

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025*

**Remarks During a Meeting With Mayor-Elect Zohran K. Mamdani of New York City and an Exchange With Reporters**

*November 21, 2025*

*The President.* Well, thank you very much. We've just had a great meeting, a really good, very productive meeting. We have one thing in common: We want this city of ours that we love to do very well.

And I wanted to congratulate the mayor. He really ran an incredible race against, you know, a lot of smart people, starting with the early primaries against some very tough people, very smart people. And he beat them, and he beat them easily.

And I congratulated him, and we talked about some things in very strong common, like housing and getting housing built and food and prices. And the price of oil is coming way down. Anything I do is going to be good for New York. If I can get prices down, it's good for New York.

And we've got them down—way down from—from last year. We have—as you know, I've been saying to a lot of people, Walmart said that Thanksgiving this year is exactly 25-percent less than last year. So that's good for New York, good for everybody.

But I just want to congratulate. I think you're going to have, hopefully, a really great mayor. The better he does, the happier I am. I will say there's no difference in party. There's no difference in anything. And we're going to be helping him to make everybody's dream come true: having a strong and very safe New York. And congratulations, Mr. Mayor.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I appreciate it.

*The President.* Please.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I appreciated the meeting with the President. And as he said, it was a productive meeting focused on a place of shared admiration and love, which is New York City, and the need to deliver affordability to New Yorkers—the 8½ million people who call our city their home—who are struggling to afford life in the most expensive city in the United States of America.

We spoke about rent. We spoke about groceries. We spoke about utilities. We spoke about the different ways in which people are being pushed out. And I appreciated the time with the President. I appreciated the conversation. I look forward to working together to deliver that affordability for New Yorkers.

*The President.* Thank you very much.

Any questions? Please.

*The President's View of Mayor-Elect Mamdani*

*Q.* President Trump, Steven Nelson from the New York Post. I've got a question for you and then also one for the mayor-elect.

*The President.* Sure.

*Q.* For you: You've referred to Mr. Mamdani as a Communist. Could you describe why you feel that way? And also, will you do anything to stop him from arresting Prime Minister Netanyahu if he visits New York?

*The President.* Well, we didn't discuss your second part of the question.

And, on your first part, I mean, he's got views that are a little out there, but who knows? I mean, we're going to see what works, or—he's going to change also. We all change. I changed a lot. Changed a lot from when I first came to office. It's now quite a while ago. It's quite a while.

My first term was great. We had the greatest economy in the history of our country. We're doing even better now. We're doing much better now than we did even the first term. And I can tell you, some of my views have changed.

And we had discussions on some things. I'm not going to discuss what they were, but—that I feel very confident that he can do a very good job. I think he's going to be—I think he is going to surprise some conservative people, actually. And some very liberal people, he won't surprise them because they already like him.

*Q.* And for Mr. Mamdani, it sounds like you had a productive discussion. But just days ago, you referred to President Trump as a "despot" who had betrayed the country. You said you'd be his worst nightmare and accused him of having a fascist agenda. Are you planning to retract any of these remarks in order to improve your relationship?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I think both President Trump and I, we are very clear about our positions and our views. And what I really appreciate about the President is that the meeting that we had focused not on places of disagreement, which there are many, and also focused on the shared purpose that we have in serving New Yorkers. And frankly, that is something that could transform the lives of the 8½ million people who are currently struggling under a cost-of-living crisis, with one in four living in poverty.

And the meeting came back again and again to what it could look like to lift those New Yorkers out of struggle and start to deliver them a city that they could do more than just struggle to afford it, but actually start to live in it.

*The President.* And I've been called much worse than a despot, so it's not—[laughter]—it's not that insulting. Maybe—I think he'll change his mind after we get to working together.

Yes, please.

### *Middle East Peace Efforts/Hamas/Hizballah*

*Q.* Mr. President, Anthony Merchak from MTV Lebanon.

*The President.* Good.

