labor Day, the thing that really differentiates you and your leadership and everybody around this table is one word, and that's "respect." Because this is a group of people that respect our farmers and ranchers. We respect the people that are in law enforcement. That's a huge change. Respecting the people that are in uniform, respecting our veterans, respecting our shrimp fishermen. I mean, whoever it is in this country—people that are building our roads.

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

And while we're ahead on the technology, we're way behind China on the amount of electricity they're bringing on line. And your strong position to support affordable, reliable energy using our nation's resources, including those across the Department of Interior—bringing back

coal mining, bringing back mining, bringing back timber—all the industries that have been killed in this country are coming back to life because of you. And with your leadership, we have a chance to not only win the AI arms race, but actually dominate it the way we're dominating in other things.

So thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much. And we're leading that race right now by a lot, and we're going to keep the electricity coming.

You know, in China, they do it very quickly. They have one person that says, "Do it," and that's it. But essentially, we have one person that says, "Do it." And we've given that order, and the job they've done has been amazing.

And I want to thank again, Lee. What you're doing in that regard is so important. And the rapidity—just as fast as them, because it's a question of a week versus a day, and that's not going to make the difference. But you've done fantastically.

And, Doug and Chris, amazing job.

So we've done this for a little while now. I don't think you've ever seen anything like it. And I—and you know, I think Sean was right. These guys that are holding these up—if you ever try holding your hand out for 2 hours—[*laughter*]*—that's a long time. These are pretty strong characters. You've been doing that a long time, I guess. Congratulations.*

Q. Too long, yes, sir.

The President. Are you getting tired? [*Laughter*] Are you getting tired?

Q. We're good for another 2 hours. Easy.

The President. I'm looking at these guys saying, they—[*laughter*]*—they look like they have no problem. It's amazing, actually. That's—they—I think they would have beaten you guys in the—in the test.*

So I want to thank you. If you want—you know, it's been a long time. [*Laughter*] If you want—if you want, we could go in and we can call it a day.

Secretary Rollins. There's lots of questions.

Q. No, we're—we have questions.

Secretary Rollins. They're ready. [*Laughter*]

The President. No?

Q. Just a few questions, Mr. President.

The President. And feel free, then, to ask some of the questions here.

Look, I believe in very open—you know, we want to be open, aboveboard. We want to be honest with the media. I wish the media was totally honest with us, but I think they're getting better, to be honest with you. And so we'll see. But if you want to take a few questions. You really want to do this.

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

*The President's Experience With Litigation/Federal Reserve System Board of Governors
Member Lisa D. Cook*

Q. On a serious note, when it comes to Fed Governor Lisa Cook, her lawyer has said that they're going to be filing a lawsuit challenging this legal action. What is your response and are you prepared for a legal fight? And then a little bit more of a——

The President. Oh, sure, always.

Q. ——of a happy question, sir.

The President. You always have legal fights.

Q. And there's a lot of football——

The President. Look, I had a legal fight that went on for years with crooked people, with very horrible people that have been found out now between John Ratcliffe and Tulsi and Pam.

And, I mean, the things that we found out—of course, it's a very, very sad group of people.

But no, she seems to have had an infraction. And she can't have an infraction, and especially that infraction, because she's in charge of, if you think about it, mortgages, and we need people that are a hundred percent aboveboard. And it doesn't seem like she was.

Yes, please.

Engagement of National Football League's Kansas City Chiefs Tight End Travis Kelce and Musician Taaylor Swift

Q. Mr. President, first, I would love to ask you a serious question, but I have to tell you, the biggest pop culture news of the year broke while we were in this Cabinet meeting. Travis Kelce and Taylor Swift are engaged, and the world wants your reaction, sir.

The President. Well, I wish them a lot of luck. [*Laughter*]

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. No, I think it's—I think he's a great player. I think he's a great guy, and I think that she's a terrific person. So I wish them a lot of luck.

U.S. Visa Policy for International Students/China/Russia

Q. On a serious note, Mr. President, in May, Secretary Rubio said that they were aggressively removing visas of Chinese students. Yesterday you said you want to allow 600,000 Chinese students to study in the United States. Could you and the Secretary clarify what is the policy on Chinese students in the United States of America?

The President. Well, we think we're—you know, look, we're getting along very well with China, and I'm getting along very well with President Xi. I think it's very insulting to say your students can't come here, because they'll go out, and they'll start building schools, and they'll be able to survive it.

But I like that their students come here. I like that other country's students come here. And you know what would happen if they didn't? Our college system would go to hell very quickly. You'd have—and it wouldn't be the top colleges. It would be colleges that struggle on the bottom. And you take out 300,000 or 600,000 students out of the system—I like having—and I told this to President Xi, that we're honored to have their students here.

Now, with that, we check, and we're careful, and we see who's there, and Marco wants that. We spoke. We're in the same position. But we have a tremendous college system, the best in the world. Nobody even close. That's why China sends them here.

And you can call it an industry if you want, but you're talking about millions of people. And I'm honored to have the students from China come here, and they're—we're just getting along very well with China.

It's a different relationship than we had for years where they took hundreds of billions of dollars, just sucked it right out of our country. They respect us again. I respect them. The relationship is very good. I think it's important that we—these are two very major powers—nuclear powers at that—but two very important powers.

You know, when I get along with Putin, when I get along with President Xi, when I get along with these people, that's a good thing, not a bad thing. We're tough and we're smart and we're strong. We get along. It's a lot better than not getting along.

You had somebody in here before. The war should have never started with Ukraine and Russia. It would have never started. And Putin said that himself. President Putin said that himself.

So we want to see college students come in from countries. There are some countries where—that we can't necessarily say that. These are places that have ideologies that we can't live with. So we—there are some areas, some countries that we can't say that. But we're honored to have the students come here.

Please, go.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes, please.

Gaza, Palestinian Territories

Q. Mr. President, yesterday, you said—yesterday, you said that within 2 to 3 weeks we would have a conclusive—pretty good, conclusive end to the war in Gaza. What did you mean by that? And can you tell us——

The President. On—on what?

Q. On the war in Gaza, you said a conclusive——

The President. Yes, what about it?

Q. You said in 2 to 3 weeks we would have a conclusive end—a pretty good, conclusive end.

The President. There's no conclusive. It's been going on for a long time. You're talking about—I guess, if you really add it up, Steve, you're talking about thousands of years, okay? It's been going on for—there's nothing conclusive, but hopefully, we're going to have things solved very quickly with regard to Gaza and also with regard to Ukraine and Russia.

