

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks During a Meeting With the White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup 2026 and an Exchange With Reporters

November 17, 2025

The President. Well, thank you very much, and good afternoon. I'm delighted to welcome FIFA President Gianni Infantino one of the greatest men of sport. He's an amazing man. He's done an incredible job with FIFA.

Fédération Internationale de Football Association President Giovanni V. Infantino. Thank you.

The President. Congratulations on the job.

Mr. Infantino. Thank you.

The President. I hear you're setting records for the World Cup.

Mr. Infantino. Yes.

The President. We'll talk about it. But he's setting records in ticket sales for the World Cup, and we love having you back at the White House, Gianni, and everybody——

Mr. Infantino. Thank you.

The President. ——that's with you. You guys have done fantastically.

I also want to thank Vice President J.D. Vance. J.D., wherever you may be. Where's J.D.?

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem. Not here yet.

The President. He's around here some—oh, he's coming right over.

Marco Rubio, who's doing a fantastic job, and Secretary Kristi Noem, who's doing a fantastic job, as well as Representative Darin LaHood. Thank you all very much. Hi, Darin.

This past summer, the United States hosted the 2025 FIFA Cup World Cup—Club World Cup, and it was great. I actually went to a match.

Mr. Infantino. Yes.

The President. And it was amazing. That was a big success too, wasn't it?

Mr. Infantino. Huge.

The President. That was sort of like a preview of what's to come. And now we're getting ready for an even bigger event next year as we host the official 2026 FIFA World Cup. That's the big one, the World Cup tournament.

This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, even for our country, because, frankly, you know, this goes to countries—everybody wants it. I guess it's going all over the world. Do you know who's getting it the next time around? Who's getting it?

Mr. Infantino. The next——

The President. Has that been selected?

Mr. Infantino. Next one will be Morocco, Spain, and Portugal.

The President. That's good.

Mr. Infantino. With three matches at the beginning in South America——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Infantino. ——Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay. And the one after will be Saudi Arabia in 2034.

The President. Wow. That's great.

Mr. Infantino. Yes.

The President. Wow. That's great.

Well, we have the King coming—Crown Prince is coming tomorrow.

This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase the greatness of American world-class athletic competition as we celebrate our Nation's 250th year.

The World Cup will also be an incredibly significant economic opportunity for countless American workers and businesses. It's expected to drive more than \$30 billion, Gianni. I don't know about that. That sounds like a lot of money. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Infantino. No, it's true.

The President. Are you sure?

Mr. Infantino. A hundred percent.

The President. How much does the country get out of that?

Mr. Infantino. Thirty billion——

The President. Twenty percent?

Mr. Infantino. ——is the economic impact. *[Laughter]*

The President. No, but do we get, like, a percentage of the gross or anything? *[Laughter]*

Mr. Infantino. That's for negotiation. *[Laughter]*

The President. That's right. I know. And it's going to create nearly 200,000 jobs for America.

Since the creation of the White House FIFA Task Force earlier this year, Secretary Rubio's team at the State Department has worked tirelessly with the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that soccer fans from all around the world are properly vetted and able to come to the United States next summer—easily.

Before I took office, it would often take a year to get a travel visa, but because of the administration's hard work, now in more than 80 percent of the world—think of that—the wait time for a visa is 60 days or less.

For those who intend to join us for the World Cup, I strongly encourage you to apply right away. And I want to thank FIFA Task Force and Secretary Rubio for the great job. Marco's doing a fantastic job in many ways too. So I want to just thank you all for a great job. Marco, you're doing a great job——

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. Thank you. Thank you.

The President. ——beyond even this.

We're also creating what we're calling the FIFA Prioritized Appointment Scheduling System. That's a hard one for most people to remember. *[Laughter]* But it's there, nevertheless. And this

will allow World Cup ticket holders with long wait times to opt with FIFA for a prioritized interview.

And I've directed my administration to do everything within the power to make the 2026 World Cup an unprecedented success. I think it's going to be the greatest. And we are setting records on ticket sales. Nobody's ever really—and FIFA's never—you know, if you look at the numbers, nobody's ever seen anything like the kind of numbers we're doing. The early ticket sales are through the roof, and much of it is even sold out.

Mr. Infantino. Yes.

The President. So congratulations, Gianni.

And I'd like to ask Gianni to say a few words. He's really done an incredible job. He's got unbelievable spirit and personality and talent and intelligence, I always like to say, because it's all a part of it. But the job you've done is, based on what's happening, unprecedented.

Thank you, Gianni.