*Q.* I would like to ask you a question about the Middle East, regarding you——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* —that said that Hizballah and Lebanon is not in a good position, and Lebanon now is the final unresolved after Gaza and Syria. Given your assessment, like, what do you say for the Lebanese today? It's the Independence——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* —Day in Lebanon. And what is your next move to push toward the disarmament of Hizballah?

*The President.* Sure. Well, we are pushing for total disarmament of Hamas and, frankly, everybody else. And we actually have peace in the Middle East. As you know, the King of Saudi Arabia just left yesterday. We had some great meetings, and he's made a contribution toward the United States of more than a trillion dollars. We have now over \$20 trillion coming into—no country has ever had anything like that, not even close. If you go to \$2 trillion or \$1 trillion, it's a lot. We have \$20- or \$21 trillion.

I think that Hizballah has been a problem in Lebanon. Big problem. We're working with Lebanon. We're working with everybody in the Middle East. That's another thing I think we have in common. We want to see peace in the Middle East. And we actually have now, for the first time, peace in the Middle East after 3,000 years, and now we're going to refine it. And I think you're going to see some very positive things happen.

*Q.* There is a potential to invite the Lebanese President—

*The President.* Oh, sure.

*Q.* —to meet you to the White House?

*The President.* Oh, I would do that. Absolutely. And if the mayor would like to be here for that meeting, because I know he feels very strongly. I think you feel very, very strongly about peace in the Middle East. I think it's—

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* We desperately want it. And that's something that I shared with the President, that when I spoke to New Yorkers who had voted for the President last November on Hillside Avenue and Fordham Road, I asked them, "Why?" I heard again and again two major reasons. One was that they wanted an end to forever wars. They wanted an end to the taxpayer dollars we had funding violations of human rights. And they wanted to address the cost-of-living crisis. And I appreciated the chance to discuss both of those things.

*The President.* He said a lot of my voters actually voted for him—

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* One in ten.

*The President.* —and I'm okay with that.

*Q.* Mr. Trump, I have this hat as well from—

*The President.* I'll do that. I'll sign it. I'll—

*Q.* Yes. For Make Lebanon Great Again.

*The President.* Give it to me, I'll sign it in a minute. That's pretty good.

[*At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

### *Immigration Enforcement Actions*

*Q.* Mr. President, you've threatened to send Federal troops to New York City. You both have differences when it comes to ICE agents—

*The President.* Right.

*Q.* —in New York City. Mr. Mamdani, you've called ICE a "rogue Government entity." I wonder how you reconcile your differences on both of those issues.

*The President.* Well, I think we're going to work them out. And I think that if we have known murderers and known drug dealers and some very bad people, you know, we want to get them out.

And the mayor wants to have peace. We discussed this at great length, actually, maybe more than anything else. He wants to have a safe New York. Ultimately, a safe New York is going to be a great New York. If it's not safe, no matter how well we do with pricing and with anything else—we can talk about anything you want. If you don't have safe streets, it's not going to be a success.

So we're going to work together. We're going to make sure that if there's—there are horrible people there, we want to get them out. I think he wants to get them out maybe more than I do. So we'll work together. We discussed it at great length.

Yes, please.

### *Consumer Prices*

*Q.* Yes. Two questions, if I may. One for you, Mr. President, on BBC in a second. But first of all, for the mayor-elect, you're both from different parts of the political spectrum. You're both populists, though, and I just wonder to what extent the President's campaign style, his techniques, his social media use inspired any part of your campaign.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Well, I actually told the President that, you know, so much of the focus of our campaign has been on the cost-of-living crisis. And when we asked those New Yorkers who had voted for the President, when we saw an increase in his numbers in New York City, that came back to the same issue: cost of living, cost of living, cost of living. And they spoke about the cost of groceries, the cost of rent, the cost of Con Ed, the cost of childcare. And too often, politicians are looking to lecture to New Yorkers what they should care about as opposed to listen.