Yes, please.

Federal Reserve System Board of Governors/Interest Rates

Q. Mr. President, who are you considering for the replacement to nominate for Lisa Cook? And what economic background or history are you looking for?

The President. Well, we have some very good people for that position, and I think we have some very good people—we're down to—I mean, I think I—maybe, in my own mind, have somebody that I like. But I deal with Scott, and I deal with Howard, and we're dealing with a lot of people actually, that are going to be involved in that decision, ultimately.

It's a very important decision, as we see. I mean, I got a bad recommendation when I went with Jerome "Too Late." You know, it's just—he's too late. His nickname is "Too Late." Costing

us a lot of money, hurting the housing. I mean, our housing industry is good, but it could be phenomenal. Most of this country, in terms—economic terms, has been phenomenal. We've never seen anything like it. Because of him and his high interest rates, the housing is less than it could be. We're going to get that straightened out very quickly.

He gets out very quickly, fortunately. He's been the wrong guy. Not a bad person, I don't think. But you know, I do think he has motives, by the way, but I don't consider him—I've dealt with worse, but he hasn't done the job. The recommendation from a certain person was not a great recommendation. That person vouched for him, but we're doing a very careful study. We'll see what happens.

Look, we have—we just put a very good man in that—in one position. We might switch him to the other—it's a longer term—and pick somebody else. But we're very happy with the person we have in there, and we'll have a majority very shortly. So that will be great.

Once we have a majority, housing is going to swing, and it's going to be great. People are paying too high an interest rate. That's the only problem with housing. We have to get the rates down a little bit, and when we do, it's going to be a tremendous difference. The country——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But the country—the country is doing so well, it sort of—it sort of blows through the fact that we have a man who's too late and not doing a very good job.

Please. In blue.

Firearms Rights/District of Columbia Public Safety

Q. Mr. President, regarding crime in DC. Something that might help, especially ladies, is being able to carry. I know you've talked about reciprocal carry. Would you like for that to apply here in Washington, DC?

The President. When you say "carry," I assume you're talking about carry what we're talking about, right?

Q. Concealed or—yes.

The President. In other words, carry a gun.

Q. Correct. Yes.

The President. Is that right? Would you like to carry a gun?

Q. I would like to, yes, sir.

The President. You'd feel a hell of a lot better, right?

Q. I absolutely would.

The President. I agree with you a hundred percent. Okay?

Q. Okay, great.

The President. But I'll tell you, within another couple of weeks—it's hard to believe what's been accomplished in 12 days—but within another couple of weeks, you won't have to carry.

Q. And on that——

The President. You're not going to have to carry. You're going to be safe. People are safe now. This—the turn has gone fast. I knew it was going to go fast, but this turn has gone really fast. And within a month or two, this is going to be one of the safest places in the country. I have no doubt about it.

And we'll do an extension. We'll work with Congress, or I could declare an emergency, but I don't think that's going to be necessary. We'll work with Congress.

Q. And to that, you've got—

The President. We're going to be working with Congress. I spoke with a—our great Speaker, and I will be speaking to John Thune. And we're getting tremendous support from Congress. Especially, maybe here, everybody wants to see our Capital be great. Could say be great again. You know, it's such a beautiful place, but if you have crime, nothing looks beautiful.

So—but you won't need to carry a gun, but if you do——

Q. Well, I would like to——

The President. ——it's going to be your choice.

Q. ——have the option, just in case.

The President. Well, a lot of people feel that.

Crime in U.S. Cities/Potential Deployment of U.S. Military Personnel to U.S. Cities/2026 Midterm Elections

Q. Sir, also, in other blue cities, you've got Karen Bass in Los Angeles, Brandon Johnson in Chicago—it seems to be very popular here, the fact that people can walk around, go to restaurants, shop——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——not have to worry about their safety. If blue city mayors oppose those efforts in their cities, do you anticipate the Democrat voters are going to take it out on them at the ballot box?

The President. I think so. I think that crime is going to be a big thing, and we are the party—the Republicans are the party that wants to stop crime. We're against crime. The Democrats like crime. I don't know why.

I mean, we talk about common sense. I think I got elected on talking about common sense. The border, we have to have a wall. We have—we don't want transgender for everybody. We don't—as I said before, we don't want to have men playing in women's sports. I mean, you see the difference weightlifting. Take a look at weightlifting. Take a look at long-distance running, where a runner came in 5 hours and 14 minutes ahead of another runner. Both champions; one male, one female—it's not fair. It's demeaning to women. It's so bad.

But they have another one, and I think this is the beauty of them all: crime. They're against crime prevention. You can't do that. You can't do that. And it's—it—I think to myself, I say: "Is there some game? You know? They're smart people. Is this"—anybody that could cheat like that in elections is smart, okay? And there's never been in history anybody that could cheat like that. They're smart. They're brilliant in many ways. I say, "Is there some trick to this?" When they say: "Trump is in Washington, DC, stopping crime. He's a dictator." And people are being mugged, like your brilliant associate here.

I don't know how you're alive, I mean, based on that story. You got very lucky he didn't just go——

[The President made the motion of a trigger pulling.]

——all he had to do is this, right?

Q. Exactly.

The President. And you know, it's pretty amazing. So——

Q. Was it an intentional threat?

The President. So we have something—I think we have two things. I think what Bobby was talking about, with respect to drug prices, is unbeatable. Nobody else could have done it but us. And I think that crime—I think crime will be the big subject of the midterms and will be the big subject of the next election.

Think of it. They are—instead of saying: "Trump is right about crime. It's really bad in Chicago." You have a guy in Illinois, the Governor of Illinois, saying that crime has been much better in Chicago recently. "And Trump is a dictator, and"—and most people say, "If you call him a dictator, then—if he stops crime, he can be whatever he wants"—I'm not a dictator, by the way—but "He can be whatever he wants."

I think it's going to be a big, big subject for the midterms. And I think the Republicans are going to do really well. They are—they called it a trap. This Democrat consultant, they said, "He's put them in a trap again." Because these are all traps, you know, 80/20, but they're not 80/20; they're almost 100 to nothing, all these issues.

But I would say that crime is stronger than men playing in women's sports. I think it's stronger than transgender for everybody. You know, it's transgender for everybody, according to them.

It's stronger—of course, it's—this is the cause of it: open borders. Open borders gave us a lot of this crime. So, you know—so there's sort of an unequal footing, I guess.

But crime is going to be a very big subject. And you know what he should do if he was smart? Illinois or New York, if they want, or Gavin Newsom, they should call me and they should say, "You know, we've got a problem."