Mr. Infantino. Thank you. Thank you, President.

Thank you very much. I would like to start, really, by thanking you, Mr. President, Secretary Rubio, Secretary Noem, Andrew, your entire team for approving and making this very important announcement today.

The FIFA PASS is being announced that Prioritized Appointment Scheduling System. That's the way people will remember it. So, if you have a ticket for the World Cup, you can have a prioritized appointment to get your visa, because we said it the very first time we met, Mr. President: America welcomes the world. America will welcome the world here next year.

We will have between 6 and 7 million tickets sold for the matches. We'll have between 5 and 10 million people coming to America from all over the world to enjoy the World Cup. And with this FIFA PASS, we can make sure that those who buy a ticket that are legitimate football fans, or soccer fans, they can come and attend the World Cup in the best conditions, starting from getting their visa and then coming, of course, in the country to enjoy.

You mentioned the economic impact—the \$30 billion, 200,000 jobs—and this is just for the World Cup. And we'll build on that to make soccer even greater.

Here, you are the number-one country in the world, the United States of America, Mr. President. You have to be the number-one country, as well, in the number-one sport in the world. *[Laughter]*

So we have to work for that, and we will do that. And the World Cup will be very, very significant in this respect.

So big, big thank you to you, to the White House Task Force, to everyone involved. And we are celebrating the next year not just the 250 years, but also the greatest and most inclusive World Cup ever. We'll have 6 billion people watching.

We have the draw coming up on the 5th of December here at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. One billion people watching the draw to find out who plays whom and where. We have 32 teams already qualified. Before or by tomorrow night, we'll have 42 out of 48 qualified. So a quarter of the world will be here, and we are looking very much forward.

So thanks. Thanks for the support. Thanks for the great work, and always happy to be here at home, if I can say that. *[Laughter]*

The President. That's great. You are home. We are. It's your beautiful trophy right there.

Mr. Infantino. Yes.

The President. But you are, and a big part of it too.

Marco, would you say a few words, please?

Secretary Rubio. Yes. Thank you, Mr. President, first of all, for getting the games, because this happened in your first term, when the cup came here, and it's a major undertaking.

So we've deployed over 400 additional consular officers around the world to deal with that—in some cases, doubling the size of the consular presence in our Embassies in certain countries. And the good news now is that in about 80 percent of the world, you can get an appointment within 60 days.

It used to take, you know, half a year or longer. And now it—sometimes it took, you know—now you can get in less than 2 months, where in places it took over a year. In places, for example, like Brazil and Argentina, you would have to—it took over a year to get an appointment. Now you can get it in less than 2 months.

So our advice to everybody is: If you have a ticket for any of the games, you need to apply, if you haven't done so, as soon as possible. Don't wait till the last minute.

Your ticket is not a visa. It doesn't guarantee admission to the U.S. It guarantees you an expedited appointment. You're still going to go through the same vetting. We're going to do the same vetting as anybody else would get. The only difference here is, we're moving them up in the queue. We're moving them up faster.

But my advice to everyone that's watching around the world is: If you intend to come to the games, you have to have a ticket. You need to apply. Apply as soon as possible. You're going to get your interview within, you know, 6 to 8 weeks or—and move forward from there. Don't wait till the last minute to do it.

Thank you.

The President. Mr. Congressman, would you like to say something?

Representative Darin M. LaHood. Well, first of all, Mr. President, none of this would have happened without your leadership securing this during your first term.

I tell my colleagues all the time, this will be the largest sporting event in the history of the world. We expand from 32 to 48 teams for the first time ever. We're doing it with Mexico and Canada, but obviously, the 11 host cities will be here in the United States, and it's going to have a \$30 billion impact economically in this country.

And so it has been a team effort by everybody. But I also want to thank President Infantino and obviously you, Mr. President, and your entire team—Andrew and Nick and everybody. It is going to be an unbelievable sporting event next summer.

The President. It's going to be great. It's going to be great.

Andrew, would you like to say something?

White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup 2026 Executive Director Andrew Giuliani. Sure. I think——

The President. Then we'll have somebody much more important——

[At this point, the President gestured toward Secretary Noem.]

Executive Director Giuliani. [Laughter] Much more important. And honestly, without her work, without Secretary of State Rubio's work in the State Department, this would not happen. And without your leadership and your vision, this would not have happened.

I think two key points, one the Secretary of State already highlighted: This is a welcoming message to the world, without going around the safety and security procedures. It's so key to make sure that this World Cup is safe and secure, and the White House task force is working every day to make sure that's the case. And also, as Congressman LaHood said, the economic benefits for American businesses, both small and large, from a \$30 billion event like this.

