

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks at a White House Diwali Celebration and an Exchange With Reporters
October 21, 2025

The President. Hello, everybody. Wow. Hello. Boy, what a group this is. *[Laughter]* These are the best—these are the best in the whole world. Huh? The best in the whole world: IBM, the whole group, huh? What a wonderful culture and what a wonderful group of people. Thank you very much for coming. It's really nice. Thank you.

Come on. I'll slide over here somewhere.

For the media, I will tell you, this is a serious group of people. *[Laughter]* Right? That's great. Thank you very much.

Look at all of the—wow, look at the people, huh? These are seriously the biggest businesspeople anywhere in the world. So I think it's a great tribute. Whatever they're teaching you, they're teaching you well, right?

Thank you very much, and welcome to the White House as we celebrate Diwali—Di-va-li—because they said there has to be a very heavy emphasis on the "v"—Di-va-li—the beautiful Hindu festival of lights. And that's what it is. It's a great festival, and it's amazing people.

I'm pleased to be joined by the director of the National Intelligence and a woman that's done a fantastic job, Tulsi Gabbard, wherever you may be, Tulsi.

Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Right here.

The President. Hi, Tulsi. FBI Director Kash Patel is really hitting his stride. Kash—where is Kash?

India's Ambassador to the U.S. Vinay Kwatra. He's right——

Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kashyap P. "Kash" Patel. I'm right here, sir.

The President. He is hitting his stride. That's the way we like it.

Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon. Harmeet?

Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Harmeet K. Dhillon. I'm right here, sir.

The President. Hi, Harmeet.

And Pastor Paula White, she's been fantastic. She's been with us right from the beginning.

We're greatly honored to be joined by the Indian Ambassador to the United States, Vinay Kwatroo [Kwatra; White House correction], and that's very nice.

Ambassador Kwatra. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Didn't pronounce it perfectly.

Ambassador Kwatra. Kwatra. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Ah, that's what—oh, I wasn't too far off there. *[Laughter]*

And his wonderful wife. And thank you very much. It's great honor to have you——

Ambassador Kwatra. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. —as well as a new Ambassador to India—this is a nice, easy name—Sergio Gor. [Laughter] Sergio—congratulations, Sergio. You're going to do a fantastic job.

And thanks as well to incredible Indian American business leaders, the biggest in the world, really, if you look at these companies, what they've done. The biggest in the world.

CEO of IBM, Arvind Krishna. And, Arvind, congratulations. I know you're working hard on a couple of jobs that I'm watching. And good luck with them, right?

IBM Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer Arvind Krishna. Yes.

The President. Good luck. It's amazing what you've done.

Chairman and CEO of Adobe—and that Adobe is big stuff—and that's Shantanu Narayen.

Adobe Chair and Chief Executive Officer Shantanu Narayen. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much, Shantanu. Nice to see you.

Mr. Narayen. Nice to see you.

The President. Thank you very much.

CEO of Micron Technology—we know what that is—Sanjay Mehrotra. Sanjay, nice to see you again.

And CEO of Palo Alto Networks, Nikesh Arora. And I want to thank you very much for—

Palo Alto Networks Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Nikesh Arora. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And great success. It's a hell of a group of people. And in addition to that, we have a lot of other tremendously successful people gathered.

On behalf of all Americans, let me also extend our warmest wishes to the people of India. I just spoke to your Prime Minister today. We had a great conversation. We talk about trade. We talk about a lot of things, but mostly the world of trade. He's very interested in that.

Although we did talk a little while ago about let's have no wars with Pakistan. And I think the fact that trade was involved—I was able to talk him out of that, and we have no war with Pakistan and India. That was a very, very good thing. But he's a great—he's a great person, and he's become a great friend of mine over the years.

In a few moments, we'll light the *diya* as a symbol of faith in the victory of light over darkness. It's a beautiful term: "light over darkness." That's what it's all about. It's knowledge over ignorance and good over evil.

During Diwali revelers recall ancient stories of enemies defeated, obstacles removed, and captives freed. The glow of the *diya* flame reminds us to seek the path of wisdom and to work with diligence and to always give thanks for our many blessings.

And we do have many blessings. Everybody in this room has many blessings, and even the—I will say—I'm not going to use the word "fake news," I refuse to use it—[laughter]—the media has some good blessings.

One of the blessings is that you didn't have to stand in the mud outside anymore, you know? You now have a beautiful stone surface, the identical color of the White House. For years, they had to stand, when we had a press conference, in the mud because it was grass. And I decided to take care of that. So I think they appreciate it.

As we look back at the past year for—and really look up to the next number of years and, hopefully, decades and centuries, we've had much to be thankful for.

And think of it. A year ago, we were a dead country. This country was a dead country, and now we're the hottest country anywhere in the world. These guys can testify to that, because I know their—I watched their stock prices, and they're like rocket ships, right? Do they ever stop? Let's keep it that way, right? *[Laughter]* Let's not talk about it, right? Let's just keep it that way. It's amazing.