And when we spoke to those voters who voted for President Trump, we heard them speak about cost of living. We focused on that same cost of living. And that's where I am really looking forward to delivering for New Yorkers in partnership with the president on the affordability agenda.

*The President.* And I think we have to work a little bit—we talked about Con Edison. We have to work a little bit on getting the prices because, you know, we've gotten fuel prices way down, but it hasn't shown up in Con Edison. And we're going to have to talk to them. You know—

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Yes.

*The President.* —if we're saying sending them fuel at a much lower price than it was a year ago, which is true, we have to get Con Edison to start lowering their rates a little bit.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Absolutely.

### *Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom*

*Q.* And if I may, last week you told me you were pushing ahead with your plans to sue the BBC for up to \$5 billion. You're going to speak to Prime Minister Starmer as well. Is there any progress or any updates on those issues?

*The President.* Well, we get along very well with the Prime Minister. We made a deal with the U.K. I like him. He's a fine person.

And you know, I think they have some big energy problems. You know, they've got windmills all over the place. They're going to have to start using other methods, because their energy is out of control—talking about in the U.K. It's out of control. And he's got that problem. He's got a big immigration problem, as you know, and he's got a big energy problem. And we talk about it. He's a good man.

*Q.* Have you had a chance to talk——

*The President.* The Prime Minister is a good man.

*Q.* Have you had a chance to speak this week?

*The President.* I haven't spoken this week.

### *Ukraine/Russia/The President's Foreign Policy*

*Q.* Mr. President, have you spoken to President Zelenskyy, or do you intend meet with him——

*The President.* Who?

*Q.* ——President Zelenskyy about your plan. Are you going to meet with him?

*The President.* I've spoken with their people. We have a plan.

It's horrible what's happening. It's a war that should have never happened. It would have never happened if I was President. And it's a shame. And I thought they should have acted quicker. But it's a cold winter, and a lot of the—you talk about utilities, but a lot of the big energy-producing plants have been under attack, to put it mildly—to put it nicely.

Yes, we have a way of getting peace, or we think we have a way of getting peace. He's going to have to approve it. Just so sad. So many people. You know, last month, they lost 25,000 soldiers. This is something—we haven't seen anything like this since the Second World War. And they're averaging 6- or 7,000 a week, between the two of them: dead soldiers. And it goes on and on.

And I think they're getting reasonably close, but it's—I don't want to predict. I would have said that would have been one of my early ones. I did eight peace deals of countries, including in India-Pakistan. You could even go—in fact, they're coming here in a week or two—go to the Congo and Rwanda. That was one—10 million people dead, and we worked something out on that. But so many.

And the one I thought would have been—for me, because I have a very good relationship with President Putin—I thought that would have been maybe quicker. But it's—it does take two to tango.

And now, you just see all the death. And, you know, it doesn't affect us, other than the fact that we don't want to see all those people dead. Really, it's on the other side of the ocean. It's a war that should have never happened. It did happen. I blame the person also sitting right behind this desk. This is a war that should have never happened, and it wouldn't have happened if I were President.

But we're trying to save a lot of lives. We're losing—they're losing 25—think of that—25,000 lives over the last short period of time. That's Ukrainian and Russian. And it's a shame.

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. I want to ask the mayor-elect about a House resolution—it just passed overwhelmingly—to condemn socialism, including with 86 Democrats—all of House Dem leadership and the minority leader, Hakeem Jeffries, despite his endorsement of you. What's your reaction to that?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I have to be honest with you: I focused very little on resolutions. Frankly, I've been focusing——

*Q.* It condemned socialism.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I understand. I think the focus is on the work at hand. I can tell you I am someone who is a Democratic Socialist. I've been very open about that. And I know there might be differences about ideology, but the place of agreement is the work that needs to be done to make New York City affordable. That's what I look forward to.