So, really, thanks to all the White House Task Force members, from Secretary Rubio to Secretary Noem to notice of funding opportunities that went out to the cities and states last months were really key from the safety and security perspective; to Deputy Chief of Staff Luna, who is integral in this whole process; to the White House Task Force members that are standing in the back of the room today and that couldn't be here, without your hard work, this would not have happened. And I really can't thank you enough for, really, the best team I've ever been a part of.

And also, to FIFA; to the president, Gianni Infantino; my good friend Carlos Cordiero—your desire to make this World Cup the best yet, it's contagious. Every single day, I come in and think, "What can we"—"What can we do to make this even better?"

And, Mr. President, your vision, more than anything. I think it takes a unique visionary to be able to go and see a sporting event and realize that this can be one of the greatest cultural events in world history. And I think there are very few people, aside from the 45th and 47th President of the United States, Donald J. Trump, that can do that undertaking. So thank you.

The President. Wow. Thank you very much.

Kristi, please.

Secretary Noem. Mr. President, thank you for Andrew. Thank you for making him the head of our FIFA Task Force. He's fantastic.

And Nick has been a rock star in facilitating all of our meetings, getting everybody together, and making sure that we're prepared to host this event.

And it's going to be the world's largest sporting event ever hosted, and it's happening under your leadership.

So every department has been working, but the Department of Homeland Security is working on making sure people can travel here safely. They know that they're welcome to the United States, that each of these events will be cooperative events with our cities to make sure that security needs are met. We put out over \$600 million worth of grants to the 11 host cities that they'll have the advantage to partner on technologies and screening technologies, drone technology. Counter-UAS, as well, will be implemented.

So we'll be prepared to host it safely. But also, with Marco's leadership at the State Department, making sure the people that come in on these tourist visas are coming in thoroughly vetted, just like anyone who would travel here. And they would come and enjoy our country and then they would go home and go home in a timely manner.

So we're excited about that, and we're excited to partner with you, Mr. President, on creating memories for people around the world that will make them not just fall in love with the United States but also fall in love with the sport of soccer.

The President. Well, thank you. How many games are there, Gianni, total?

Mr. Infantino. Total 104 games, meaning 104 Super Bowls, in 1 month.

The President. That's amazing.

Mr. Infantino. This is the magnitude of the event.

The President. It's like that, you know, when you think—right?

Secretary Noem. It is. It's incredible.

Mr. Infantino. One hundred four Super Bowls in 1 month.

The President. It's going to be the biggest sporting event we've ever had.

Mr. Infantino. Yes.

The President. It's like having 104—or even if you cut it in half, 50, 60 Super Bowls. Right? That's okay too. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Infantino. In 1 month.

The President. Any questions? Please.

Expedited Visa Processing for FIFA World Cup Ticketholders

Q. Mr. President, can you just take us through this FIFA PASS idea that you guys are talking about here? How exactly is it going work for ticket holders——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——to this big event that the United States——

The President. Sure.

Q. ——is hosting?

The President. I'll let my guys do that because they can do it much better. And—either one of you two. Nick, would you like to talk about it?

White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Implementation Nicholas F. Luna. Sure. Well, Mr. President, without your leadership, this would not happen. And we came in, in 10 months we have a system that's going welcome the world. The greatest host in the history of the world is going to host the world here.

Basically, this system allows folks with a FIFA ticket purchased through FIFA to go through the FIFA portal that is then going to get prioritized with the State Department so that those appointments are going to be had before existing appointments so that people, when they buy tickets, they have confidence that they're going to be able to come to the games and spend their money and travel this country and do all the things that they want to do and enjoy the game.

So it's a incredible vision that the President executed here. Within 10 months—we started with really not that much. And so, this whole team here, with the President's guidance, has made this possible. It's going to be the greatest games in the history of the world.

The President. Okay. Do you have that—[*inaudible*]?]

Q. Yes. That makes—yes, sir. That's great. Thank you, sir.

The President. Not too complicated.

Daniel [Daniel Baldwin, One America News Network], please. Daniel.

Economic Impact of World Cup

Q. Mr. President. Yes. You were talking about the economic impact of this. Billions and billions of dollars. This builds on the framework and the groundwork that you've built already up for a major year in 2026. Deregulation, energy independence, tax cuts, historic amounts of private sector investments. What do you envision for the 2026 economy when this event comes to town next year too? On top of everything else that you've already done.

