

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

**Remarks During a Video Conference and Question-and-Answer Session With
United States Servicemembers and an Exchange With Reporters in Palm Beach,
Florida**

November 27, 2025

The President. I assume we're on and everybody sees us. I see you. A lot of great-looking faces. Am I correct? Everybody is on, right? If you are, wave. If you're not, just—you can leave and go have turkey. *[Laughter]* Good. I think everyone is waving.

Thank you very much, and I'm honored to speak with so many incredible members of the U.S. military and to wish all of you a very happy Thanksgiving.

Attack Against National Guard Servicemembers in the District of Columbia

Before we begin, I want to express the anguish and the horror of our entire nation at the terrorist attack yesterday in our Nation's Capital, in which a savage monster gunned down two servicemembers in the West Virginia National Guard who were deployed as part of the DC Task Force, which has done such an incredible job. I mean, until yesterday, we literally had no incidents for many months. It was the safest place imaginable. And this is a different kind of crime. This is a really bad crime.

Millions of Americans are praying for those heroes and their families. And I must unfortunately tell you that just seconds before I went on right now, I heard that Sarah Beckstrom of West Virginia, one of the Guardsmen that we're talking about—highly respected, young, magnificent person—started service in June of 2023, outstanding in every way—she's just passed away. She's no longer with us. She's looking down at us right now.

Her parents are with her. This just happened. She was savagely attacked. She's dead. Not with us. Incredible person. Outstanding in every single way, in every department. That's horrible.

As you know, the other young man is fighting for his life. He's in very bad shape. He's fighting for his life. And hopefully, we'll get better news with respect to him.

And the monster that did this is also in serious condition, but we won't even talk about him.

As you may know, DHS has confirmed that the suspect is an Afghan national, flown here by the previous administration, who was such a bad administration.

And I have a picture of a plane. This is what it looked like when they came in.

[At this point, the President held up a printout of a photograph of a crowded cargo plane.]

It was total bedlam. Do you remember that period of time? Total bedlam. People crammed onto the plane. And the toughest, meanest, most capable physically got on the plane, not the people that we were looking for or that they wanted to bring in.

Here's a picture for you. Just take a look at that plane. Standing on top of each other and sitting on top of each other. This is what we had under the Biden administration. That whole thing should have never, ever happened. They should have left from a different base. They should have left from Bagram, as you know, and it would have been a much different story.

But they didn't do that, and this was a—this was just a route, just a terrible situation.

This heinous atrocity reminds us that we have no greater national security priority than ensuring that we have full control over the people that enter and remain in our country.

For the most part, we don't want them. They come in illegally, have a lot of problems. Their countries force them in because their countries are smart. They don't want them. "Let's give them to the Americans to take care of." They come out of jails, in many cases, mental institutions. They're gang members. They're drug dealers. We don't want them.

Video Conference With United States Servicemembers

Many of the servicemembers on this call today are engaged in crucial aspects of that mission. And to each and every one of you, I just want to thank you so much. Incredible people. You make this sacrifice like few others understand. A lot of them don't even understand it. And you're keeping America safe and free. Our military is strong.

My first term, I rebuilt our military—all aspects of our military. And in Afghanistan, we actually gave up a big chunk, but relatively—as much as it seemed like it's small compared to what we bought and to what we have and to what we're buying.

We're spending over a trillion dollars this year on our military. We have a military—the best in the world. We make the best equipment in the world, and we have the best people in the world.

So joining us this evening are six units deployed across our hemisphere representing every branch of the United States Armed Forces. First, I want to thank the members of Army's legendary 101st Airborne Division—you know, I've heard about that for—since I was a little boy—the Screaming Eagles, calling in from Fort Huachuca in Arizona. And you're led by Major General David Gardner, a real tough cookie and great general. I appreciate it. General Gardner.

The 101st has done an outstanding job leading the Task Force—Joint Task Force at our southern border. And we have nobody coming in. They're not coming in. Under Biden, they were coming in by the millions. Now we have nobody coming in. We have a strong border. Nobody talks about it anymore. I'm not given credit for anything, just like you guys are not given credit for anything. *[Laughter]* We do the greatest job. But that's all right.

They don't talk about the border anymore because—you know why? Nobody comes in. We had 9 months now where we had nobody coming in. Zero. And this is being fed—this is—the people that do this are—they tend to be on the left. They'd love to say millions of people came in through Trump, and they actually said nobody came—even I find that hard to believe, but they literally are saying nobody came in. And I hope people appreciate the job that you've done and the job that we've all done.