We have more than \$17 trillion—they're part of the reason—more than \$17 trillion of investment pouring into the United States. It's going to be, I believe, over \$20 trillion by the time the year is up. And as an example, the last administration had less than a trillion dollars in a period of—their 4-year period, they had less than a trillion. We have—we're going to have \$20 trillion. We have over \$17 trillion already.

That's investment coming in, and I think it's largely for two reasons. We had a good election on November 5, but maybe more importantly—of course, it wouldn't happen if that election result didn't happen. I think, much more importantly, we have tariffs that—you build in the United States, you don't have a tariff to pay. You build outside and you have to pay a tariff.

And we're taking in money at a level that no other country has ever seen. There's never been a country, I don't think—fellas, do you agree with that?—there's never been a country with an investment in less than a year—actually, to be exact, less than 9 months—of \$17 trillion, right? And I know you're all doing—you're all participating, aren't you, huh? So that's really good stuff.

The economy is roaring, the incomes are rising, and small-business confidence is at the highest level in over a decade. So the confidence levels—which they do—which means something. They think, over the last 10 years—I don't think they go beyond that—we have the highest level of confidence in our economy.

Gasoline prices are way down. Grocery prices are way down. Energy prices are way down. Mortgage rates are down. We have a stiff—a real stiff at the Federal Reserve. I can't help that, but he's going to be leaving soon. And inflation has been defeated. But even though his rates are too high, we're—we—the economy has been amazing.

Our border is secure. Totally secure. We had nobody—zero—nobody in the last 4 months coming through illegally, which is actually hard to believe, because, you know, they give me those numbers. But essentially, it would be just about nobody. They actually say zero. That's actually hard to believe you can have zero when you had millions pouring across a year and a half ago, 2 years ago. But they actually—we have it down to practically nobody. And they are coming in, but they're coming in legally.

And we're forging peace all over the world. We're putting America first. We're getting everybody to sort of get along.

And I just got a call from the Middle East. We're doing very well there. We have—many, many countries, as you know, signed on to peace in the Middle East, and nobody thought they'd ever see that happening.

The Hamas situation, where they're pretty violent people, I would say. That—we could put that out in 2 minutes. We're giving them a chance. You know, they—they agreed that they'd be very good, very straight. They wouldn't be killing people, and they have killed people. That wasn't the deal we made. But if we—if they don't honor the deal, they'll be taken care of very quickly. But I'd rather not have to do that.

But we have total peace in the Middle East. We have levels of friendship with everybody and every—countries that hated each other now love each other. Nobody ever saw anything like it.

I think you guys are pretty surprised over here, right? You're—Harmeet, you're surprised? But a lot of people are surprised. Are you guys surprised? Peace in the Middle East. You've been hearing about it for as long as you've been alive—

Micron Technology Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer Sanjay Mehrotra.
You do.

The President. —and it's been a lot longer than that. You're still pretty young. But we have peace in the Middle East.

And so, as we light the *diya*, we look forward to a new year and a greater peace and a greater everything for all of us. And we want tremendous success, tremendous health. We're doing a lot of things in the world of health.

And the autism situation is just crazy when you think of it. And you go back 20 years, it was 1 in 20,000 and now it's 1 in 12. Is that hard to believe? When I hear that number, it's not even—it's not even believable. And we think we're a little—we think we're on to it. Bobby is doing a great job, and Dr. Oz, all of them. They're really working hard. Nobody's ever seen anything like that, and it's been a very important factor for me. I just say you've got to focus on that. We think we have a lot of the answers. We've announced a lot of the answers, actually.

But we're looking at many things. We've made tremendous progress, and maybe the thing we've done the best on is prices for our drugs. We have favored nations now, where other nations, as you know, were paying a fraction—a small fraction of what we were paying. And this was—for many, many years, this was happening. This was set up 30 years ago, where we were paying 10 times more, 12 times more, 5 times more, always tremendous numbers more. And I said we're not doing that anymore. And the drug companies have agreed, and the countries have agreed.

Now, if I didn't have tariffs, I wouldn't have been able to get it. I said, "Well, if you don't agree, we're going to charge you tariffs for more than the equivalent amount." And amazingly, everybody agreed. So our drug prices are going to be coming down a hundred percent, 200 percent, 300, 400, 500 percent in some cases. A bill that costs \$10 in London would cost \$120. And think of it: \$120 in New York or a place—any place in this country. A drug that cost \$86 in Berlin cost \$1,300 in New York and throughout the United States. And we're not doing that anymore. So we're just not doing it anymore.

So I just want to—and I think that's going to be—that's going to be huge for our—anything—Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security—anything having to do with health because the drug prices are going to be coming down.

I tell the story of my last administration, my fourth year, I was so honored because I brought drug prices down. The first time in 28 years, prices were brought down by a certain amount—I'll tell you what the amount was in a second—but by a certain amount. And so, at the beginning of the year to the end of the year, I actually brought them down. First time in 28 years that happened. And the number was one-eighth of 1 percent. That's all I saved. But I was proud because first time it ever happened. And now I'm bringing prices down 600 percent, 700 percent, 900 percent, 200 percent.