The President. Yes, it's just a huge economic boon to this. You know, we had a little shutdown that was caused by the Democrats, and this will make up for it many times over. So that's good. But I think it's the importance of the event all over the world. The world is watching.

And it really is. It's like having, you know, many Super Bowls, actually. Each game is almost a Super Bowl. Some of them are, I guess you could say, bigger than Super Bowls. I guess when you get to the finals, it's of that level or more.

Mr. Infantino. Yes. Much more.

The President. Worldwide, it's—I think it's got to be more. So, that's great.

You know, when Gianni and I made the deal, I never thought I was going to be President because I was supposed to be retired by that time. *[Laughter]* And I got a little lucky. So I'm very honored to have it.

And we have the Olympics coming too. That will be great. And the 250. The 250 is going to be—right out on the lawn you're going to have a UFC event with Dana White and his people. He's going to have the greatest card they've ever assembled. I was talking to Dana White the other day, and they're going to have the greatest card they've ever assembled. Gianni, see—you'll be sitting up there with me, Darin. We'll be watching it. So right opposite the front door of the White House. It's going to be on June 14. So it's really going to be an amazing period of time.

But this is something very, very special. World Cup. All my life, I've heard about it.

Yes.

The President's Health

Q. Mr. President, I have a question about Venezuela, but can I just first ask: The health of the President is always news. Your voice sounds a little rough. Are you feeling all right?

The President. I feel great. I was shouting at people because they were stupid about something having to do with trade in a country, and I straightened it out. But I blew my stack at these people because they're so stupid. *[Laughter]*

Q. Well, it sounds like there's a follow-up there, but can I ask you about Venezuela? You suggested—

The President. Sounds like there's a what?

Q. It sounds like there's a follow-up there—

The President. Oh.

Q. —but can I ask you about Venezuela?

The President. I thought you said there was a polyp, and I said—*[laughter]*—I don't want to hear that.

Q. That's a whole other issue.

The President. Okay.

Venezuela/Border Security

Q. You suggested you've made a decision about what you want to do next about Venezuela. I understand you don't want to tip your hand, but is there anything you're ready to rule out at this point? Are you ruling out U.S. troops on the ground?

The President. No, I don't rule out that. I don't rule out anything. We just have to take care of Venezuela. They dumped hundreds of thousands of people into our country from prisons. Nobody knows better than this——

Secretary Noem. That's right.

The President. ——young lady right here. She's done an incredible job with Tom Homan and all of your people.

Secretary Noem. Yes.

The President. It's amazing. You know, we have a tight border right now. Nobody comes in. But we had millions of people pouring through—a year ago, we had millions of people pouring through our border, and many of them came from Venezuela, including Tren de Aragua, the gang. And I guess what I'm hearing, Kristi, is that's as bad a gang as there is anywhere in the world.

Secretary Noem. It's the worst.

The President. Is that actually the worst?

Secretary Noem. Absolutely, sir. Absolutely, they are the worst.

The President. I mean, they're worse than MS-13.

Secretary Noem. They're killers. They massacre people. They cut them up into pieces, and they bury them in their communities where they grew up. They're horrible people.

The President. And we had a lot of them. And many of them—most of them—pretty soon, most of them are going to be out. But they sent them in like we're a dumping ground.

So I'm not in love with the people running Venezuela. I love Venezuela. I love the people of Venezuela. But what they've done to this country—and I really say this: What Biden and the Democrats have done to this country can never ever be forgotten.

Q. You suggested Maduro wants to talk. Are you prepared to speak with him directly? Would you commit to doing that——

The President. Probably would.

Q. ——before you order the strikes?

The President. Yes, I probably would talk to him. Yes, I talk to everybody.

Go ahead, please.

Q. Mr. President, to follow up on Garrett [Garrett Haake, NBC News], was that what you were referring to?

The President. Please, go ahead.

Q. Was that India?

Immigration Reform/Worker Visas/Semiconductor Manufacturing

Q. Rebeka Zeljko with Blaze News. So you—in a recent interview, you had made some remarks about H1-B visas. You said——

The President. About what?

Q. About H1-B visas.

The President. Yes.

Q. You said that there were certain talents that Americans needed to outsource to foreign workers. Could you clarify maybe——

The President. Until they learn that, yes. Like, for instance, if you're going to be making chips. We don't make chips too much here anymore, but we are going to be. In a period of a year, we're going to have a big portion of the chip market.

But we have to train our people how to make chips because we didn't—we used to do it. And then, foolishly, we lost that business to Taiwan. Very, very foolishly, because if they had a President that thought like I did, they would not have let that happen. But it's all coming back.