*Q.* And I want to clarify your answer to Steven Nelson. He asked about your comment calling the President a "fascist," and your answer was: "Both President Trump and I have been clear about our positions and our views." Are you affirming that you think President Trump is a fascist?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I've spoken about——

*The President.* That's okay. You can just say yes.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Okay. All right. Yes. [Laughter]

*The President.* It's easier. It's easier than explaining it. I don't mind.

### *Ukraine/Russia*

*Q.* And, Mr. President, I wanted to ask you also about this Ukraine plan.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* President Zelenskyy said today that his country would risk either giving up a partner or giving up its dignity. There's been criticism that this deal proposal——

*The President.* You mean he doesn't like it?

*Q.* It's unclear. He was sort of tenuous about it.

*The President.* Well, he'll have to like it. And if he doesn't like it, then, you know, they should just keep fighting, I guess. You know?

*Q.* The suggestion that he made, though, was that if he doesn't accept it, that the U.S. would pull back its support for Ukraine. Is that accurate?

*The President.* Well, at some point he's going to have to accept something. You know, he hasn't accepted. You remember, right in the Oval Office not so long ago, I said, "You don't have the cards."

Don't forget, I inherited this war. I would have never——this war never would have happened. I inherited this war. And I thought he should have made a deal a year ago, 2 years ago. The ultimate deal would have been if it never started. That would have been the good deal. That could have been done too if you had the right President, but you didn't have the right President.

### *Affordability Issues*

*Q.* Mr. President, the cost of living is something that you and Mr. Mamdani seem to agree on.

*The President.* Right.

*Q.* Democrats have run New York City for a long time, Mr. Mamdani. Do you see Democrat policy, specifically, as being a problem? And I'd like that be a question that both of you could answer. In New York City.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Look, I think that there are many things in our city where we have to own the responsibility of it, things that existed long before the President was the President. And those are also——part of the message of our campaign was to take on a broken politics of the past. And I ran against a number of candidates who represented different versions of that past.

And what we found time and again is that working people were left behind in the politics of our city. And what we're looking to do is put those people right back at the heart of our politics so that we don't have a situation where we're in the wealthiest city in the history of the world and yet one in five can't even afford \$2.90 for a metro card.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*The President.* You know, we had some interesting conversation, and some of his ideas, really, are the same ideas that I have. But a big thing on cost. You know, the new word is "affordability." Another word is just "groceries." You know, it's sort of an old-fashioned word, but it's very accurate.

And they're coming down. They're coming down high. They were—you know, we had—both of us—we had the highest inflation in the history of our country, the last 4 years, under the Biden administration. And we've got inflation down now to a normal number. It's going to go even a little bit lower than that.

Katie [Katie Pavlich, NewsNation], do you have something in the back?

*Law Enforcement in New York City*

*Q.* Yes, Mr. President. Thank you so much. Mr. Mamdani often talks about New York City being covered by international law, that they will follow international law. Doesn't often talk about the U.S. Constitution. What is your response to that?

*The President.* Well, I don't know what you're referring to in terms of—it can be covered by international law and local law. It's covered by a lot of laws, and—but it's covered by U.S. law. Are you referring to anything in particular?

*Q.* He just says that they're a city that endorses and enforces international law. Is that at odds with U.S. law?

*The President.* No, I don't know. Would you want to add—do you want to respond to any of those?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Yes, I think what I've shared with the President is our desire to not only follow the laws of our own city, laws that protect New Yorkers, but also a desire for consistency in our politics across the board. And that's something that we've talked about—

*The President.* Yes.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* —and something that I know many New Yorkers want.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Q.* Will you work with ICE then? Will you work with ICE then?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* We discussed ICE and New York City, and I spoke about how the laws that we have in New York City allow for New York City government to speak to the Federal administration for about 170 serious crimes. The concerns that many New Yorkers have are around the enforcement of immigration laws on New Yorkers across the five boroughs, and most recently, we're talking about a mother and her two children and how this has very little to do with what that is.