So I can't believe I actually had a news conference to celebrate one-eighth and one-quarter of 1 percent. But that was, you know—you learn, right? [*Laughter*] You learn.

So we're doing—and you guys know more about favored nations than anybody. So we're going favored nations. We're demanding it, and we've got it. And as you know, we had Pfizer, we

had all—we had the big companies. They're all agreed or close to agreeing, but the countries have agreed to it. Actually, the countries would be generally more difficult. If we didn't have the power of tariffs, they wouldn't have agreed. They would have said, "Nope, you've got to pay 10 times more than we pay."

We were paying 10 and 12 times more than other countries for the exact same pill made in the exact same lab or factory. So it's an amazing thing. I think it's an absolute game changer. There's—nobody's ever even heard of a thing like that. And you'll see the results over the next year, year and a half. And I think it's great.

So I'd like to ask a person who's really been fantastic. We'll ask a few of the people to say a few words. You're on international television, so don't get nervous. *[Laughter]*

Kash, would you say a few words, please? You've done a fantastic job.

Director Patel. Well, thank you, Mr. President. It's an honor to be a first-generation Indian American whose parents lawfully immigrated to this country. And under your leadership, so many more millions of Americans are living that dream.

And to celebrate here in the Oval Office on Diwali—which you said, rightfully so, is a triumph of good over evil—is just an incredible honor. It's incredibly humbling. Indian Americans around the world and Indians around the world are thrilled that you are such a profound leader in sharing this diversity with the world. And we can't thank you enough.

And happy Diwali, sir.

The President. Great. Well, thank you, and congratulations on everything.

And how about a great company? IBM. He's taken this company from—it was a little troubled, as I remember—*[laughter]*—a few years ago, like 10 years ago—to being one of the hottest companies anywhere in the world. Arvind, could you say a few words?

Mr. Krishna. Thank you, Mr. President. In the spirit of Diwali, we should also acknowledge all that the President and the administration is doing to really boost technology, innovation, and that leading to economic growth.

I want to point out people forget often how much public and private partnerships in the United States have mattered to boost technology. You look at semiconductors, you look at space, you look at the internet, mobile, and hopefully quantum down the road.

So, Mr. President, I'd like to thank you for all that you're doing to boost our technology leadership.

The President. Well, you've done amazingly, and I just think it's incredible. I know exactly what you've been through, because it—it was a troubled company until you came along, and you made it very untroubled. You made it a rocket ship. So I congratulate you. Thank you, Arvind, very much.

We have a very, very great company, Adobe. And Shanta, could you say maybe a few words, please?

Mr. Narayen. Sure. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much.

Mr. Narayen. And first, it's such an honor, you know, to be here in the Oval Office and to celebrate Diwali, which for all of us growing up, as you pointed out, was, you know, the victory of triumph over evil, light over darkness. I think what you're doing, Mr. President, to have peace and prosperity and investment in this country is just amazing.

And as a company, I think—hopefully, everybody here is using Photoshop—[*laughter*—]in order to, you know, take all these pictures.

But I would really like to thank you for your leadership, and we will continue to invest in the U.S. to make sure that we continue to drive innovation.

Thank you.

The President. And your investments been very large. So how much have you invested and do you plan to invest in the U.S.?

Mr. Narayen. As far as our investment is concerned, it's all intellectual property. It's people. So we make everything here.

The President. Right.

Mr. Narayen. So that's the software.

The President. That's good.

Mr. Narayen. And so, we're a \$20 billion-revenue company now.

The President. Right.

Mr. Narayen. One of the largest software companies in the world, and headquarters is Silicon Valley.

The President. That's very good.

Mr. Narayen. So thank you Mr. President.

The President. Fantastic job. How much are you investing, IBM?

Mr. Krishna. A hundred and fifty billion over the next 5 years.

The President. A hundred and fifty billion? That's good. [*Laughter*]

Micron is doing pretty good. How's Micron doing? Okay? Pretty Good?

Mr. Mehrotra. Mr. President, really a great honor to be here today celebrating Diwali with these excellent peers of ours from the tech industry.

And Diwali stands for light, hope, renewal. And the United States is light to the rest of the world. And particularly on the renewal piece, I just want to really applaud you and your team in terms of bringing renaissances in semiconductor manufacturing——

The President. Right.

Mr. Mehrotra. ——here to the U.S. So Micron is investing \$200 billion, 150——

The President. Two hundred billion.

Mr. Mehrotra. Two hundred billion dollars in leading-edge memory manufacturing.

And in the course of next few years, we have 40 percent of our manufacturing here in the U.S. And this will add, over the course of years, 90,000 jobs——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Mehrotra. ——and \$1½ trillion impact to the economy. So, we are very thankful to the support that we get from your team and, Mr. President, from you——

The President. Wow.