You know, we could solve, with this team—different players, but work the same way, because you'd leave them here—you don't want to take them out and let it go to hell.

Everybody's so happy in—I'll bet you walked over here today and you had no fear. Nobody has any fear anymore, for last 12 days.

But what if—if they—what—it would be so smart: Gavin Newsom calling me up, say: "You know what? We have a big problem. We have the Olympics coming up. We want to do well. We have tremendous problems on crime and other things, and we'd love some help." Chicago, in particular, maybe, right now. I mean, it's a disaster. It's a disaster. We could solve their problem in—it's bigger than this—let's say 2 months—okay?—working with their police.

I know their police very well. I have a big project in Chicago. I built—I was so proud of it. It's the best site in Chicago. I got it. Nobody else got it. I was happy as hell. That was when I was a real estate guy, and I got it—the "Sun-Times site," they call it. And I built a building. It's a great building.

And I'm so embarrassed when I see the kind of crime stats coming out. They're so—so embarrassed.

And if I were a Governor—a Democrat Governor or a mayor or anybody having to do—I'd call up President Trump. I'd say: "President Trump, we need your help. We saw what you've done in DC in a period of 12 days." This is 12 days. We haven't even started. This is going to be so safe. Going to be the safest place on Earth, and we'll do the same thing in Chicago.

But I'd like to be asked, as opposed to just going in and doing it. Because, you know, when you go in and do it, then they start screaming: "Oh, he shouldn't be here. We don't need him. We're doing so well." And then the better we do, they take credit for it. So it's really pretty unfair.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes. Go ahead.

Public Safety in the District of Columbia/White House Renovation Project

Q. Mr. President, on crime. For a lot of victims, like myself, a big concern is long-term——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——sustainability. Can you share with——more with the American public about your plan in ensuring that DC is safe in the long term——

The President. Longer term, yes.

Q. ——in the months and years ahead?

The President. Well, it's a great question.

Number one, we want to stay there for longer than 30 days. As you know, we have an absolute mandate, and I can extend it, but I'd rather not have to declare a national emergency because, by that time—I mean, right now, there's not an emergency. We've done—as you sort of said yourself, it feels like a different world.

We've got under arrest and prosecution and we've thrown out—taken some and we're in the process of taking hundreds out of our country that shouldn't be here. And these are hardcore, professional criminals. They were born to be criminals, in my opinion. But they're seriously bad people: murderers, drug dealers. You know them all. You see them all as you walk beautifully to work, and every once in a while, somebody puts a gun to your head, because that's what happened in your case.

We're getting a lot of them out of the country. We're putting a lot of them in prison because we're afraid to bring them out of the country. They could come back. You know, as good as we're doing, they could come back. We don't want them back, and that's going to solve a lot of it.

We also think there should be a presence here for long enough. We should also work with our police department, because you have very good police here—very good. We're working very well with them, by the way, and we have to work together for a while.

We have some people that are very tough and very strong. Working with the police, they're going to be able to handle it.

And you know what? If it gets a little bit bad—a little bit—just a little bit—I'll bring them back in, and we'll straighten it out, and we'll make it perfect.

You're going to be so safe in the city, and you're going to have the city beautified. We're going to be giving out—we're working with Clark, as you know, Construction. They're the biggest. They're working with me also. We're building a beautiful ballroom for the White House. They've been after it for 150 years. Employs a lot of people. It's going to be as beautiful a ballroom as has ever been built.

And Clark is the big builder in this city. They've done, I guess, a majority of the good work, the big work. And we're working with them on the beautification: the fixing up the roads; the fixing up of the medians, the—you know, between the roads so cars don't wrap into each other. They wrap into the—I have one piece sitting on the ground for weeks. This was a year ago, when I had to come in, unfortunately, for fake court cases. And I looked at the condition, and we have it fixed up a lot right now. You know, the tents are removed, and a lot of things have taken place. But I'd come into this city, and I'd say, "Boy, does it look bad." The filth on the roads. The medians were broken and always laying down and nobody would fix them. And all of that.

Well, we're going to have new medians. We're going to have a nice topping put on the road. We're not going to rip the roads apart and start a construction project that'll last for 2½ years as they rebuild the road, which they don't have to do. And we're going to have this place so beautiful. That's going to be a part of it.

Now, the biggest part is crime, but it's also a part—you know, when you see a dirty city—it's like I told—I don't know, it became the number one thing viral. I said, my father—he's a smart guy. He's a great guy. He was a loving, wonderful father, but he could be a little on the tough side. He told me that, "Son, when you walk into a restaurant and you see a dirty, filthy door going into the restaurant, don't go there, because the kitchen is dirty also." When they see a dirty Capital, the rest of the world, they lose a lot of respect for our country.

This Capital is going to be so beautiful. We're going to have new poles, new lights, new fences—stuff that, when you add it up, it's money, but it's peanuts compared to what we're talking about. And we're also going to have great safety.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, I wanted to ask you on crime and also a question on foreign policy that maybe other officials can weigh in on too. And on crime, Iris shared her story, and you mentioned, you know, about people going to dinner.

The President. That was a terrible story, because——

Q. Yes.

The President. I'm just amazed she's here. When—when the gun is—Pam, when the gun is put to the head.

Did they ever capture these people, by the way?

Q. I kept calling, but I haven't heard back about this guy's whereabouts.

The President. It would be really great if you could maybe give the information. She's very good at capturing people, you know? *[Laughter]*

Q. Yes.

The President. She's very good. If you could give that information to Pam, it would be great.

Q. Yes. Will do. For sure.

The President. Would you do that?

Q. Yes. Will do.

The President. All right.

Q. Thank you so much, Madam Attorney General.

The President. Wouldn't—you'd love to see them—I would assume you'd like to see them captured.

Q. For sure. Yes, for——

The President. You can't—you just can't——

Q. I've been waiting for years.

The President. Yes. Take a good look at that.

Go ahead. So go ahead.

Crime in the District of Columbia

Q. So, yes. Just a few weeks ago, I was out to dinner with my husband, and then, you know, we're taking the Metro back, and then we get attacked on the Metro. They were throwing things—some teenagers, you know, like, throwing liquid at us.

The President. Oh, they're throwing things?

Q. I mean——

The President. They throw—how about where they chop down the granite curbs and the concrete curbs—but the granite curbs, so expensive. You know, those granite curbs, nobody uses them because they're so expensive. And you see a guy chopping them and handing out big chunks of them like a brick, because they couldn't get in, because people were stopping them from walking out. A little bit unusual when you're walking with a bag of bricks. [*Laughter*] Generally speaking, Sean, that's not a good sign, right? [*Laughter*]

Secretary Duffy. Not a good sign.