But we're stopping the invasion of our country. We stopped it cold. And if you remember, Biden said: "I need new legislation. I need new"—you didn't need legislation. I didn't get legislation. What you needed was a new president.

So, with your help, we now have the most secure border in American history. It's the single most secure border in American history. So I just want to thank you. And the 101st—I want to thank you very much. The job you've done is amazing, working with all of our great people.

We also have the men and women of the U.S. Navy serving as part of the *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group under Captain Christopher Farricker. And they're on board the USS *Iwo Jima* in the Caribbean Sea.

Working right by their side are members of the 22d Marine Expeditionary Unit, led by Colonel Tom Trimble. Thank you very much. I think you—wave to me because I can see you then. Let's see. There you are. Handsome people. They're beautiful-looking people. Thank you. Like central casting—I could put you in a movie right this second, and—the three of you—and I think we'd have a top-grossing movie. You don't have people like you in Hollywood.

Part of the 22d MEU is also serving in Puerto Rico. The 3d Battalion, 6th Marines Devil Dogs, led by Major Ross Gilchrist. Where is Major? Where are you? Hello, Major. Another central casting—is everybody central casting? It's all—like, they're all handsome, tough guys. I don't know what's going on here.

But the Navy, Marine Corps team is currently helping to defend our country, protect our interests, and decimate—literally decimate terrorists. The job you've done is incredible.

I also want to thank you for your amazing work to quickly deliver lifesaving aid to Jamaica in the aftermath of the recent hurricane, which was devastating. Thank you very much. Appreciate it, Major, and everybody. Appreciate it.

Next up are the airmen serving with one of the most feared bomber forces in the world. The U.S. Air Force's 7th Bomb Wing at Dyess Air Force Base in Texas, under the auspices and leadership of Colonel Seth Spanier. Colonel—where are you, Colonel? Colonel, let's see here—you're right there. Thank you, Colonel.

All of you are backbone of America, and you really are the backbone of America's air power. And in recent weeks, you've been working to deter Venezuelan drug traffickers, of which there are many—of course, there aren't too many coming in by sea anymore; if—you probably noticed that—from sending their poisons into the United States, where they kill hundreds of thousands of people a year.

But we're going to take care of that situation. We're already doing a lot. We've almost stopped. It's about 85 percent stopped by sea. You probably noticed that. People aren't wanting to be delivering by sea, and we'll be starting to stop them by land also. The land is easier, but that's going to start very soon. We warned them: Stop sending poison to our country.

We also have the 18th Space Defense Squadron at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, headed by Captain Ryan Weber. Captain, where are you? Captain? Thank you very much, Captain. Great job.

Every day, you maintain American dominance on the high frontier. You're the guardians of one of the most important domains we have to protect, and you make us very, very proud of the job you do, Captain. Thank you.

Finally, we have the great men of the Coast Guard. And I have to tell you, they have a lot of women in the Coast Guard now too, and we're happy about that. United States Coast Guard aboard the Coast Guard Cutter *Forrest Rednour* with Lieutenant Commander Alexis Wilde. Alexis, where are you? Hi, Alexis. Alexis Wilde at the helm.

And I'm told that, just last month, the *Forrest Rednour* intercepted a boat with lots and lots of illegal aliens off the coast of California—it was loaded—and then turned them over to the Customs and Border Patrol. And they did it so professionally. The people were very, very impressed with the job you did, Commander. So thank you very much. That was a great job. And thank you for defending our maritime borders with skill and with pride. And the job you do—amazing.

So I want to thank all of you again for your amazing service to our country. God bless our warriors. God bless our heroes from West Virginia National Guard. What a group. I love West Virginia.

And I want to wish everybody a very happy Thanksgiving. We have a country that we can be very proud of.

I was with the King of Saudi Arabia, and he said: "You know, sir, last year you had a country that was a dead country. We thought it was dead. And now you have the hottest country anywhere in the world." And it's true.

And we're going to be having close to \$20 trillion invested. That's record-setting by 10 times. Nobody's ever had anything like it. We're building plants. We're building factories, auto factories, AI plants.

The whole thing with artificial intelligence—I don't know the word. I've never liked the word "artificial." I don't know what artificials are. I think they ought to change the name. I've always said that's a lousy name to have—artificial anything—but it's a big business. And we're building more. We're leading China by a lot. We're leading everybody by a lot.

We make the best military equipment in the world, and they're ordering it at numbers that nobody's ever seen before.