Mr. Mehrotra. —in terms of bringing memory here to the U.S. And memory is key with AI today, right?

The President. Yes. You always talk about memory. I have a good memory. *[Laughter]* But those machines have a better memory, right? No matter what you do.

Mr. Mehrotra. Absolutely.

The President. That's fantastic. Really fantastic.

Nikesh, Palo Alto is a hot one, and tell me about that. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Arora. Mr. President, thank you for having me here, and it's a pleasure and an honor to be here—

The President. Great, great honor. Thank you very much.

Mr. Arora. —to celebrate Diwali with you.

As my colleagues have said, it's the triumph of good over evil, and prosperity. And what you've done the last 9 months, in terms of making the United States one of the most business-friendly administrations, and allowing us all opportunity to invest not just in technology, but in our people, is just amazing.

We are now the largest cybersecurity company in the world. And we just recently—

The President. Wow, that's great.

Mr. Arora. We just in—just recently spent \$25 billion insourcing technology, so all cybersecurity is made in the United States, because we believe that the next bastion in the world is going to be cyberwar, and we just want to make sure we are prepared as a country and really show off our companies and our critical infrastructure.

The President. Fantastic job. It's amazing what you've done. And all of these people, to me, they mean two things: big investment, but the big investment I like because of jobs. It's a tremendous number of jobs that they've produced.

Would you say a couple of things about your great company, please?

Stone Point Capital Managing Director Prem Parameswaran. Oh, thank you, Mr. President. I'm with Stone Point Capital, private equity, which I'm sure you know.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Parameswaran. And we just raised a new \$11½ billion fund, and we obviously invest very heavily in financial services—financial services technology. And so, it's—it's actually an honor to be here in the Oval Office with you. And as a fellow Winged Foot member too—

The President. Oh, that's nice.

Mr. Parameswaran. —I've always—it's always a pleasure to be with you. And I've got to tell you, you're the best President that I've ever seen, and we're so proud of you.

The President. Thank you very—I'm glad I asked him to say something. *[Laughter]*

Would you like to say something about the great job you're doing? Huh? Right here? Anybody back here? They're all—these are all incredible people that everybody looks—in the business world, everybody looks up to them.

Please, go ahead. Would you like to say something?

Natsoft Corporation Founder and Chief Executive Officer Timmy Cheedala. Thank you for your leadership.

The President. Go ahead, please.

Mr. Cheedala. Thank you for your leadership.

The President. I love the hat. *[Laughter]* I love this. I didn't ask him to do that.

Mr. Cheedala. I'm running a tech business——

The President. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cheedala. ——for 21 years. We build products on AI and mission learning.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. And it's going great, right?

Mr. Cheedala. Yes.

The President. Good.

How about over here, we have some very unshy people. *[Laughter]*

Harmeet, how about saying a few words?

Assistant Attorney General Dhillon. Well, thank you, Mr. President. It's a tremendous honor to have supported you three times and been part of your administration.

And, on this day of Diwali, I say on behalf of the United States Department of Justice, that the message of the triumph of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance and justice over injustice is something that your administration is personifying, and it's a tremendous honor to be part of it. And thank you very much for including us here today.

The President. Good. And you're at the DOJ and doing a fantastic job, I hear.

Assistant Attorney General Dhillon. Thank you, sir.

Ambassador Kwatra. That's great.

The President. She's doing a good job, Kash, right?

Director Patel. She's doing outstanding.

The President. And Tulsi, we know, is doing a good job.

What do you think, Tuls?

Director Gabbard. Yes, sir. Thank you very much.

You are doing today what you have done throughout your time in service—is bringing people together from all across the country and all different backgrounds.

And this day is, of course, very special to so many of us because, while it is the celebration of hope and light and renewal, we can never forget that the source of that hope, light, and renewal comes from God's love for every single one of us. And so today we celebrate God and His love and the blessings that He has shared with all of us.

The President. Oh, fantastic. Thank you all very much.

Anybody like to say anything? Would you like to say something? Please.

Ambassador Kwatra. Mr. President, let me start, first of all, by expressing a deep sense of gratitude for opening up White House, Oval Office, your home to mark Diwali's——

The President. Right.

Ambassador Kwatra. —festival of lights, which is celebrated by over one-fifth of humanity.

And as Kash said, you are showcasing the strength of diversity through the celebration. So, it's truly a great honor, and thank you very much for that.

May I also, on behalf of my Prime Minister and on my own behalf, wish you and your loved ones very, very happy Diwali greetings, particularly to over 5 million strong in—

The President. Yes.

Ambassador Kwatra. —the Indian diaspora in the U.S.

The President. That's right.

Ambassador Kwatra. And may I close by making a wish, which is normally we do for Diwali. We wish that the light of Diwali continues to shine on your success and on the strength of India-U.S. partnership.

The President. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Kwatra. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. I spoke to him today. He's doing well, and your country is doing very well. You know that.