The President. That's not a good sign.

But they now come in with hammers.

Secretary Lutnick. Jeez.

The President. They can disguise a hammer, and they start pounding the concrete and the granite, and they hand out chunks. And those people take those chunks and start throwing them at cops, or they stand on the top of bridges, and they drop them down into the windshield of your car, and you get killed running into a light pole.

Secretary Lutnick. Jeez.

The President. It's—those days are over.

Law Enforcement in New York City/Cashless Bail Policies/Chicago, Illinois/"Sanctuary" Cities

Q. I wanted to ask you: Governor Hochul—Kathy Hochul said that she spoke to you on the phone, and you said you might send National Guard troops to New York. You've mentioned that. So will you be sending——

The President. I'd love to do it——

Q. Will you be sending troops? And when?

The President. ——if she'd like. I get along with Kathy. If she'd like to do that, I would do it.

See, look, New York has difficulty like other—and I don't want to make this—I want to make this, like, friendly. But the places we're talking about happen to be virtually all Democrat-run.

Now, take a look at your 25 places that—that are most troubled. Every one—except maybe one, and it's way back in number 24 or 25—but essentially, 25 out of 25 are run by Democrats.

And cashless bail was a disaster. When they did that—and I believe it was instituted first in New York, but when they did cashless bail, that was a tragedy for this, because that's when it really started. It really started getting bad.

When somebody kills somebody, you don't say: "You can come out. You don't have to put up anything." You put that person in jail, and you—you find out whether or not it's true, but you

don't give cashless bail with a promise to come back in a couple of months, we'll start talking to you, because they go out and they kill other people. And you can't do that.

The cashless bail has been—you know, the—it's just a woke thing. It's got to stop.

You see that, Kristi, better than anybody.

Secretary Noem. I do. Absolutely.

The President. It's got to stop. It causes unbelievable—and we're doing that. We're stopping it in DC.

I would love to have the Governor of Illinois call me and say, "Look, we have a problem in Chicago." We will stop that problem in Chicago in 2 months, maybe less. In 2 months, we'll stop it.

These are tough cookies we have working for us. These are tough cookies. These are not politically correct soldiers that—I won't go into definitions of what that means—[*laughter*]*—*but these are not politically correct soldiers. These are rough guys.

I watched it last night. I see it. I saw them the other day when we went down and we spent some time together with them. These are tough cookies. These are not people that you're going to laugh at and spit in their face and they're not going to do anything about it.

And these people, they're afraid. These gang members, who are bad people too—these are bad—these are just bad people. Ours are bad, but they're bad in a good sense. Right? You understand that, Scott.

Secretary Turner. Oh, yes.

The President. And we can solve Chicago in 2 months.

Now, then, as per your statement before, we have to keep it going, and we'll be able to keep it going. The first thing you have to do is get it down. We are very close to being in that position in DC, and within a month, we will be—within a month from when we started, which is quicker than I thought, we're going to have—you're going to feel very, very safe. I think you feel very safe right now.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

But I would love it to have these Governors, mayors call me and say, "We'd like to invite you into our community because we have a problem, and you can handle the problem, and we can't."

One other thing: sanctuary cities. They should be terminated. They're sanctuary for criminals. They're safety and security for criminals. They are very, very bad, and all of these places have big sanctuary cities, and all they're doing is protecting criminals.

Okay.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Go ahead.

Investigations of Mortgage Fraud

Q. Mr. President, thank you. A couple of questions about—about Lisa Cook. You have spoken out very strongly for a long time about what you see as the weaponization of government.

The President. Yes.

Q. Is your administration weaponizing government—

The President. No.

Q. —by digging into the mortgage records of officials you don't like?

The President. No, they're public. I mean, you can find out those records. You can go check out the records yourself.

And you should be doing that job, actually. You wouldn't do that because that's not the kind of reporter you are, but you should be doing that job. I shouldn't have to be doing it. If you did your job properly, we wouldn't have problems like Lisa Cook.

Go ahead. You were going to say something.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Interest Rates

Q. But, sir, would you be—sir, would you be trying to fire——

The President. Huh-uh. Go. Blue.

Q. —Lisa Cook——

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. —if she had voted to lower interest rates?

Q. On national security——

The President. Please.

Q. —a follow-up——

The President. I think we have to have lower interest rates, yes.

Law Enforcement and Crime

Q. A follow-up question for you and Madam Attorney General on national security. We've heard from Stephen Miller yesterday in the Oval Office that there are street criminals here in DC who were actually found to be doing business with transnational criminal cartels overseas.

The President. Mm-hmm, that's right. And we know who they are, and we know who they're doing business with. And we're arresting the people—very strongly arresting, and we're keeping them there, because, you know, your laws here make it very difficult.

And one of the other laws we're trying to get done, because you have 14-year-old kids that are just as tough as a 25-year-old kid, just as dangerous, and they carry the same gun. And we have to make a provision where they're treated like older people, because these are seriously tough, bad—they're children, but they're criminals, and they're really bad criminals. And they're used by older people because they never get charged, because you can't do anything to them.

But we are getting that changed, Pam, I hope, because you have 14-year-old kids that are evil. They're sick. And they have to be put away. The—something has to be done, because you can't have a society where they're allowed to walk the street. You know that better than anybody.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Q. Mr. President, on your way to Alaska, you——

The President. I can't believe—you're not tired holding that? Look at this.

Q. I have a few more questions. [*Laughter*]

The President. How strong are you? How strong are you? Look at him. He's been holding that thing for 3 hours. [Laughter] You're a good fisherman.

Q. Thank—well, I should give that a shot.

The President. Go ahead.

Russia/Ukraine/India/Pakistan

Q. On the way to Alaska, you had mentioned that there would be severe consequences if Vladimir Putin did not agree to a cease-fire.

The President. Yes.

Q. After that summit, that was rolled back, given the negotiations. Is he back on the clock now?

The President. I want to see that deal end. It's very, very serious what I have in mind, if I have to do it. But I want to see it end.

I think that, in many ways, he's there. Sometimes he'll be there, and Zelenskyy won't be there. You know, it's like, who do we have today? I've got to get them both at the same time. But I want to have it end.

We have economic sanctions. I'm talking about economic, because we're not going to get into a world war.