But we're doing better than we've ever done before. We have—the stock markets just hit, for the 48th time, an alltime high during the 9 months that I've been here—a little less—more than 9 months now. And so, we have the hottest stock market ever. That's a big thing for 401(k)s. And all of the millions of people with jobs and 401(k)s, everybody participates in that. But it's 48 times in a little bit less than 10 months. Forty-eight times we hit an alltime high.

And I think we're going to continue because when these factories that we're building—from all over the world they're coming—because of tariffs, I think, because of November 5, the election result—but because of tariffs.

And we're taking in hundreds of billions of dollars like we've never done before. And some of that's going to go back in the form of a, sort of, dividend to our people, but much of it's going to go toward reducing debt. And what it really goes for—and even better than the money we're taking in is the fact that nobody is attacking our companies and taking them out, stealing them like they've been for many years. Because if they do that, they have to pay a tariff as they make products and sell them into our country.

So we made deals with Japan, we made deals with South Korea, we made deals with the European Union where they pay us hundreds of billions of dollars, and they participate. They're now building plants. Honda is building plants. And they're all—every car company from all over the world, virtually, is building plants now in the United States because they don't want to pay the tariffs. So there's never been anything quite like it. It's been amazing.

So we're taking in—think of it—hundreds of billions. Next year, it will be a trillion dollars or more. But we're taking in all this money, at the same time protecting our country, and we're respected again. They actually respect us, and they made the deals. I mean, they respect us, but they pay us—as an example, Japan is \$650 billion; South Korea, \$350 billion; European Union, \$950 billion. And they are building plants now in the United States because they don't want to pay tariffs.

So this is one of the biggest things economically that's never happened. Nobody's ever seen anything like it. And over the next couple of years, I think we'll substantially be cutting, and maybe cutting out completely, but we'll be cutting income tax. Could be almost completely cutting it because the money we're taking in is going to be so large.

And yet, other countries who have been ripping us off for many, many years—and many years, they've just been ripping us to shreds—China would take in \$600-, \$700 billion a year, rebuild their military. And now we have a fair deal with China. We just met with President Xi. We have a great relationship. We have a fair deal. We take in a lot of money in the form of tariffs.

But so many—even our friends. I mean, European Union, they're our friends. Japan, they're our friends. South Korea is our friends. They're now paying us hundreds of billions of dollars, and they're also paying tariffs to come in. We're not paying tariffs to go in there.

By the way, they're paying tariffs, but we're not. So that's a total reversal. But we are benefiting like they used to benefit against us, but we're benefiting even more.

So I just want to thank everybody for making all of this possible. Without you, what—you know, we don't have any defense. And, boy, do we have defense. We have the strongest military anywhere in the world. We make, as I said, the best equipment. But we have—more importantly, we have the strongest military anywhere in the world.

And you saw that with Iran, with those beautiful B-2 bombers. They totally obliterated the nuclear—potential nuclear supply of Iran, and they did it in the dark of night with no Moon, no light, no nothing. Early in the morning, they attacked. You couldn't see a thing. And every single bomb hit its mark. Every single bomb.

The Atomic Energy Commission said it was total obliteration. Remember when some of the fake news tried to say, "Well, maybe it wasn't as bad." Well, it was much worse than anybody thought. And I want to thank those pilots and all of the mechanics and all of the people that serviced and worked on the B-2 bombers.

We just ordered a lot more of them. And the reason we did is they were totally incredible, totally invisible. There was stealth. Nobody saw them. They knew they were coming, but they couldn't see them. And they dropped the bomb, and then one of the pilots—commanders said: "Skedaddle. Let's get the hell out of here."

But they dropped those bombs, and they loved doing it. They were so honored. They said to me when they came to the—I invited them all to the Oval Office, including the people that take care of the machines, because, you know, they flew 37 hours both ways—37 hours—and there wasn't a sputter from an engine. There wasn't a broken screw. There wasn't a problem. There wasn't a chipped piece of paint. It was a flawless mission.

I want to thank General "Razin" Caine for that and Pete Hegseth for that. But it was an unbelievable event.

We have a country that's so respected again, but when the pilots came to see me—and I gave them a medal, all of them. There were a lot of handsome people. They look like Tom Cruise, actually. It was very good casting. But I like Tom Cruise. The last of our movie stars, probably. But—although we're honoring Sylvester Stallone in a little while at the Kennedy Center, so I'm going to put him in that same category. We have Sylvester Stallone and Tom Cruise.