*The President.* What we did is, we discussed crime more than ICE, per se. We discussed crime. And he doesn't want to see crime, and I don't want to see crime. And I have very little doubt that we're not going to get along on that issue. He wants to—and he said some things that were very interesting and very interesting as to housing construction. And wants to see houses go

up. He wants to see a lot of houses created and a lot of apartments built, et cetera. And you know, I—we actually are—people would be shocked, but I want to see the same thing.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*The President.* Please. Jack [Jack Posobiec, One America News Network].

*Q.* Yes, Mr. President, I wanted to know: One of the policies as well that Mayor-elect Mamdani talked a number of times about on the campaign was shifting the tax burden for property taxes from what he called minority communities to White-based communities and putting more taxes on White people.

I also noticed that in your acceptance speech, you didn't mention——

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Mr. President, I can——

*The President.* Go ahead.

*Q.* ——didn't mention anything about——

*The President.* I'd rather have you answer. *[Laughter]*

*Q.* ——America or Christians or white people in general, and so I didn't know if that was some—one of the policies that you guys had spoken about.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* We focused on affordability. We focused on the cost-of-living crisis.

What I will say is that I am very much interested in property tax reform, because what we see right now in New York City is a system that is so inequitable that it can't even stand up in court. And the President and I spoke about the importance of not only building more housing but also making sure that regulation of housing is something that is manageable to actually get through and not the cause of yet another weight that we see in our city.

*Q.* But to be clear, you're continuing this idea of race-based property taxes.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* No, to be very clear——

*Q.* It's what you said.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* No, the——

*Q.* Yes, it is.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* The use of the term was a description of neighborhoods, not a description of intent.

*Q.* So you intend to tax the whiter neighborhoods more?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* No, we intend to create a fair property tax system because we want a New York City that is not only fair and equitable but also one that every New Yorker can afford.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*The President.* Please, go ahead.

### *Federal Funding for New York City*

*Q.* Mr. Mamdani, anti-Israel protesters just targeted a synagogue in New York. Are you concerned about Jewish New Yorkers feeling welcome and safe in the city?

And, President Trump, you've threatened to cut off Federal funding to New York City. What policies would prompt you to do that? Would that be city-run grocery stores? Would it be something else?

*The President.* Well, I think if we didn't get along, whether it's cut off or just make it a little bit difficult or not give as much. We want to see—I use the term—we don't want good money going after bad. And we just—we don't want that to happen. I don't think that's going to happen. I did say, you know, subject to what policies are being said.

We had a meeting today that actually surprised me. He wants to see no crime. He wants to see housing being built. He wants to see rents coming down. All things that I agree with.

Now, we may disagree how we get there. The rent coming down, I think one of the things I really gleaned very, very much today. He'd like to see them come down, ideally by building a lot of additional housing.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Yes.

*The President.* That's the ultimate way. He agrees with that and so do I. But if I read the newspapers and the stories, I don't hear that. But I hear—I heard him say it today, and I think that's a very positive step.

No, I don't expect—I expect to be helping him, not hurting him. A big help, because I want New York City to be great.

Look, I love New York City. It's where I come from. I spent a lot of years there. Now I'm right here. We took a big setback with a mayor that we had named de Blasio. I thought he was a tremendous setback for the city.

I think this mayor can do some things that are going to be really great.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Yes, okay, how about you?

*Q.* Thank you.

*The President.* Go ahead please.

### *The President's View of Mayor-Elect Mamdani*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President, you're a billionaire. You have a different address nowadays than you used to, but you used to call New York City home. Would you feel comfortable living in New York City under a Mamdani administration?

*The President.* Yes, I would. I really would, especially after the meeting. Absolutely.

*Q.* What makes you comfortable?

*The President.* We agree on a lot more than I would have thought. I think he's—I want him to do a great job, and we'll help him do a great job. You know, he may have different views, but in many ways—you know, we were discussing when Bernie Sanders was out of the race, I picked up a lot of his votes, and people had no idea, because he was strong on not getting ripped off in trade and lots of other things that I've practiced and have been very successful on: tariffs, a lot of things.