I'll tell you what, in my opinion, if I didn't win this race, Ukraine could have ended up in a world war. We're not going to end up in a world war anymore, but it would have ended up, possibly, in a world war. That would have been a—they were ready to trot.

But just like India and Pakistan were going to end up in a nuclear war if I didn't stop them. You know, it was sort of strange. I saw they were fighting. Then I saw seven jets were shot down.

Secretary Rubio. Yes.

The President. I said: "That's not good. That's a lot of jets." You know, \$150 million planes were shot down. Lot of them—seven, maybe more than that. They didn't even report the real number.

And I'm talking to a very terrific man, Modi of India, and I say, "What's going on with you and Pakistan?" Then I'm talking to Pakistan on trade. I said, "What's going on with you and India?" And the hatred was tremendous. Now, this has been going on for a hell of a long time, like with—sometimes with different names, for hundreds of years.

But I said, "What's going on?" I said, "I don't want to make a trade deal." "No, no, no, we want to make trade deal." I said: "No, no. I don't want to make a trade deal with you. You're going to have a nuclear war. You guys are going to end up in a nuclear war." And that was very important to them. I said, "Call me back tomorrow, but we're not going to do any deals with you, or we're going to put tariffs on you that are so high"—you were there, Howard, right?

Secretary Lutnick. Yes.

The President. You're going to—"put tariffs on you that were so high, I don't give a damn. Your head's going to spin." [Laughter] "You're not going to end up in a war." Within about 5 hours, it was done.

Secretary Lutnick. Amazing.

The President. It was done. Now, maybe it starts again. I don't know. I don't think so, but I'll stop it if it does.

We can't let these things happen. The Russia-Ukraine situation—last week, 7,012 soldiers—7,012 soldiers died. They were Russian; they were Ukrainian. They weren't American. So a lot of people would say: "What do you care? They're not American." I care. They're—they're 12,000—over the last couple of weeks, over 12,000 people died in the last—like, in 2 weeks.

You know, we're talking about crime, where somebody is killed here, or somebody—think of it. You have your son leaving Russia, leaving Ukraine, their little house, wherever they live with their parents. They're waving goodbye, just like our parents would wave goodbye. And they're waving them, "Goodbye, son." And then a week later, his head's blown off in a stupid war by a drone, a whole new form of military problem.

So, no, I'd like it to stop. I want to get it to stop. And it will not be a world war, but it will be an economic war. And an economic war is going to be bad, and it's going to be bad for Russia. And I don't want that.

Now, I have to also see, because not everybody—you know, Zelenskyy is not exactly innocent either. Okay? You know, it takes two people to tango, and I say it all the time. You've got to get them together. I get along with Zelenskyy now—[laughter]—but we have a much different relationship, because now we're not paying any money to Ukraine. You know, I stopped that. We're paying money to ourselves.

What's happening is NATO is buying all of the equipment and paying in full. But even with that—forget about that. I want to get it stopped, because it's a lot of lives that are being lost. Every week, it's 7,000, 5,000, 6,000—I get the reports, and I see battlefields. I'd rather not see them.

And you know, you read about——

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. What did Putin say in your phone call?

The President. You read about Gettysburg—you read about Gettysburg, and you see, you know, those thousand—600,000 people, but in that war, in particular, it was really bad, like 150,000 or some—just dead body. I'm seeing the same—I see pictures. I see satellite pictures of heads over here, arms over here, legs over here.

And this is like a modern age. This is no different than the worst wars that I've ever seen. And if I can stop it, because I have a certain power or a certain relationship—I had a very good relationship with President Putin—very, very good. That's a positive thing again. And I think I'm probably the only—Steve Witkoff would tell you, I'm the only one that can solve it. I don't know. You've told me that a few times, unless he was saying that just to build up my ego, but it's not, really. I have no ego when it comes to this stuff. I just want to see it stopped.

Thousands of young people—mostly young people are dying every single week. If I can save that by doing sanctions or by just being me or by using a very strong tariff system that's very costly to Russia or Ukraine or whoever we have—you know, but I stopped seven wars, and three of those wars were going on for more than 30 years.

You know, if you look at Congo, if you look at—just look at any of them, almost all of them were going on for extended period of time.

Now, interestingly, one had just started. It was 2 days old, and you know that one. That—we did that one when we were in Scotland negotiating. It was 2 days—by the way, 2,000 dead bodies laying on the border, and I got that one stopped too.

And I'm very honored by that, but I still—the one that I thought would be the easiest is turning out to be the hardest. That's President Putin and President Zelenskyy. But I think I'll get it done.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Why do you think that is? Why is it harder than you thought it would be?

The President. You never know. It's war.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

With war, you never know, right? War is very tricky, very horrible. But with war, you never know. Things change. People go into war, think they're going to win the war, and then they get their asses kicked, and they lose their country. They lose millions of lives.

Nobody goes into a war thinking they're going to lose. They go in—I'm sure that Ukraine thought they were going to win. It's going to be—you know, we're going to win. You're going to beat somebody that's 15 times your size.

Biden shouldn't have let that happen. Biden shouldn't have got—I mean, the man was grossly incompetent. He should have never been there. That would have never happened.

But you don't go into a war that's 15 times your size.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Say it?

Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Member Lisa D. Cook

Q. The Fed just put out a statement saying that Lisa Cook has indicated, through a personal attorney that she'll promptly challenge this action in court, seek a judicial decision that would confirm her ability to continue. And——

The President. That's all right, whatever it is.

Q. And it says, "The Fed will abide by any court decisions."

The President. Thank you very much for reading that.

Q. Will you abide by a court decision?

The President. I abide by the court. Yes, I abide by the court.

Q. So, if the court—*[inaudible]*——

Q. Sir, should Vanity Fair——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Yes, please.

Q. Should Vanity Fair staffers——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. That's enough. That's enough. Go ahead.

Q. Vanity Fair staffers——

U.S. Government Ownership Stake in Private Companies/Semiconductor Manufacturing

Q. Mr. President, what other companies—or what other companies are you thinking about taking a stake in?

The President. Well, you know, we didn't take a stake in the sense that it was reported. Everyone said I bought a stake in Intel. No, I got it for free. I said—I was with the—is that a correct statement? Howard was there.

Secretary Lutnick. Absolutely correct.

The President. Scott knew all about it. They came in—a man was charged with something, by a very good person. Senator Cotton made some statements about the gentleman that was running Intel. When he came in, and—and I said some rough things about him. I said, "I'm not happy with it." And they called, and he was very devastated at what I said. I said he should immediately resign.