Ambassador Kwatra. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. So we're supposed to light something. But I thought maybe because he's had such an outstanding year, I'm going to ask Arvind to maybe do the honors. Can you handle it for me, Arvind? *[Laughter]* I think you might be—do a better job than me. So, if you could take care of that it'd be great.

[At this point, the diya was lit.]

Well, he's done a good job. *[Laughter]* I didn't know you were supposed to do that. I'm glad I asked him to do it. *[Laughter]*

Participant. Would you like to come to light this one, Mr. President?

The President. Yes, if you want.

Ready?

[The President finished lighting the diya.]

Okay.

Director Patel. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you all. Thank you everybody. Thank you.

Did you have some—did you have some questions? I'll go back.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Yes. Mr. President, the meeting with Vladimir Putin is canceled or put on hold. Do you know what happened there? And does that affect your decision whether or not to send Tomahawks to Ukraine?

The President. No, no. I want to—I don't want to have a wasted meeting. I don't want to have a waste of time.

So I'll see what happens, but we did all of these great deals—great peace deals. They're all peace deals. They're agreements—solid agreements, every one of them, but this one.

And I said, go to the line—go to the line of battle, the battlefield lines. And you pull back and you go home, and everybody take some time off because you've got two countries that are killing each other. You can—two countries are losing 5- to 7,000 soldiers a week. So we'll see what happens. It's—we haven't made a determination.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

The President's Salary/Potential Compensatory Damages for Past Department of Justice Investigations/White House Renovations

Q. Mr. President, are you asking the Justice Department to look into the Federal investigations into you and look for compensation? And how much are you asking for?

The President. Who's asking for what?

Q. Are you asking the Justice Department to pay——

The President. Who's compensation?

Q. ——compensation for——

The President. Who's compensation?

Q. Your Federal—the Federal investigations into you. Are you asking them to pay compensation, and how much?

The President. Into me? I'm—I don't get any compensation. I do it for nothing. I gave up my salary.

Into me?

Q. No, it's going to be the—the Justice Department. Are you asking them to pay you compensation for the Federal investigations that happened to you? And how much are you asking for?

The President. Okay. Well, I guess they probably owe me a lot of money for that. *[Laughter]* Probably—yes, that's true. That's very interesting.

No, I get no salary. I gave up my salary. It's a good salary. Not as much as these guys make, but that's okay. *[Laughter]* It's a lot of money, and I don't—as you know, I didn't take it in the first four years. I'm not taking it in these four years either.

But as far as all of the litigation and everything that's been involved, yeah, they probably owe me a lot of money.

But if I get money from our country, I'll do something nice with it, like give it to charity or give it to the White House while we restore the White House.

And we're doing a great job on the White House. The—as you know, the ballroom is under construction. It's going to be—they've been trying to get it for 150 years, and it's really—I think it's going to be fantastic.

But we'll see what happens. I mean, we have numerous cases having to do with the fraud of the election—the 2020 election. And because of everything that we found out, I guess they owe me a lot of money, but I'm not looking for money. I'm looking for, really—I think it's got to be—it's got to be handled in a proper way. If it's not handled in a proper way, it could happen—we don't want it to happen again. We can never let what happened in the 2020 election happen again. We just can't let that happen.

And so the way we go—I know Kash is working on it, everybody is working on it, but—and certainly, Tulsi is working on it. We can't let that happen again to our country.

Look at what's happened, where you have millions of people being allowed to come into our country, all because of a crooked election, where they come from prisons, they come from jails. They come from mental institutions and insane asylums. And they're drug dealers. The people that they've allowed to come into our country. We cleaned them out in Washington, DC. We have a very safe Capital right now. We have a Capital that's as safe as it can be.

But I don't know. I mean, you'd have to ask the lawyers about that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

India-U.S. Relations

Q. A comment and a question, please, for you. First of all, you have just won billion-plus hearts around the globe, including in India, by celebrating the Diwali——

The President. Yes. Yes.

Q. ——in the White House right here.

The President. Right.

Q. And my other comment is, Mr. President——

The President. I like his question already. *[Laughter]*

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

In February, you and the White House staff welcomed——gave a warm welcome to the prime minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi.

The President. Right. That's right.

Q. And after that, I decided to make a short trip to India for you. How popular you are in India. And I went there in a holiest——also festival there. Millions of people were there. And also, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was addressing a media event, 5,000 people. I was one of them there——

The President. Right. Good.

Q. ——listening to him. And when I went to several states in India, what I found out, Mr. President, three people are most popular there: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Donald Trump, Mr. Kash Patel, and also——with the surprise——our White House Press Secretary, Karoline Leavitt. *[Laughter]*

The President. Wow. She is doing good, right? She is doing good. She's popular everywhere. Superstar.

Q. And my—and, Mr. President, my question is, you had a great relationship with the people of India——

The President. Right.

Q. ——when you visited India, and with the——with the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, and also with the Indian American community. Where do we stand today, all those relations, from 45 to 47 and the future, Mr. President? Please. Thank you.