Bernie Sanders and I agreed on much more than people thought. And when he was put out of the race—I think quite unfairly, if you want to know the truth—many of the Bernie Sanders voters voted for me, and I felt very comfortable, frankly, in seeing that and saying that. And, you know, just turned out to be a statistical truth.

But, no, I feel very comfortable. I would be—I would feel very, very comfortable being in New York, and I think much more so after the meeting.

Yes, please.

*Mayor-Elect Mamdani's Transportation Choices*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. I have a question for you, but a very quick one to the mayor. Why did you fly here? Aren't trains greener?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I'll use every form of transit, and I want to make sure that they're all affordable in New York City. And that's why making busses fast and free is a centerpiece of our campaign.

*The President.* Did you——

*Q.* There is a bus that goes——

*The President.* Well, but—I know, but if he flew, that's a lot quicker too, in all fairness. [Laughter]

*Q.* Your time is important.

*The President.* No, I mean he's working very hard. For him to be—that's a long—that's a very—that's a very long drive. I'll stick up for you. You know, the plane takes you 30 minutes, and driving takes a long time.

*U.S. Coast Guard*

*Q.* And, Mr. President, I was wondering if you could clear up some confusion around a Washington Post report. There is this explosive report that the Coast Guard is no longer going to characterize swastikas and nooses as hate symbols. DHS called that a "lie" and "fake" news. Can you clear up——

*The President.* I don't know anything about it. When was this written?

*Q.* I think yesterday.

*The President.* Well, look, the Coast Guard is an incredible group of people. I know them very well. We just ordered a lot of new Coast Guard cutters. Beautiful. The most magnificent ship. They look like yachts with lots of guns on them.

So I don't know. I haven't seen any report like that, but certainly, we want them to remain a great force, and they are.

*Q.* Mr. President, you are a peacemaker, and you did the peace in all the 9 months——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* ——around the world. I would like to ask Mr. Mamdani: You've accused the U.S. government of committing genocide in Gaza while President Trump was working on peace. Why that?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I've spoken about the Israeli Government committing genocide, and I've spoken about our government funding it. And I shared with the President in our meeting about the concern that many New Yorkers have of wanting their tax dollars to go towards the benefit of New Yorkers and their ability to afford basic dignity.

And what we see right now is, we're in the ninth consecutive year of more than 100,000 schoolchildren being homeless in our city, and there's a desperate need not only for the following of human rights, but also the following through on the promises we've made New Yorkers. And I appreciated the meeting we had and the work that we can do.

*Q.* But do you agree that President Trump did do a peace and he worked hard to make the peace? Because he worked hard to do the peace in the Middle East and everywhere. What—do you agree with that?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I appreciate all efforts towards peace. And I shared with President Trump that when I spoke to Trump voters on Hillside Avenue—including one of whom was a pharmacist that spoke about how President Trump's father actually went to that pharmacy not too far from Jamaica Estates—that people were tired of seeing our tax dollars fund endless wars.

And I also believe that we have to follow through on the international human rights. And I know that still today those are being violated, and that continues to be work that has to be done no matter where we're speaking of.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

#### *Democratic Party/The President's View of Mayor-Elect Mamdani*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. Do you view the mayor-elect as the true leader of the Democrat Party? And do you think Leader Schumer and Leader Jeffries, you know, have to follow his lead?

*The President.* Well, look, I hope they have great leaders. This is a man that, right now, I think, is focused on New York City. I really think he has a chance to do a great job. We're going to help him, but I really think he has a chance to do a great job.

But I'll let you answer that. Do you consider yourself the leader of the Democrats? I think it's more appropriate for him.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I consider myself the next mayor of New York City, and I keep my horizons firmly on New York City. And I appreciate the meeting the President, which focused, again, on the five boroughs and whether New Yorkers could afford to live there.