And he came to see me, and I was very impressed by him, actually. And he made a mistake, or the things—factors happened, where something like this could have taken place. In the meantime, his board was staying by him.

And I said to him—and it took about, I would say, less than 45 seconds—I said: "You know what you should do? If you're smart, give the United States of America 10 percent of your company." And he looked at me, and he said, "I'll do that." I said, "I just made \$11 billion for the United States." And we made the deal. I took. I didn't pay. We didn't write a check.

Now, I guess Biden, with his stupid CHIPS Act—[*laughter*—]handed money to all these people that didn't need any money.

Secretary Lutnick. Exactly.

The President. It didn't do anything. You know the chip—they're giving billions of dollars to everybody. They all have so much money, and now they have more money. But there's no commitment that you had to build. They just took all this money. I don't—it's the stupidest thing I've ever seen. See, with tariffs, they have to come in—because if they don't come in, they can't sell into our country.

So it's power, and you don't have to give up any money. But I said to him, very simply—I mean, I'm glad we're straightening this out, because everyone thinks I bought in. No, I said, "It would be great—we'd be a great partner for your company"—and I want to see Intel do well. You know, Intel was a great company, and it can be a great company again. But I said, "I think it would be good if we own 10 percent of your company." He said, "I'll make that deal." And it happens to be worth \$11 billion.

So we made \$11 billion for the country, and then I was criticized by some of the fake news media. "That's not the American way." Actually, it is the American way. Now, if I can help other countries or do those deals with other—I would do that. I think it's great. It's good. Builds up—

Q. Do you know what other companies?

The President. —our balance sheet. Let me tell you, our country is becoming very rich, again. You don't see it.

When the CBO came out on Friday and said, "We just found 11—we just found \$4 trillion." And that goes to reduce our deficit—\$4 trillion—and it was from the tariffs. Our country is becoming very, very rich again. I hope you get used to it. [*Laughter*] You know, you're going to have to get used to it.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Tariff Revenue

Q. In addition to reducing the deficit, any update on your previous talking about potentially giving Americans a tariff rebate check? Any update on that?

The President. Well, we have a lot of money coming in—rebate check for the Americans—and it's coming in at tremendous numbers. Don't forget, I would say, Scott, we probably are talking about, right now, 50 percent—maybe even less than that. With all the money you're hearing is coming in, you're talking about, you know, a lot of it hasn't kicked in yet. And when it really kicks in is in 2 years when these plants are built and opened and the money starts pouring in. Right?

But, I mean, there's a concept of making a—you could call it a dividend, as we would say—making a dividend to the people in this country who have had to suffer through stupid leadership. And they paid a lot of taxes, and they got nothing for it. Or they got attacked like you were—okay?—for it. No, there's a possibility.

Primarily we want to pay down debt. But there's a possibility that we take a piece of it and pay some—make a dividend to the people.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. And on American tech companies, you—

Q. Mr. President, on—I have a question for Steve Witkoff, if I may.

The President. Yes.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. This just—this past weekend, Sergey Lavrov was saying that Putin will not sign a peace deal with Zelenskyy because Russia views him as illegitimate. I'm just wondering if the Russians have been relaying this to your team. If they view Zelenskyy, you know, as the leader worth signing a peace deal with—

The President. It doesn't matter what they say.

Q. —if they will go to the table.

The President. Steve can answer it, but I can answer it too.

Doesn't matter what they say. Everybody is posturing. It's all bullshit. Okay? *[Laughter]* Everybody is posturing.

Steve, do you have a different answer?

Special Envoy Witkoff. I agree with you, sir. *[Laughter]*

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

District of Columbia/Law Enforcement/Military Rules of Engagement/U.S. Military Readiness

Q. "Defund the police"—"defund the police," sir. In—in—here in this city, they're 500 people short on the police department, Metropolitan—Police; in New York City, it's 3,000; in Chicago, it's 1,300. Would they have had to bring in troops from the National Guard if the police departments in this country were fully staffed? "Defund the police," how bad did that turn out for America?

The President. It's an interesting question. I found—I was surprised when I heard how many police were here. It's not a really big area, and I think they said they're down to 3,200 police, or

something like that. I said, "That's a lot of police." And I was a little bit surprised, because to me that's a big force, and it's not a big area. But it is what it is. There's a lot of crime.

You have a lot of——

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Don't forget, you have a lot of police that weren't allowed to do their job.

Q. Sure.

The President. When I came in, as you remember, we made tremendous strides, and a little conflict that we had going at the time, because I allowed our military to make the decision. I said, "You can make any decision you want." I gave it to the colonels in the field. I gave it to the captains in the field.

Do you remember that? Where everything went through Biden, meaning one of the people, and everything went through Obama before him. Everything went through—they had to make the decision as to whether or not to attack the Taliban.

So they'd find 30 people together. They'd call up Washington, and they'd go to a political hack who knew nothing about it. My first night, I got that same call. I—they called me, and they said, "We have a"—I got a call, 3 o'clock in the morning, because I listened to their system. And they were calling me, and they were asking me whether or not they could attack a group of people having to do with—you know what war I'm talking about. And I said, "I know nothing about this."

Wait a minute. And then I said: "Who is he? Let me speak to the people calling." They're calling from Afghanistan. And I said, "Let me speak to the people. I want to speak to them." And it was a colonel. I said, "Where'd you go to school, Colonel?" "I went to West Point, sir." "Were you a good student?" "I was, sir. I was a very good student." "So you're calling the White House to ask for permission to attack, and by the time you get the answer—how long does it take?" "Sometimes 2 or 3 weeks." "So, by the time you get the answer, the people that you want to attack have already left, right?" He said, "How did you know that, sir?"

I said, "Let me ask you—so you were a good student, you went to West Point, and you love the military, right?" "Yes." "You make the decision."

And I gave all those guys that went to all these great schools, and they're all military people—I gave them the right to make their own decision. And we kicked ISIS' ass.

Don't forget, ISIS was supposed to be—was supposed to take 5 years to terminate them. And we had a man named "Razin" Caine, who happens to have done the whole thing in Iran. He's a great general, and he's a wonderful guy too, believe it or not. But he's a great soldier.

We let them do their work, and we defeated ISIS. We defeated everybody—everybody—every fight that we had, militarily—that I had, I won. And I let these great soldiers do—do some make a mistake? I guess.

But like this colonel, I'll never forget it, "Where did you go to school?" "I went to West Point, sir." I did ask him a question. I like good students as opposed to bad student. He said, "I was a good student, sir." And I said, "You do what's necessary." And you know, I don't want to sound overly vicious, but he wiped out the entire group of very bad people that want to kill us. So you have to let them do their job.