But I will tell you that they said: "For 22 years, sir, our predecessors and us wanted to make this attack." Twenty-two years, they wanted to make this attack, and they practiced it three times a year for 22 years, and no President gave them the approval to do it. "Until you came along, sir. We want to thank you."

I said, "Did you really enjoy it?" They said: "Sir, we loved it. We loved it." And these are brave men. These are from a different place than some of the people I know who aren't courageous. We have a lot of people that aren't courageous. These people were amazing, and the job they did.

So, with that, I'm going to ask Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Rockwood, who's a highly respected young man, to speak to you. And if you have any questions, I'll answer them, unlike Biden. He didn't take questions. But I take all the questions you want. You can ask me any damn question you want, and then we go and have a great Thanksgiving. Because I don't know about

you probably had your dinner already, but I didn't, and I know exactly what I'm going to have: turkey. Okay? *[Laughter]* I believe it's turkey.

So, Lieutenant Colonel, if you would, you take over. Go ahead.

Army Aide Lieutenant Colonel Charlie C. Rockwood, USA. Yes, sir. We're going to pass it over to Major General David Gardner from the United States Army.

Joint Task Force-Southern Border and 101st Airborne Division Commander Major General David W. Gardner, USA. Happy Thanksgiving, President Trump. This is Major General Dave Gardner, the commander of the 101st Airborne Division and your Joint Task Force-Southern Border.

The President. That's right.

Maj. Gen. Gardner. I appreciate saying I was tough. Everyone cheered. I assume that means they agreed with you. *[Laughter]*

We are headquartered in Arizona. The servicemembers with me today represent over 10,000 deployed along the 2,000 miles of our border from San Diego to the Gulf of America. We support Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Border Patrol. And as you said, Mr. President, illegal aliens entering our country is at a historic low thanks to our collective efforts.

The President. That's right.

Maj. Gen. Gardner. On the screen behind me, you may be able to see some of the images of us patrolling, reinforcing the border wall. And we're doing that 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including today, Thanksgiving.

Our soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen, guardians, and coast guardsmen were able to have fantastic Thanksgiving meals and engage in traditional football games against each other. We're doing well. We all appreciate you taking some time from your family to speak with us today. And thank you for your support, Mr. President, and happy Thanksgiving.

The President. Well, David, thank you very much. And one thing you said in the question or statement, probably—I like a statement even better than a question—but I like that because you appreciate what we're all doing together. We're partners. But you said the "Gulf of America"—*[laughter]*—and there's a thing that for, actually, 350 years—100 years older than us, Mexico—it was called Gulf of Mexico. And I would say to myself: Why are we calling it Gulf of Mexico when we have 92 percent of the frontage and they have—I'm a real estate person at heart—and they have 8 percent?

And I made that change. It was amazing. It took, literally, a matter of hours, and it was done. And nobody even—very rarely did they complain. We beat AP, Associated Press, very badly in a lawsuit. You know, they tried to get it stopped because they're not good Americans. I mean, who would want that stopped? But we beat them. As you saw, we beat them very badly in a lawsuit.

But other than that, I mean, we had no complaints, and everybody is happy with it, except Mexico. I wouldn't say they're thrilled, but they'll get over it.

But we now have the Gulf of America, David. The Gulf of— isn't that great? And I'm very proud of it, every time I see it. And now it's spoken of routinely. I saw it before. There was some event taking place down by Louisiana, and they said, "We're here at the Gulf of America." They're just talking about it, like, routinely now. They're not saying, like, "Gulf of America" and smiling. They're just routine. It's called, now, the Gulf of America. So I'm actually very glad you brought it up. That's another one of our many achievements.

So thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Maj. Gen. Gardner. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Great job.

Please.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Sir, before we go on, do you have any questions for the President?

Participant. Yes. Mr. President, this is Sergeant Major Anderson. I do have one question, sir.

The President. Yes, sir.

Army-Navy Football Game

Participant. If you were to place a wager between the Army and Navy football game——

The President. Oh—[laughter]——

Participant. ——who would you put your money on, sir?

The President. Oh. [Laughter] You know, David, I think you should dock him. That's a terrible question. [Laughter] That's a horrible—he'll get me in so much trouble. But I'll tell you what I will do: I'll be going—you know, you have—one of those teams is having a spectacular year, and one of them is—they're both doing well, but I'll be at the game, and I'm going to let you know right after the game who's going to win. [Laughter] That's going to be a good game, and you're going to be watching it.