I think we're going to have a—within a few years, we're going—and not because of the CHIPS Act. The CHIPS Act was a disaster for this country. We gave away billions of dollars to other countries and other locations and companies, and all they did was rob our money.

But because of tariffs, the chips are coming back. Chipmakers are all coming back. And I think, within a very short period of time, we're going to have—maybe even the majority of the chipmaking in the world will be right in the United States, where it should have been all along. But because we had people that didn't believe in tariffs—they believed in them, but they didn't know how to use them. We would have had nobody leaving our country right now, and instead, you have almost a hundred percent of the chips are made in Taiwan. It's so disgraceful.

The good news is, it's all coming back.

Yes, please. In the back.

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President——

The President. The gentleman in the back.

Venezuela

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wanted to just follow up on Venezuela. In these talks with Maduro, is there anything that he could say or do that would let—allow you to feel like he could stay with your support? Is there anything that he could say that you would be, "Okay, you can stay as leader, as a"——

The President. It's hard to say that. You know, the question is a little bit tricky. I don't think it was meant to be tricky. It's just that, look, he's done tremendous damage to our country, primarily because of drugs, but really—because we have that problem with other countries too—but more than any other country, the release of prisoners into our country has been a disaster. He's emptied his jails. Others have done that also.

He has not been good to the United States. So we'll see what happens.

I'll—at a certain period of time, I'll be talking to him.

Q. Mr. President, can I get your reaction——

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President, can I just follow up?

Q. ——to some news this morning?

Q. You mentioned your voice and you were shouting about trade. Which country in particular——

The President. Well, I don't want to say.

Q. —upset you? Was it India, Switzerland?

The President. No, no. A country who wanted to try and renegotiate the terms of their trade deal, and I wasn't happy about it.

Q. But which country was it? People want to know.

The President. Why would I say that to you? [*Laughter*] Why would I—I can't believe it.

World Cup Host Cities/Wildfires in Los Angeles, California

Q. Mr. President, on the World—on the World Cup, if you would—Seattle and the World Cup. The new mayor-elect of Seattle is a Democratic Socialist. Seattle has six——

The President. Yes, or beyond. Or beyond. I watched her. I——

Q. Right. Seattle has six——

The President. That's more than socialism.

Q. Right. Seattle has six World Cup games. How close are you going to be watching that city, with the crime in that city?

The President. Well, if we think—and I'll have to speak to Gianni about this, but if we think that—the mayor of L.A. is incompetent. Everybody knows that. You know that I was there, I guess, 2 years ago, and we got all the Federal permits taken care of. Far more complex than the State permits and the city permits.

And Lee Zeldin, who's a superstar, got everything taken care of. The toughest part, you know, having to do with the fires—that should have never happened—if they let the water come in, it wouldn't have happened. Right?

Do you know that people aren't building their houses yet? I mean, can you imagine that? And if we didn't go in early on—Kristi, I think we can say it—well, the—the head of their police department said it: They were unable to handle it. You would've had—not only did you have the fires, but you would have had total insurrection in Los Angeles.

And if we didn't go in and the head of—you know the gentleman. He said it, and he said it strongly. He said, "We could not have done it"——

Secretary Noem. That's right.

The President. ——"without the Federal Government." We did a great job.

If we think there's going to be the sign of any trouble, I would ask Gianni to move that to a different city. We have a lot of cities that are—well, would love to have it, number one, and will do it very safely. So, if we think there's a problem in Seattle, where you have a very, very liberal/communist mayor—I would say, you know, it's certainly beyond just liberal. I watched her over the weekend. Wow. That's another beauty we got there.

But if we think there's going to be a problem, we'll—Gianni, can I say we will move? I don't think you're going to have this problem, but we're going to move the event to someplace where it's going to be appreciated and safe.

Mr. Infantino. Yes. Well, I think safety and security is the number-one priority for a successful World Cup. We can see today that people have trust in the United States when we see at the tickets—ticket sales. We sold, I mean, record-breaking figures of tickets: almost 2 million already, sold out of 2 million that we have been selling. This is because people, they know that they will be coming here and they will experience a safe and secure World Cup.

This is the responsibility, of course, of the Government, of Secretary Noem, of everyone. And obviously, we will—I mean, we will discuss. We are working together. We have a Task Force for this. And we must ensure that all fans coming from abroad or being here, they can experience a celebration of coming together, of the sport. And this goes only with 100 percent safety.

Secretary Noem. We are——

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

The President. Go ahead, please.