The President. Well, we stand great. And the people of India—I love the people of India. And we're working on some great deals between our countries.

I spoke to Prime Minister Modi today, as I mentioned before, and we just have a very good relationship.

And he's not going to buy much oil from Russia. He wants to see that war end as much as I do. He wants to see the war end with Russia, Ukraine. And, as you know, they're not going to be buying too much oil. So they've cut it way back, and they're continuing to cut it way back.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. On Portland, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, please. Go ahead.

Portland, Oregon/National Guard

Q. An appeals court recently ruled that you can send the National Guard into——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——Portland, Oregon. Do you feel unfettered to send the National Guard into whatever city you want now?

The President. Well, I guess that that was the decision. I can send the National Guard if I see problems. I looked at Portland over the weekend. The place is burning down. I mean, it's burning down. We weren't there. We weren't—we didn't spend much time there because we were waiting for that decision, but the court probably—that it—maybe that influenced the court.

But you look at a place like Portland, it's just—it's ridiculous when they say that there's no problem. The place was—it was on fire over the weekend.

But we did. We won the case in court of appeals. I think it was the Ninth Circuit. So that's pretty good. And very strong opinion that we have the right to use the National Guard. You would think that would be common sense. We have the right to use the National Guard to put out trouble.

Well, that's, you know, how I got elected. One of the reasons I got elected.

Yes.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Russia/Ukraine/U.S. Security Assistance/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr. President, what changed your mind after talking to Vladimir Putin between then and now? Why did you think that a Budapest summit would be—might be a wasted—there might be wasted time?

The President. Well, I didn't say anything. I didn't say it would, and you know, you never know what's going to happen. But a lot of things are happening on that front—on the war front with Ukraine and Russia. And we'll be notifying you over the next 2 days as to what we're doing.

Q. Did you hear something from the——

The President. But a lot of things are happening. I think——

Q. Did you hear something from the Kremlin?

Q. Mr. President——

The President. I think we're going to get it solved.

Yes, please.

Ukraine/Russia

Q. Mr. President, on Ukraine, do you still see a chance for a cease-fire? And what is Putin—

The President. Say it again. What?

Q. —asking for? Do you still see a chance for a cease-fire? And what is—

The President. I do. Yes. Yes.

Q. —Putin asking for?

The President. I do. It's a vicious—look, it's a vicious war. It doesn't really affect us. We sell equipment to them. We sell equipment to NATO and NATO gives it to Ukraine, but we don't pay anything anymore.

Biden spent \$350 billion. The war would have never happened if I were President. It would have never—not even a million years. And Putin knows that too, would have never happened.

But it did happen, and I came in, and I have to see if I can put it out.

But it doesn't affect us because we're not losing soldiers there. Although, when I first came in, that could have ended up—it's not going to happen, but it could have ended up in World War III. That was really out of control.

So now it's—they're shooting and they're killing people. And I think Putin wants it to end, and I think Zelenskyy wants it to end, and I think it's going to end.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Lapse in Federal Government Appropriations

Q. Did Senator Schumer—Senator Schumer said he reached out to you about meeting on the government shutdown. Will you meet with him before you leave for Asia on Friday?

The President. Well, I will. Actually, I'd love to meet with them. I just want them to open up the country first. You know, the country is doing—is so hot right now, and they've never voted against, you know, continuation. They've never voted again—they've never done that. They're doing this because they have Trump derangement syndrome.

But I will—I would love to meet—I would like to meet with both of them, but I set one little caveat: I will only meet if they let the country open. They have to let the country open. The people want to go back to work. They want to be served. They want to—they need the services of some people, and a lot of people need the money, the payroll. So I'll do it as soon as they open up the country. I'd like to meet with them.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Yes.

Lapse in Federal Government Appropriations/Tax Code Reform/Illegal Immigration

Q. So you won't meet with them until the Government—just to be clear, you won't meet with them until the Government is open?

The President. The Government has to be open. Yes. The Government has to be open. You know—you know how long it would take for them to do that? Just say, "Okay, Government is open." That's it. There is nothing.

Q. How long do you think this could go?

The President. They're not negotiating. What they're doing is saying—they lost the negotiation, and when we got the "Great Big Beautiful Deal" done, they lost that negotiation. Now they're saying, "Well, we want to get some of the things we lost." But the problem is, the things they lost are very bad for our country.

We don't want to have people come over from all over the world, from prisons and all, and have them have their health care paid for. We want to take care of people that are American citizens and all. So they want \$1.5 trillion of money to be wasted and jeopardize the health care of other people. We're not going to do that.

So we're going to—I would love to meet with them. We want the country open first.

Yes, please.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

New York City Mayoral Race

Q. Mr. President, a new poll shows that if Curtis Sliwa dropped out of the New York mayoral race, then Andrew Cuomo would only trail Mamdani by 4 points. Would you call Curtis Sliwa to drop out of the race so that can happen?