I love it. I'd—that's a place where we get a lot of cheers when we go in. You know, we got—we won the military vote in the largest number ever gotten by a President by far, despite the lies that they said about me. You know, they make up stories, the lies. They're disgusting people.

But we won the military by the biggest vote in the history of our election. So I like the military, but I like the Navy, and I like the Army a lot. And I'm going to be at the game, and I don't know if you're going to be there. You're pretty far away. But we'll be thinking about—you know, I'll be thinking about that wise-guy question you just asked me. [Laughter]

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. All right, sir. With that, we're going to go over to Major Ross Gilchriest from United States Marine Corps.

6th Marines 3d Battalion Landing Team Commander Major Ross W. Gilchriest, USMC.
Good evening, Mr. President. The Marines and sailors in this room from Battalion Landing Team 3/6 are ready, capable, and lethal to support readiness and lethality in support of Operation Southern Spear.

We're here in Camp Santiago, Puerto Rico, conducting sustainment training. And recently we conducted a mobile training team, employing first-person-view attack drones, conducting two-day strikes and the first-ever three-night strikes in the history of the Department of War.

This represents a milestone in our combat lethality, increasing the capability of the Marine Corps in the joint service.

Soon, we're going to prepare to support counternarcotics operations in the ground, maritime, and air domains and respond to crisis and contingency operations to provide you options, Mr. President, in support of national security objectives to protect the homeland.

Marines and sailors of BLT 3/6, the Hellhounds, are ready. We're the first to fight and at the tip of the spear as an expeditionary force in readiness.

Thank you for your support, Mr. President. Semper Fidelis. Happy Thanksgiving.

The President. Well, thank you, Ross, and you people are just amazing. You do a fantastic—I knew every move. And every single thing you said, I know exactly what you did and who did it, and I want to just thank you. You were amazing.

And Border Patrol, and all of the people here—you know, Border Patrol, every single one of them, these are great people—ICE. You know, ICE gets not the credit they deserve. They are unbelievable, tough, smart, and they're unbelievable patriots.

So, Ross, thank you very much. You really have—

Maj. Gilchrest. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. —done a great job. We appreciate—we love working with you. Thank you.

Maj. Gilchrest. Thank you, Mr. President.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Before we go over to the Navy, do you have any questions for the president?

Amphibious Squadron Eight Commander Captain Christopher M. Farricker, USN. Good afternoon, sir. The only proper response to the colonel from Fort Huachuca is: "Go Navy. Beat Army." [Laughter]

The President. Okay, I've got to remember that. Thank you very much. They're going to have a great game.

Thank you very much.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. All right, sir. We're going to—

Capt. Farricker. Yes, sir.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. We're going to move over to Captain Chris Farricker from the United States Navy.

The President. Okay.

Capt. Farricker. Yes, sir. Sir, we're on board here, *Iwo Jima*. Proud commander of the U.S. *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Readiness Group, along with the 22nd MEU expeditionary. You already met my one brother from central casting, Colonel Tom Trimble. [Laughter]

My other brother is Colonel Rick "Shooter" Haley. Behind me is so—a few of the men and women who comprise the 10,000 sailors and Marines of our Iwo R team who are currently conducting maritime patrols against narcos in the Caribbean in defense of the homeland.

Colonel Rick Haley, USN. Yes, sir. As you know that we have also—besides the missions that you know about, sir, we also reinforce the Embassy in Haiti. We're getting engaged on a routine basis, both receiving fire from some of those gang members and returning fire defending that Embassy.

We've also opened up operations down here in the south, conducting expeditionary advanced base operations at Roosevelt Roads, where Major Ross Gilchrest and the team are currently training. We've also done, as you mentioned, Mr. President, humanitarian support to Jamaica. We're proud to be part of this Navy-Marine Corps team and be part of the defense of the homeland, sir.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much, and really great job. Would anybody—

Col. Haley. Sir, I'd like to—

The President. Yes, go ahead, please.

Col. Haley. The First Lady came down to North Carolina—

The President. Right.

Col. Haley. —last week and visited the marines and sailors—

The President. That's right.

Col. Haley. —at Camp Lejeune. And my wife and my daughter and my two sons were able to meet the First Lady—

The President. That's right.

Col. Haley. —and get a pic with her. She was really gracious, and we really appreciate the time that she spent with the Marines and sailors. That meant a whole lot to a whole lot of people down in North Carolina, sir.