*The President.* By the way, being the mayor of New York City is a big deal.

*Q.* Absolutely.

*The President.* I always said, you know, one of the things I would have loved to be some day is the mayor of New York City. Being the mayor of New York—and especially now, because I think you're at a—really a turning point, one way or the other. It can go great, or it can go in a different direction, and I think you really have a chance to make it great.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Appreciate it.

*Q.* Mr. President, you say you love New York City. Mr. Mamdani, does New York City love President Trump?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* New York City loves a future that is affordable. And I can tell you that there were more New Yorkers who voted for President Trump in the most recent Presidential election because of that focus on cost of living, and I'm looking forward to working together to deliver on that affordability agenda.

*The President.* And a lot of—I got a lot of votes. One more. Go ahead. One or two more. Go ahead.

*Q.* One more—

*The President.* I tell you, the press has eaten this thing up. You know, I've had a lot of meetings with the heads of major countries. Nobody cared. This meeting that—you people have gone crazy—you know, outside, you have hundreds of people waiting. This is just a small, little group. For some reason, the press has found this to be a very interesting meeting. The biggest people in the world, they come over from countries, nobody cares. But they did care about this meeting, and it was a great meeting.

Go ahead.

### *The President's View of Mayor-Elect Mamdani*

*Q.* Yes, Mr. President, I was going to ask you exactly that. Why do you think there's so much more—you know, so much excitement around this than even some foreign leaders?

*The President.* Because I think he's different. All right? I think he's different, and that can be in a very positive way. But I think he's different than—you know, your typical guy runs, wins, becomes mayor maybe, and nothing exciting. Because he has a chance to really do something great for New York.

New York is at a very critical point. And he does need the help of the Federal Government to really succeed, and we're going to be helping him. But he's different than, you know, your average candidate. He came out of nowhere. I said—he has a great campaign manager standing over there. He came out of—he came out of nowhere. What, did you start off at one or two? And then—

I watched. I said, "Who is this guy?" He was at 1, then he was at 3, then he was at 5, then he was at 9, then he went up to 17. I said, "Hmm, that's getting a little bit interesting." Right? And then all of a sudden, he wins a primary that nobody expected he was going to win. It's a great tribute. I mean, it's an amazing thing that he did.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* And I'll just—sorry, I'll just add one thing to what the president said, is—one thing I also appreciated is—in our meeting to appreciate a portrait of FDR and the incredible work that was done with the New Deal. And also, in thinking about what it can look like when the Federal Government and New York City government work together to deliver on affordability, it can be transformative.

*The President.* You know, we have a great portrait of FDR that I found in the vaults, that was missing for years. I found it and I put it up. He's a Democrat, to the best of my knowledge. He's a Democrat. And when the mayor saw that portrait, he said, "Sir, do you mind if I have a picture taken by that portrait"—it's an amazing portrait.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* It is. It is.

*The President.* I hope the picture comes out good. But it's an amazing portrait in the Cabinet Room. So he's a big fan of the New Deal, I guess, and of FDR.

Yes, ma'am.

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. You said that you both spoke about crime.

*The President.* Yes.

### *New York Police Department*

*Q.* There are many police officers set to come off the rolls at the end of this year in New York City. Are you going to allow those police to be replaced with police officers—actual cops? And are you going to require that that happens? Would there be some consequence if the staffing—

*The President.* Well, I hope it happens. But again, that's going to be, ultimately, the mayor's decision.

*Q.* What's your answer?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Is that I look forward to delivering public safety with the NYPD. And I've said over the course of our campaign that we have the number of police officers today.

*Q.* What's that number?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* They are the ones—that's budgeted about 35,000 head count. And I think the key thing is that we have to make it easier for police to focus on police work, not ask them to respond to 200,000 mental health calls a year.