The President. Well, I looked at the polls, and looks like we're going to have a Communist as the mayor New York. It will be very interesting. But here's the good news: He's got to go through the White House. Everything goes through the White House—at least this White House, it does. And we'll have to see what happens.

But if he dropped out—he's not going to win. And not looking too good for Cuomo either. But maybe—I don't know, if he dropped out, maybe Cuomo would have a little bit of a chance. But not much, because it looks like the lead is—it's not a great lead, but it's big enough that he should be able to win.

So, you know, I don't know that I want to get involved. It's really a question of: Would I rather have a Democrat or a Communist? And I would rather have a Democrat than a Communist. You know, it's a big statement.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

New York City Democratic Mayoral Candidate Zohran K. Mamdani

Q. Will you meet with Mamdani if he wins?

The President. Yes, I'll speak to him. I would.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I think I'd have an obligation to speak to him. But let—you know, I love New York. I've always loved New York. I just can't believe a thing like this is happening.

I left New York, and we had a mayor, de Blasio, who was a disaster. But when I left, it was sort of before he could really take hold. And boy, New York was a hot city, and now it's sad to see what's happening, frankly.

And with a Communist in charge—look, you just go back a thousand years. I mean, it's been done many times. A thousand years, it's never worked once. So it's not going to work now either.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, you're building——

The President. Say it.

Obama Presidential Center in Chicago, Illinois

Q. You're building your ballroom right now. They're also building the Obama Presidential Library. I'm wondering if you've seen——

The President. He needs help.

Q. Have you seen pictures of the architecture? And what do you think of it?

The President. Yes, I did. It's not too pretty. [*Laughter*] No, but it's closed. It stopped. They ran out of money. I mean, he's building a library-slash-museum. You know, you call it some museum, some—and usually they call it both. They call it "library and museum." That's the official name.

And they're stuck. And he wanted only women and DEI to build it. Right? That's what they got. And the construction workers are standing out there and saying, "We want to be able to build it."

You know, you have great—I built a great building in Chicago, as you know—a big, beautiful building, one of the tallest buildings in the country. And we got it built very quickly, very well. And we used the construction workers of Chicago. They're great workers. They're great construction people, and I suggest that he get them involved.

But they're hundreds of millions of dollars over budget, and I think it stopped. I'm reading these terrible stories, but that's the way our country was run under President Obama too. Nobody knew it.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

China/Trade Negotiations/Tariffs

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Russia remains China's top crude oil supplier in September. Are you considering tariffs on China?

The President. Well, I mean, you read the same papers as I do, but I don't have to read the papers because I'm the one—right now, as of November 1, China will have about 155-percent tariff put on it. And I don't think it's sustainable for them.

So I want to be nice to China, but China has been very rough with us over the years, because we had Presidents that weren't smart from a business standpoint. Some were good politicians. Some weren't even good politicians. But they allowed China to take advantage of us, and every other country to take advantage of us.

If you see, I made a deal with the European Union. I made a deal with Japan, with South Korea. Made a lot of these deals that are great deals, and I was able to do it—it's really national security. I was able to do it because of tariffs, and we're getting hundreds of billions—even trillions of dollars—paid into the United States.

We're a very rich country again. We'll start paying off debt. We'll do a lot of things. We'll probably make a distribution out of some of the tariff money. I think we're going to make a distribution over the next fairly short period of time to the people, because we took in so much money from the tariffs, from—just the European Union, \$650 billion. Japan, \$550 billion. South Korea, \$350 billion.

That's even a lot of money for you guys, right? [*Laughter*]

Participant. Yes.

The President. That's not bad, right? But—no, we're taking in a lot of money, and it keeps people like this here, because that's why they're coming in.

I mean, you wouldn't be—I mean, I'm not going to speak for you, but generally, they won't be coming in if it weren't for tariffs. They come in here, and they don't have to pay any tariff. If they do it outside, they pay a lot of money, a lot of tariffs. The money comes to us. And in order not to pay the tariff, they come, and they build here. That's why we have more plants under construction than we've ever had in the history of our country.

And you wouldn't think it's complicated, but you would have thought somebody would have done this a long time ago, sitting in this beautiful seat behind what's called the Resolute Desk. You know that, right? This is a very famous—this is even more famous than any of your desks, but your desks are good. *[Laughter]* Your desks are very good.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Potential Compensatory Damages for Past Department of Justice Investigations

Q. Mr. President, aren't you—can I just follow up on her question to you? Because The New York Times is reporting that your legal team is seeking \$230 million from your own Justice Department now in response to the investigations into you. Is——

The President. It could be, yes.

Q. Is that something you want your legal team to do?

The President. I don't know what the numbers are. I don't even talk to them about it. All I know is that they would owe me a lot of money, but I don't—I'm not looking for money. I'd give it to charity or something. I would give it to charity—any money.

But look what they did. They rigged the election. And as you know, we had, in one case, "60 Minutes" had to pay us a lot of money. George Slopapopoulos had to pay us a lot of money, and they already paid. You know, they paid me a lot of money because what they did was wrong.