The President. Well, thank you very much. And she had enjoyed it. And she mentioned that, meeting your family, and she said, "Those people are in good shape. They're in very good shape." I don't know if she's referring to me when she says that, because, I don't know—that could be a little slight. But she was very impressed with everything she saw. Thank you very much.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Sir, before we go to the Navy Captain Farricker, do you guys have any questions for the President?

Capt. Farricker. I do have one selfish one, sir. My daughter's ninth birthday is here in a few days. I was wondering if I could get a "Happy birthday, Catherine" from you, sir?

The President. And her first name is?

Capt. Farricker. Catherine, sir.

The President. Well, Catherine, you have a father who's a great hero and a great man and highly respected. Happy birthday and take good care of him. *[Laughter]* Thank you very much.

Capt. Farricker. Thanks, sir. Appreciate it.

The President. Say hello to her. Anybody back there have a question?

Capt. Farricker. I think that's it from us here, sir. Again, appreciate your time, and Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family.

Participant. Happy Thanksgiving, sir.

The President. Thank you all very much. Great. Have a great Thanksgiving. Thank you.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Sir, with that, we're going to go over to Colonel Seth Spanier from United States Air Force.

7th Bomb Wing Commander Colonel Seth Spanier, USAF. Happy Thanksgiving, Mr. President. I'm Colonel Seth Spanier, 7th Bomb Wing commander, and here with me, I have Lieutenant Colonel Brian Guyette, 28th Bomb Squadron commander; and Major Joseph Spada, our 28th Bomber Generation Squadron commander. And we're here representing the 4,000 men and women stationed at Dyess Air Force Base in Texas, employing the mighty B-1.

28th Bomb Squadron Commander Lieutenant Colonel Brian Guyette, USAF. Good evening, sir. The Bomb Wing hosts multiple B-1 squadrons that are responsible for everything from turning the world's best combat aviators to operational test in addition to projecting strength and lethality across the globe.

Recently, the Bomb Wing's combat squadron was forward-deployed to the Indo-Pacific, and the men and women that you see behind me were part of the 20th Bomb Squadron and fellow

squadrons that executed operations in the Caribbean and were responsible for demonstrating the latent combat capability of the training squadron, in addition to projecting credibility into the Caribbean on behalf of the long-range strike platform, the B-1B——

The President. Well, thank you——

Lt. Col. Guyette. ——that's currently off-station at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

The President. Thank you very much. And I don't know if you know: We have more planes on order in terms of dollars and planes itself. And they have a new one, the F-47.

And I didn't name that. It was named F-47. They think I named it. I didn't. They surprised me. But I hear it's stage six, and it's at a level that nobody's ever seen before.

But we have more planes on order right now and things in the works than we've ever had. So, from the Air Force's standpoint, I know you know exactly what's on order because we dealt with you and what you like, but we've never had so much—so many planes being built at one time, and we're reinvigorating everything.

I know the F-35 has been very good, and we're working on some maintenance is—maintenance issues to get some of them back sooner, as you know, because some of them are out. And rather than having them sit there, we're getting them fixed. Should have happened a long time ago. But we've never been in the position where we've ordered so many, and I think the Air Force has to be very happy about that.

Lt. Col. Guyette. Yes, sir. Absolutely.

The President. Good. Thank you. And if you have any questions, please, go ahead from your group.

Participant. Good evening, Mr. President, and happy Thanksgiving.

The President. Thank you.

The President's Most Difficult Obstacle To Overcome

Participant. I'm Senior Airman Laurent. I'm an intel analyst at the 28th Bomb Squadron. My question for you today is: What is the most memorable obstacle or hardship that you've encountered in your life, and how did this shape you to be the leader you are today?

The President. Wow, that's an interesting question. [Laughter] But I'll tell you, you know, in terms of obstacles, would be the weaponization of government by the previous administration. That was probably the biggest obstacle. I ran. I won by a lot. I ran a second time, I won by a lot. And I ran a third time, and it was too big to rig.

But the biggest was that. They went after a lot of great Americans. I was one of them. And I would say weaponization by my opponent was a disgrace to our Nation. And I would say it was the most difficult time, and we won.

And now I'm—you know, today I'm in Florida, but generally I'm in the White House, I'm in the Oval Office. So I look around and say, "Oh, well, couldn't have been that bad." But it was. It was a disgrace to our Nation, and it should never be allowed to happen again. And it's being looked at very strongly.

But it's a very interesting question. I don't know that anybody's ever asked me the question that way. But if you did, I would say it's the—it was the weaponization and illegal weaponization that they used where our Government attacked the President and the former president of the United States of America.