Secretary Noem. We are communicating with all these mayors about what their responsibilities are. They know the safety and security of these events is their number-one responsibility. And we'll be there. The President is always there to keep Americans safe. But he also made sure the people that—know their responsibilities and that they're prepared to host these events and do so in a safe manner.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The President. Yes. Go ahead, please.

2028 Presidential Election

Q. There was some news this morning from an Axios report that Senator Ted Cruz was laying the groundwork for a potential 2028 Presidential run. Could I get your reaction to—would you—could you see yourself supporting Senator Cruz?

The President. Well, he's a friend of mine. I mean, you know, I haven't spoken to him about it. It's a little early. It's 3¼ years. That's a long time. But he's a very good guy. He's a very good friend of mine. You remember we had a—quite a campaign against Ted, and it worked out quite nicely. Let's see, where are we? Oh, we're in the Oval Office. [Laughter]

But I'm not that surprised to hear that. [Inaudible]

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Tariffs/Semiconductor Manufacturing

Q. Mr. President, on the tariff exemptions. You had some recently on a variety of different goods. I'm wondering: Are you ruling out, going forward, no more exemptions on products? You were mentioning a disagreement you had earlier, so I'm wondering what you——

The President. No, we've taken in——

Q. ——what you're thinking of with this.

The President. ——hundreds of millions of dollars in tariff money. We're going to be issuing dividends later on, some—somewhere prior to—you know, probably in the middle of next year, a little bit later than that—of thousands of dollars for individuals of moderate income, middle income.

We're going to pay down debt. You know, we have a lot of money from tariffs. If we didn't have tariffs, this nation would be in serious trouble. And we've taken in tremendous amounts of money. And you know what's more important than that? We've protected our businesses from being raided like we did with the chip business. Now we're bringing them all back.

But our—you know, we had a hundred percent of the chip industry, and then they left. They went mostly to Taiwan and South Korea, but mostly Taiwan. And they have almost a hundred percent. And we're going to have, within a short period of time, a big percentage of the chip

business. They're coming back because of tariffs, because they don't want to pay the tariffs. Because the tariffs will be very steep if they don't come back. And they're all—they've committed to come back.

As you probably heard, Apple is now up to \$700 billion. We have Nvidia at \$600 billion. We have tremendous amounts of money pouring in.

Our country has become amazing again and really, really rich again.

I will say this. We have a decision we're waiting for. It's a very big decision.

The numbers that we've taken in, if you talk about investments, is trillions—not with a—not with a "b," not with an "m"—millions—but trillions of dollars. I can't imagine having to give that money back on something that we're allowed to do.

And the ones that are fighting us are countries—largely, they're backing countries that have been ripping us off for years—using tariffs to rip us off. And now we're able to defend ourselves.

It really is a matter of national security, because economic security is national security. So I think you're going to see another thing happening. I think you'll see food prices—they've come down very substantially since Biden. But I think you're going to see food prices coming down very substantially.

Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. President, on Saudi Arabia—on Saudi Arabia, tomorrow you're hosting——

The President. Yes.

Q. —Saudi Arabia. Are you planning to sell F-35s to Saudi Arabia?

The President. Yes.

Q. I mean—and, also, are you looking at doing a similar security agreement like you did with—with Qatar?

The President. Yes. No, I am planning on doing that. Yes. They——

Q. You're going to sell the F-35s?

The President. They want to buy them. They've been a great ally. They've got to like us very much.

Look at the Iran situation, what we did in terms of obliterating, you know, their—we obliterated their nuclear capability.

Yes, I will say that we will be doing that. We'll be selling F-35s, yes.

Department of Justice Files Concerning Deceased Convicted Sex Offender Jeffrey Epstein

Q. Can I ask you to clarify something you posted on Truth Social last night? You urged House Republicans to vote in favor of this Epstein release bill they're going to vote on——

The President. Yes.

Q. —tomorrow. I just want to be super clear on your position. Do you want to see that pass the Senate? Would you sign that bill if it gets to your desk?

The President. I do want to—it—here's what I want: We have nothing to do with Epstein. The Democrats do. All of his friends were Democrats. You look at this Reid Hoffman, you look

at Larry Summers, Bill Clinton, they went to his island all the—and many others. They're all Democrats.

All I want is, I want for people to recognize a great job that I've done on pricing; on affordability, because we brought prices way down, but they're going way lower; on energy; on ending eight wars and another one coming pretty soon, I believe.

We've done a great job, and I hate to see that deflect from the great job we've done. So, I'm all for it.

You know, we've already given 50,000 pages. You do know that.