In Washington, they're not allowed to do their job. Okay? They're not allowed.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

You have great police. You have great police——

Q. Let me ask you——

The President. ——but they're not allowed—hello.

Go ahead

Federal Government Funding/Democratic Party

Q. On Congress, Mr. President. Would you be open to a yearlong continuing resolution?

The President. I'm always open to whatever is necessary. Look, here's the problem in Congress: You have Democrats that will never vote for anything.

I could say that we're going to lower your taxes by 50 percent; we're going to guarantee you free cities, safe cities—nobody will ever get touched, molested, beat up, shot in the head; we're going to give you the greatest country ever. We need your vote. And they won't vote, and they do it in unison.

The only thing they do good is cheat on elections and unite. You know why they unite? Not because they're good or they're loyal people. They unite because they're afraid. They're afraid of the radical left, and you can't get their vote.

So we have a vote coming up at the end of September, and I think we're going to pass it because we have the majority. And I think almost every Republican will vote for an extension, because no matter what deal you make with these people—look at Schumer. He made a deal a year and a half ago, and after making the deal, he's been almost run out of the party. He's not the same man. He's not the same man. He's finished. He aged 20 years. He's become a Palestinian, by the way. We call him "our great Palestinian Senator." [*Laughter*]

But Chuck Schumer—and I wrote him a letter. I said: "Chuck, that was really great. Thank you very much." And somebody gave the letter to the press—not me—and he was destroyed, because they thought I was being sarcastic, and I wasn't. He made a great decision. It kept our country open. That was a positive.

But you can count on almost no vote. I mean, I see things—I'll give you an example: crime. So we're going to pass a bill so—to stop crime. We may not get one Democrat vote. Okay? We may not get one. So, when you say "continuing resolution"—I guess so, and it's going to be passed exclusively by Republicans.

U.S. Visa Policy/Domestic Agriculture Industry

Q. On farm visas——

Q. Mr. President, why do you use "Palestinian" in a derogatory sense, sir?

Q. ——you mentioned in Iowa that you wanted to see some changes to the—the H-2A visa program for——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——for farm workers.

The President. Right.

Q. You mentioned in Iowa that you want to see changes. Do you want to see that before the fall harvest?

The President. Well, I love both groups. And we take care of our farmers, and we also take care of the people that want bad people out of our country. And we're working on something

that's going to work really well. We take care of our farmers. But we also have to take care of those people that voted for me, because they don't want criminals in our country, and we're working on something where we can take care of both.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Federal Deficit and Debt

Q. On that—and you were talking about the CBO report that two of your Cabinet members were talking about. I remember back on "Liberation Day," many of us reporters covered your detractors, people saying that it was going to explode the deficit and therefore explode the debt. Who all has called you to say, "I was wrong"? *[Laughter]*

The President. That's very good. You know the answer to that.

Okay. Yes, please, go ahead.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

National Guard/Use of U.S. Military Personnel in U.S. Cities/Chicago, Illinois/Governor Jay R. "J.B. Pritzker of Illinois/Governor Gavin C. Newsom of California/News Media

Q. Mr. President, Governor Pritzker said yesterday that he—at a press conference—that he would encourage nonviolent resistance to the National Guard——

Secretary Lutnick. Jesus Christ.

Secretary Rollins. Wow.

Q. —if they were sent to Chicago. What's your response to that?

The President. He said what?

Secretary Rollins. That's insane.

Q. That he would encourage nonviolent resistance if the National Guard is sent to Chicago.

The President. Look, this guy doesn't know what resistance is or nonviolent resistance is. He's a bad politician. It's amazing. I mean, if he didn't have the money, he wouldn't get any votes, because there's no compelling reason to vote for him. The guy's a major loser.

But it would be nice if he would call me. I would change my mind immediately if he said—you know, because everybody knows Chicago is a hellhole right now. Everybody knows it. It's not like he's saying, "Chicago has much better numbers, right?" Well, what's much better? You mean, a hundred people are going to be murdered? It's going to be much more than that.

So I would have much more respect for Pritzker if he'd call me up and say: "I have a problem. Can you help me fix it?" I would be so happy to do it.

I don't love—not that I don't have—I would—have the right to do anything I want to do. I'm the president of the United States. If I think our country is in danger—and it is in danger in these cities—I can do it.

No problem going in and solving, you know, his difficulties, but it would be nice if they'd call and they'd say, "Would you do it?" And we do it in conjunction.

Now, we work well—very well with the police, because we naturally get along with the police. So the police and us work really well together, whether the mayor is opposed or whether—I mean, you have a really rotten mayor there too. He's got a 6-percent approval rating in Chicago. *[Laughter]*

And I see Black women wearing a red MAGA hat last night on television: "Please let the President come in. My son was attacked. My this"—you have a force of Black women—Black women—they're, like, "Only Trump." They want Trump to come in, and you see them. They're all over the place in Chicago, because they're afraid to go out, and they don't want their son or their daughter killed, just like your parents didn't want you killed. And we have a tremendous—look, it's not about winning elections, because we want to have nice, fair elections. It's not politics. We want to see a safe country. You have people that want to see a safe country, and they're great people. You have great people in Chicago.

The mayor is at 6-percent approval. He's an incompetent man. He should have never been put in a position like that. He can't handle it.

You have an incompetent Governor there. You have an incompetent Governor in California—Gavin. He's incompetent—I know him very well. He's incompetent. He's a nice guy. Looks good. "Hi, everybody. How you doing?" He's got some strange hand action going on. I don't know what the hell his problem is. *[Laughter]* It's a little weird, to be honest. A little something shaky going on there.

But you know, all he has to do is call me and say: "We have the Olympics coming up. We want to make it really good and safe," and I'll put some really good, great American patriots in there, and you won't have any problems.

Don't forget, it's loaded up with some stone-cold killers, some really bad people, some people that were just born to be bad. They're criminals—bad criminals, dangerous. And we can solve the problem for them very quickly. Very quickly.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Okay. I—you know what I think? I think this: You have not had this happen for 4 years. You sat, and you'd ask one question to Biden, and it was always the ice cream question, right? "What flavor ice cream do you like best?" *[Laughter]* "Uh, uh, I like, uh, vanilla." And that was the end of the conference.

I think now we've done enough.

Q. One more question on Israel——

The President. These people are very busy.

I want to just thank—this is the greatest—this has never been done before. First of all, a Cabinet meeting was—you—was sacred. You'd never let the fake news media in. But the fake news media isn't all fake. It's—a lot of it is, but it's not all.