And you know, when somebody does what's wrong—now, with the country, it's interesting because I'm the one that makes the decision, right? And you know that decision would have to go across my desk, and it's awfully strange to make a decision where I'm paying myself. In other words—did you ever have one of those cases where you have to decide how much you're paying yourself in damages?

But I was damaged very greatly. And any money that I would get, I would give to charity.

Okay. Please, in the back.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Yes, please. Go ahead.

Democratic Party/Tax Code Reform

Q. Is the Democrat Party now more Zohran Mamdani's party than it is even Leader Schumer's or Leader Jeffries'?

The President. It probably is, yes. He's—look, it's—I mean, maybe he'll run for President in 4 years. You'll have a communist President. That would be interesting, right? I don't see it happening. You know, I've always said you will never see—and I always talked about socialism, and—you will never see a Socialist so and so. And I was right. I would say it in speeches, "We

will not have socialism in our country." And I was right. Communism, yes, but soc—in other words, they skipped socialism, and they went down to communism.

No, he's a Communist, and he's going to be, maybe, the mayor of New York. I don't know. Maybe—you know, polls are wrong, but these polls seem to be pretty consistent. But he would be—I would say he would be the leader of the party. It's not Schumer.

Schumer is shot. He's shot. This poor guy, I feel sorry for him. I know him—known him for a long time, but he's—I think he's mentally gone. He's been beat up by young, radical lunatics, and I think Chuck Schumer is—he's gone-zo. I really do. I think he's probably not going to run. It shows that he's losing in every poll.

Now, this is hard. You know, he wants to meet with me. It's sort of hard to be with the guy after I make a statement like that. But I'm just giving you the facts. I think Chuck is probably finished.

I know some people—Democrats—that would be good. There's some good politicians and some, you know, reasonable people. But I understand that they would not have a chance of, you know, getting—even the concept of holding the torch, they're not going to get it. But they have some people that—I really believe they're low-IQ people. They're stupid people, and they seem to be leading the party. So we'll see what happens.

Look, the Republicans are strong. We have great leadership. We're very strong in every way, and we're going to keep it that way. But we are really a strong party.

You know, our party has grown magnificently. We've gotten—and look at all the union votes I got. Nobody thought that was ever possible. Look at the election where I won popular—I won everything. I won all seven swing States. If you win three or four swing States, you're doing great. I won all seven by a lot. And I think the best thing, when you look at districts—2,700 versus 525. That's big. That's why the map shows all red. So we won in a tremendous landslide, and that's because people liked our policy. I guess they like me, but they like my policies: strong borders, good education, low taxes.

You know, in the "Great Big Beautiful Bill," we got the biggest tax cut in history. Not only no tax on tips, no tax on Social Security, no tax on overtime—we got the biggest tax cut in the history of our country in the bill that we just approved. And I think people see that and they like it, and that's why we're doing well, but they are not. They do not have leadership.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Great—great question. Pulitzer Prize.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:33 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Senior Adviser to the White House Faith Office Paula White-Cain; Pooja Kwatra, wife of Ambassador Kwatra; Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell; Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.; Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Mehmet Oz; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; and George R. Stephanopoulos, coanchor, ABC's "Good Morning America" program. Director Patel referred to his parents Pramod and Anjana Patel. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on November 17.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Arora, Nikesh; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Cheedala, Timmy; Cuomo, Andrew M.; de Blasio, Bill; Dhillon, Harmeet K.; Gabbard, Tulsi; Gor, Sergio; Jeffries, Hakeem S.; Kennedy, Robert F., Jr.; Krishna, Arvind; Kwatra, Pooja; Kwatra, Vinay; Leavitt, Karoline; Mamdani, Zohran K.; Mehrotra, Sanjay; Modi, Narendra; Narayen, Shantanu; Obama, Barack; Oz, Mehmet; Parameswaran, Prem; Patel, Kashyap P. "Kash"; Powell, Jerome H.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Schumer, Charles E.; Sliwa, Curtis; Social Security program; Stephanopoulos, George R.; White-Cain, Paula; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division; Autism spectrum disorders; Border security; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; China, trade with U.S.; Director of National Intelligence; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; Diwali; Economic improvement; European Union, trade with U.S.; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Federal Government appropriations, lapse; Federal Reserve System; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Health insurance exchanges; House minority leader; Illinois, Obama Presidential Center in Chicago; India, Ambassador to the U.S.; India, Prime Minister; India, relations with U.S.; India, trade with Russia; India, trade with U.S.; India, U.S. Ambassador; Inflation; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Japan, trade with U.S.; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Medicare and Medicaid programs; National Guard; News media, fairness and accuracy; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pakistan, relations with India; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, oil supply and refining; Russia, President; Secretary of Health and Human Services; Senate minority leader; Senior Adviser to the White House Faith Office; South Korea, trade with U.S.; Tariffs; Tax Code reform; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; White House Ballroom construction project; White House Press Secretary.

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