And I was fighting for you, not just for myself. I was fighting for you. I was fighting for everyone that I'm looking—all of those incredible patriots that I'm looking at, but the millions of people that are listening right now and the hundreds of millions of people in our country. And we fought and we won. But they're bad people.

So thank you. That's a great question. Thank you very much.

Participant. Thank you, sir.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Sir, with that——

Col. Spanier. Sir, one last one. If you could throw up——

The President. Yes.

Col. Spanier. ——a "chop," it's our—to the Mohawks. That's our squadron motto: "Chop."

The President. Oh, good. I love it. Chop. *[Laughter]* See, we're not allowed to do that anymore. You know, we're not allowed—you're not allowed to use the word "Indian" anymore. The only one that wants you to are the Indians. All right? *[Laughter]* I don't think you should ever change. I will never tell you to change. All right? It's great. And they're very proud of it, too, by the way.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Sir, we're going to turn over to Captain Ryan Weber from the Space Force.

The President. Okay.

18th Space Defense Combat Squadron Commander Captain Ryan Weber, USSF. Good evening, Mr. President. My name is Captain Ryan Weber, and I'm the commander of the 18th Space Defense Combat Squadron. Today with me, I have Delta Crew. They're working the holiday swing shift right now, which is led by Lieutenant Cunningham and Sergeant Jackson. We also have five orbital analysts with us today.

Our mission here at the 18th is space domain awareness, tracking everything to, in, and from space, whether that's a launch, satellite reentry, or maintaining the catalog—48,000 objects in space.

It's been a historical year for 2025. We've had over 273 space launches to this year, 174 of those being from the U.S., and we're just grateful for our newly operationally-accepted system to lead the way for the world in space domain awareness.

The President. Well, I know all about it because that was my baby, Space Force.

Capt. Weber. Yes, sir.

The President. So I can't say I have any favorites, because I don't want to do that, but I'll tell you, I have a real love for Space Force. And as you know, I did that. We put some very good people in because we were losing to China and Russia substantially, and now we're leading China and Russia substantially.

And as you know, Biden came in. He wanted to terminate Space Force. He thought it was funny. He thought it was so funny. The military didn't think it was funny, and he was met with a great force, and the force said, "You're not doing any—you're not doing this."

But I think it's going to go down as one of our most important—you know, it's—as technology goes. The things we're doing now in space are unbelievable, and I think it'll be one of the truly great things that this administration did. I did it in my last term, but we really had great

people there, and we're dominating space now. We're dominating it. We were losing it to both China and Russia at the time. We had no Space Force. And so, we created this incredible group of people. They came together, and they created something very special. And I'm very proud of all of you for being involved. It's going to be one of the most important things, I think, that I've ever done.

Thank you.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Ryan, before——

Capt. Weber. Thank you, sir.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. ——we move on to the postcard, does anybody from your team have a question for the President?

Future of the U.S. Space Force

Capt. Weber. The one question I would have, sir, is: What do you see for the future for the Space Force? How do you expect it to grow as we build out as a branch?

The President. Yes, I just think it's unlimited. I think it's, you know, in terms of technology, in terms of—you know, the others have been here for a long time, and Air Force has been—and I could have left it in the Air Force, but I really thought it had—it should have its own identity, and it works closely with the Air Force. But you wouldn't have had your own identity. And I don't think it was working doing it that way.

So we created—because of the importance, we created Space Force, and I think it's got unlimited growth potential, and maybe at a faster level than others, because they have been here. You know, they've seen it, and they're doing great, but you're a seedling. You're—you know, you're just at the beginning of your powers. It's going to be a unlimited future. Really, I feel that. And I'm—I think you agree with that, but it's going to be unlimited future. And thank you all for being involved. Very proud of you. Thank you.

Capt. Weber. Thank you, sir. On behalf of the 18th, thank you for your support, and happy Thanksgiving.

The President. Well, you have my support totally, and you too. Happy Thanksgiving. Thank you very much.

Capt. Weber. Thank you.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. Sir, to round it out, we're going to go over to Lieutenant Commander Alex Wilde, United States Coast Guard.

U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Alexis Wilde, USCG. Good evening, Mr. President. Lieutenant Commander, Alex Wilde, commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter *Forrest Rednour*. We're currently patrolling the southwest border off of the coast of California in support of Operation Border Trident to protect the maritime boundary. With a crew of 25, our fast-response cutter has contributed to mission success in securing the border, as you mentioned.