I think it's a great thing. I think it's—maybe it's going to be done in the future. I hope it's going to be done, but you really get the word out. I mean, we had—each one of these people spoke. I think each one—if I thought one of them did badly, I would call that person out. I would say, "Kristi, what the heck are you doing?" *[Laughter]*

Secretary Noem. Oh, don't say that, sir. Please, don't say that. *[Laughter]*

The President. No, but—no, seriously, you have a very talented group of people. They get along. They work along together. And there's something really nice about, just, you know, the openness of what we're doing.

Secretary Lutnick. Amazing.

The President. It's government. It's an open government. That's what we are.

Secretary Rollins. It's incredible.

The President. And we haven't made too many mistakes. We maybe will, but we haven't made too many mistakes. We've called it right. And I think you could be very proud of your country.

We are a respected country again. We are really, right now, respected at the highest level, and we're doing great. And we're a very rich country again—very rich—and that's a good thing, because when we're rich, we can take care of poor, and that's what we're doing. And we're taking care of crime.

And I hope—just in finishing, I hope that Illinois, I hope that New York, I hope that California—I hope they call me and they say, "I'd love to have you come in and help us out." I will be a totally different person with them. I will respect them for doing it.

Thank you all very much.

Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mark E. Zuckerberg, chief executive officer, Meta; Shawn Fain, president, United Auto Workers; President Lee Jae-myung of South Korea; Giovanni V. Infantino, president, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA); White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Mayor Muriel E. Bowser of Washington, DC; Inspector Michael Pulliam, 3d district commander, Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia; Chief of Police Jim McDonnell of Los Angeles, CA; Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Mehmet Oz; David A. Ricks, chair and chief executive officer, Eli Lilly and Co.; Sean M. O'Brien, general president, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Jerome H. Powell, Chairman, and Stephen I. Miran, member, Federal Reserve System Board of Governors; Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Michael Johnson; Senate Majority Leader John R. Thune; Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India; Lip-Bu Tan, chief executive officer, Intel Corp.; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. J. Daniel Caine, USAF; and Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago, IL. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. Secretary Kennedy referred to professional golfer Bryson DeChambeau. Director Gabbard referred to former Central Intelligence Agency Director John O. Brennan; and former Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper, Jr. Attorney General Bondi referred to Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada Garcia, cofounder of the Sinaloa Cartel, who pleaded guilty to leading of a continuing criminal enterprise and a Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) charge; and Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán Loera, who was convicted in 2019 of several charges related to his leadership of the Sinaloa Cartel and sentenced to life imprisonment at ADX in Florence, CO. Secretary Hegseth referred to Deputy Secretary of Defense Steve Feinberg. Reporters referred to Abbe D. Lowell, founding member, Lowell & Associates, PLLC; White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Stephen Miller; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on August 27.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Cabinet meeting; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Homan, Thomas D.; Bass, Karen R.; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela J.; Bowser, Muriel E.; Burgum, Douglas J.; Caine, J. Daniel; Chavez-DeRemer, Lori M.; Collins, Douglas A.; Cook, Lisa D.; Duffy, Sean P.; Fain, Shawn; Gabbard, Tulsi; Greer, Jamieson L.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Hochul, Kathleen C.; Infantino, Giovanni V.; Johnson, Brandon; Johnson, J. Michael; Kelce, Travis; Kennedy, Robert F., Jr.; Lee Jae-myung; Loeffler, Kelly L.;

Lutnick, Howard W.; McDonnell, Jim; McMahon, Linda E.; Miran, Stephen I.; Modi, Narendra; Moore, Westley W.O. "Wes"; Newsom, Gavin C.; Noem, Kristi L.; Obama, Barack; O'Brien, Sean; Oz, Mehmet; Powell, Jerome H.; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Pulliam, Michael; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Ratcliffe, John L.; Ricks, David A.; Rollins, Brooke L.; Rubio, Marco A.; Schumer, Charles E.; Scott, Timothy E.; Swift, Taylor; Tan, Lib-Bu; Thune, John R.; Trump, Melania; Turner, E. Scott; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Vought, Russell T.; Witkoff, Steven C.; Wright, Christopher A.; Xi Jinping; Zeldin, Lee M.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr; Zuckerberg, Mark E.

Subjects: ; 2026 midterm elections; Afghanistan, withdrawal of U.S. military forces; Agricultural production, strengthening efforts; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Attorney General; Autism spectrum disorders; Automobile industry, strengthening efforts; Border security; Cabinet meeting; California, Governor; California, political demonstrations in Los Angeles; California, wildfires in Los Angeles area; Capital punishment; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; Central Intelligence Agency; China, President; China, relations with U.S.; Coal-based energy production, expansion efforts; COVID–19 pandemic; COVID–19 vaccines; Department of Education, proposed closure; Director of National Intelligence; District of Columbia, beautification efforts; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; District of Columbia, Mayor; Education, global competitiveness; Egg prices; Environmental Protection Agency; European Union, trade with U.S.; Federal Government, appropriations legislation; Federal permitting process, improvement efforts; Federal Reserve System; Federal workforce, reduction efforts; Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup; Foreign university students, U.S. visa policy; Furniture industry, improvement efforts; Gasoline costs; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Household income and wages; Illegal immigration; Illinois, Governor; India, Prime Minister; India, relations with Pakistan; Inflation; Intel Corp.; Interest rates; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Japan, trade with U.S.; Job creation and growth; Joint Chiefs of Staff; Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; Management and Budget Director; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Maryland, Governor; Massachusetts, Harvard University in Cambridge; Medicare and Medicaid programs; National Guard; New York, Governor; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Oil and natural gas, domestic production; Opportunity Zones, economic development in low-income communities; Pakistan, relations with India; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of Agriculture; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of Defense; Secretary of Education; Secretary of Energy; Secretary of Health and Human Services; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Secretary of Labor; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Interior; Secretary of the Treasury; Secretary of Transportation; Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Semiconductor manufacturing; Senate majority leader; Senate minority leader; Small Business Administration; Social Security program; Solar and wind energy; South Korea, President; South Korea, trade with U.S.; Speaker of the House of Representatives; Sports, efforts to restrict transgender participation; Steel and aluminum, U.S. tariffs on foreign imports; Tariffs; Tax Code reform; Transgender athletes, efforts to restrict participation; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. servicemembers, service and dedication; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East; U.S. Trade Representative; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Vice President; Water management policy, improvement efforts; White House Border Czar.

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