Unfortunately, like with the Kennedy situation, with the Martin Luther King situation—not to put Jeffrey Epstein in the same category, but no matter what we give, it's never enough. You know, with Kennedy, we gave everything, and it wasn't enough. With Martin Luther King, we gave everything, and it's never enough.

We've already given—I believe the number is 50,000 pages.

Secretary Noem. Mm-hmm.

The President. Fifty thousand pages. And it's just a "Russia, Russia, Russia" hoax as it pertains to the Republicans.

Now, I believe that many of the people that we—some of the people that we mentioned are being looked at very seriously for their relationship to Jeffrey Epstein. But they were with him all the time. I wasn't. I wasn't at all. And we'll see what happens.

What I just don't want Epstein to do is detract from the great success of the Republican Party, including the fact that the Democrats are totally blamed for the shutdown. You know, they cost our country hundreds of billions of dollars with that and a lot of inconvenience.

So I'm for any—I don't—they could do whatever they want.

Q. You would sign it if it comes to your desk?

The President. We'll give them everything.

Sure, I would. Let the Senate look at it, let anybody look at it, but don't talk about it too much because, honestly, I don't want it taking away from us.

It's really a Democrat problem. The Democrats were Epstein's friends, all of them. And it's a hoax. The whole thing is a hoax. And I don't want it taking away from, really, the greatness of what the Republican Party has accomplished over the last period of time.

Yes, please.

Federal Support for Farmers

Q. Mr. President, the shutdown is now over.

The President. Yes.

Q. Administration officials had said when the shutdown ends, they'll reevaluate the farmer relief. Now we have the deal with China. So is the administration still looking to dish out farmer relief now that the Government is back open and you——

The President. Yes, we want to——

Q. ——have access to certain funds?

The President. I'm always going to help our farmers and——

Q. So are you still looking to do relief?

The President. I would do that, yes, if it's——

Q. When can we expect that?

The President. If they need relief, we'll be there for them. We'll—we're going to always be for our farmers.

Q. So what are waiting on?

The President. Yes, please, in the back.

Federal Law Enforcement Support in U.S. Cities

Q. Mr. President, just speaking of the—the economic impacts of FIFA and possibly moving to another city, some games, if you feel there's crime. Is there, like, a timeline that you would do that? Because these cities—there's sponsorships, there's economic impacts for these communities.

The President. Sure.

Q. Is there a—do you——

The President. Well, you know——

Q. ——will you make this decision——

The President. ——the Governors are going to have to behave. The mayors are going to have to behave. You know, in the case of California, you have a problem. You have high crime, and you have a place that just suffered great fires and everything else, and they didn't do a very good job.

And if we didn't go in, from the crime standpoint, you would have had a disaster. It would have been—it was not going to be handled properly. It wasn't able to be. The head of the police said without—as I said, without the Federal Government, they could not have done it.

So here's the story. I love Los Angeles. If they want help during this, I would love to send in National Guard or whoever's necessary to help them. I want it to be great. I'd love it to be in Los Angeles. I love the place. It's a natural for Los Angeles.

If we think they're going to—there's going to be crime, if we are obstructed by the Governor—and maybe he won't obstruct; maybe he'll be great—but I'd love him for—for him to call and say, "You know, we'd like to have some extra help." Because if there's even a hint of a problem, we want to get in there before the problem occurs. We want to make it totally safe for Gianni and FIFA and all of the great people that are going to be there. And I think that's going to happen.

I would—be honored to help California if they're going to have a problem. And if they think they're going to have a problem, they should say so. We can be in there in 24 hours' notice and do a great job.

Public Safety in the District of Columbia

Q. But does that have to happen by the end of the year—by the end of the year? By the end of the first quarter? I mean, FIFA is coming.

The President. Well, I think this: If they would tell us——

Q. This is——

The President. ——if they would tell us now, they're not going to have a problem. Because if we go in, they don't have a problem.

Look at DC. There's no crime in DC anymore, and DC was a mess. If they want us to go in, I'd like them to tell us right now. But if we go in, there will be no problem. There will be no crime.

Q. What's the message, then, to, like, local businesses who are considering sponsoring those communities——

The President. Tell your Governor to ask——

Q. ——and uncertainty?

The President. ——for Federal help. We'd love to help them.

Mexico/U.S. Drug Interdiction Efforts/ U.S. Airstrikes on Suspected Drug-Trafficking Vessels in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific/Colombia

Q. Mr. President, on Venezuela. Are you planning on also potentially launching strikes in Mexico or putting American troops or American personnel into Mexico to deal with the cartels?