*Q.* So is that a reduction from what you're at right now? Are you committing to maintaining the same level of cops?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I've committed over the course of the campaign to maintain the 35,000. That's the head count that we had through the campaign.

*Q.* And not replace them with case workers, social workers?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* No, I've said that's the head count that we want. What we need to do is make sure they can focus on serious crime.

*The President.* And he just retained a great Police Commissioner, I believe. Right?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Yes. Yes, we did.

*The President.* If the——

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Commissioner Tisch.

*The President.* If the newspapers are correct.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* That one they're correct about.

*The President.* He retained, I think, somebody that is a—she's good friend of some of the people in my family—of Ivanka. And they say she's really good, really competent. And he just retained her. So that's a good sign.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

#### *The President's Willingness To Work With Mayor-Elect Mamdani*

*Q.* Are there still topics that you see the two of you disagreeing on in the future? And do you think you'll have more meetings like this?

*The President.* There will be topics that we disagree on. I think we'll probably come to a conclusion. And ultimately, he'll convince me, or I'll convince him. You know, it's for the good of New York. Ultimately, it's for the good of New York. I don't care about affiliations or parties or anything else. I want to see—if this city could be unbelievable, if he could be a spectacular success, I'd be very happy.

*Q.* Do you think you guys will meet more in the future, too?

*The President.* Say it?

*Q.* Do you think you'll meet again in the future, you know, throughout the administration, the both of you?

*The President.* I think we will. I think we will. I hope we do. I enjoyed the meeting. We had a great meeting.

Please.

#### *Representative Elise M. Stefanik*

*Q.* Mr. President, Republican Elise Stefanik has campaigned multiple times by calling Zohran Mamdani a "jihadist." Do you think you're standing next to a jihadist right now in the Oval Office?

*The President.* No, I don't. But she's out there campaigning. And you know, you say things sometimes in a campaign.

*Q.* Isn't that sort of divisive?

*The President.* She's a very capable person. But——

*Q.* Isn't that a kind of label?

*The President.* ——you'd really have to ask her about that. But no, I don't particularly—I think—I met with a very—I met with a man who's a very rational person. I met with a man who wants to see—really wants to see New York be great again. And I can say "again," because New York was great.

You know, when I came down to Washington initially, the city was so hot. It was doing great. We were having some telltale signs of problems. We had a mayor that was not doing a great job. But still, it was moving along. And it went bad. It really went, you know, pretty bad.

And he can—I think it's been at lower points, but it went pretty bad. I think he can bring it back. Now, the question is: Will he bring it back all the way? Will it—will he bring it back greater than ever before? Which is—I guarantee that's his wish. I think he wants to make it greater than ever before.

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* I agree.

*The President.* And if he can, we'll be out there cheering. I'll be cheering for him. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody.

*Q.* Is there a reason that you chose not to answer the question about synagogue protesting and Jewish safety?

*Mayor-elect Mamdani.* Oh no, I care very deeply about Jewish safety, and I look forward to rooting out anti-Semitism across the five boroughs and protecting Jewish New Yorkers and every New Yorker who calls the city home.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 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; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.; Sen. Bernard Sanders, in his capacity as a 2016 Democratic Presidential candidate; and Maya Handa, campaign manager for Mayor-elect Mamdani. Reporters referred to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; President Joseph Aoun of Lebanon. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on November 24.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Mayor-elect Zohran K. Mamdani of New York City, meeting with President; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* de Blasio, Bill; Handa, Maya; Mamdani, Zohran K.; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Sanders, Bernard; Starmer, Keir; Stefanik, Elise M.; Tisch, Jessica S.; Trump, Ivanka M.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

*Subjects:* 2024 Presidential election; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Housing, affordability and access; Inflation; Israel-Hamas cease-fire agreement implementation; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary organization; Middle East, regional integration and security;

Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Saudi Arabi, Crown Prince; Tariffs; U.S. Coast Guard; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; United Kingdom, Prime Minister; United Kingdom, trade with U.S.

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