The President. Would I want strikes in Mexico to stop drugs? It's okay with me. Whatever we have to do to stop drugs.

Mexico is—look, I looked at Mexico City over the weekend. There's some big problems over there. If we had to, would we do there what we have done to the waterways? You know, there's almost no drugs coming in through our waterways anymore.

Isn't it down like 85 percent?

Secretary Noem. It is, sir, absolutely.

The President. I don't know who the 15 percent——

Secretary Noem. Yes.

The President. ——would be. [*Laughter*]

Secretary Noem. Yes. Yes.

The President. It wouldn't be you.

Executive Director Giuliani. No, that's for sure. No, sir.

The President. No, I think it's been——

Secretary Noem. Tons and tons of drugs.

The President. You would say that's a big signal.

Secretary Noem. Absolutely.

The President. We have almost no drugs coming into our country by the sea, by, you know, the waterways. And you know why. Okay? I mean, it's pretty obvious.

Would I do that on the land corridors? I would—look, every boat we knock out, we save 25,000 American lives, not to mention the destruction of families. These families are decimated forever. The mother, the father, the children, they never recover really from it. You know, when you lose somebody like the way they—any—if you lose them, but the way they die is horrible.

Q. Is it something you're actively looking at?

The President. So, when we knock out a boat and we save 25,000 lives, that's great.

Now, do I feel the same way about the—corridors that they use? We know every one of them. We have every one of those corridors under major surveillance.

Secretary Noem. That's right. Absolutely.

The President. We have nobody coming in through our southern border, but we know exactly how they get their things here, how they get the drugs here—fentanyl, cocaine.

Colombia is—has cocaine factories where they make cocaine. Would I knock out those factories? I would be proud to do it, personally. I didn't say I'm doing it, but I would be proud to do it because we're going to save millions of lives by doing it.

Q. Would you only do with Mexico's permission though?

The President. I wouldn't answer that question. I've been speaking to Mexico. They know how I stand. We're losing hundreds of thousands of people to drugs. So now we've stopped the waterways.

But we know every route. We know every route. We know the addresses of every drug lord. We know their address. We know their front door. We know everything about every one of them. They're killing our people. That's like a war.

Would I do it? I'd be proud to. I'd probably go into Congress and say, "Hey"—and you know what? The Democrats or the Republicans would both agree, unless they're crazy. And they are a little crazy on the Democrat side.

But——

Q. And would you go to Congress——

The President. ——we have—lost hundreds of thousands of people a year—death. And that's not talking about family destruction. That's talking about death. And much of it comes through Mexico.

So let me just put it this way. I am not happy with Mexico. Okay?

Thank you very much, everyone.

Thank you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Thank you.

Q. Who were you yelling at?

The President. I'll tell you maybe next week.

Q. Next week?

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Dana F. White, chief executive officer, Ultimate Fighting Championship; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela; Mayor-elect Katie B. Wilson of Seattle, WA; Mayor Karen R. Bass of and Chief of Police Jim McDonnell of Los Angeles, CA; Reid Hoffman, cofounder, LinkedIn; former Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence H. Summers; former President William J. Clinton; and Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California. Director Giuliani referred to FIFA Senior Adviser Carlos Cordeiro. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on November 18.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup 2026, meeting; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Bass, Karen R.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Clinton, William J.; Cruz, R. Edward "Ted"; Giuliani, Andrew; Homan, Thomas D.; Infantino, Giovanni V.; LaHood, Darin M.; Luna, Nicholas F.; Maduro Moros, Nicolas; McDonnell, Jim; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince; Newsom, Gavin C.; Noem, Kristi L.; Rubio, Marco A.; Summers, Lawrence H.; Vance, James D. "J.D."; White, Dana F.; Wilson, Katie N.; Zeldin, Lee M.

Subjects: Agricultural production, strengthening efforts; America's 250th birthday celebration; California, 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles; California, Governor; Colombia, drug production and trafficking; Department of Justice files concerning deceased convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; Environmental Protection Agency; Federal Government appropriations, lapse; Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Illegal immigration; Inflation; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Mexico, border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Mexico, counternarcotic efforts; National Guard; Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince; Saudi Arabia, trade with U.S.; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of State; Semiconductor manufacturing; Suspected drug-trafficking vessels, U.S. airstrikes in Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific; Tariffs; Venezuela, President; Venezuela, relations with U.S.; Venezuela, Tren de Aragua criminal organization; Vice President; Visa policy, U.S.; White House Border Czar; White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Strategic Implementation; White House Task Force on the FIFA World Cup 2026.

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