Last month alone, we had three at-sea interdictions and apprehended 45 illegal aliens. I'd like to recognize to my right the boarding team and pursuit team from our most recent interdiction. To my right, Lieutenant Junior Grade Fuller, Boatswain's Mate First Class Garcia-Cosby, Electrician's Mate First Class Araiza, Boatswain's Mate Third Class Gerharts, and Machinery Technician Second Class Samano.

We've had a real nice day, as you said. It's been pretty quiet on the water, to be honest. Our two culinary specialists gave us a real treat today for Thanksgiving by smoking two turkeys, and this evening, we'll be trying to have some trivia here on the mess deck.

The President. Well, I——

Lt. Comd. Wilde. We're truly grateful for this opportunity to speak with you today.

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you. You know, I've loved the Coast Guard for a long time. And more than anything else, all the lives you saved in Texas and various places, all of these places that got hit by the hurricanes and all of the different—you know, the storms—the big storms—the big water storms, as they call them, but mostly hurricanes.

The jobs you do, the way you go into those seas, I wouldn't want to do it. You want to do it, but I wouldn't want to do it. And I just want to thank you for that.

As you know, we've ordered a lot of Coast Guard cutters—brandnew, beautiful. The best machines in the world. The fastest, the best, the best maneuverability, they tell me. I said, "How's the speed and the maneuverability?" I'm a looks person. I wanted the hull to be perfect. I—you know, I sort of redesigned the hull a little bit. The hulls. But we ordered a lot, and we're ordering icebreakers, too, that you're going to be in charge of. We have 11 of them being built right now.

We had none. You know, we only have one in the whole country. Russia has 48. And we have one. And that's just ridiculous. So we're doing them in conjunction with Finland and some other people. And they make the big—you know, they're—they're known as the people that do, I guess, 90 percent of the icebreakers. So they have a great expertise.

But we're doing them also as a joint venture where they get to be built in this country. And they've already started. So we've ordered 11. You were going to build one, and the one was going to cost almost—almost as much as the 11, and every one of the 11 is much better than the one. So that didn't sound like a good deal.

So you know exactly what you're getting. You're getting the best icebreakers in the world—the top of the line—and they're going to be delivered very soon, actually. They're moving along very quickly. They're already—they're building them. And you'll end up with 11. But before we even start that, we're going to end up doing another 11 pretty soon.

So you're going to have a lot of icebreakers pretty soon, which is very important, I assume. Is that important for the Coast Guard? Because if it's not, I'll cancel the order immediately.
[Laughter]

Lt. Comd. Wilde. It's very important, Mr. President.

The President. Okay. Good. Then I won't cancel the order. That's good. You're going to have the best icebreakers there are. So it's really great. Very important to us. Thank you.

Any other questions?

Participant. Yes, Mr. President.

The President. Yes.

The President's Golf Game/Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Participant. I'm Petty Officer Araiza. My first question is, what is your true golf handicap, not according to fake news?

The President. Oh.

POI Araiza. And are you and President Biden going to play that golf match?

The President. I'd love to. I mean, I've invited him, but he doesn't want to show up.
[Laughter]

Look, I know a lot about golf. I've won 38 club championships, and I don't get to practice much. I won one last year. I won a club championship at a big club, beating a 27-year-old kid. I said, "You know, I'm decades older than you." But I said, "The fairway doesn't know how old you are as you walk up the middle, and he's in the rough."

And I've been a good golfer over the years. I won—when you win—you know, club championships are our majors. You know that most people can't play in them. They want—we're talking about no-strokes or anything else.

So I'm a very low handicap, and I've won 38 of them legitimately. Every one legitimately. It has to be legitimate, because you have a lot of people following you during club championships, as you know. So I guess I'm very—I've got to be right around scratch or better.

I beat a plus-three—that's three better—three below par, you know, if you look at it, for those that don't know—in the finals of the club championship last year, with all I was going through and with no practice.

So I'm a good golfer. Yes, I would have to say that. I want to be honest. I have to be honest. *[Laughter]* I played with Bryson DeChambeau. So, you know, the—breaking 50. And we had a good time. But a lot of people thought that was—that was a great ratings hit, and we had a lot of fun. But golf is great. It's sort of a microcosm of life.

And you have a lot of people talk, but they can't play like Biden. Biden can't hit a ball 30 yards, I'm telling you. I looked at his swing. *[Laughter]* He cannot hit a ball 30 yards. He said he was a six handicap. He said—that was the only thing that made me angry during the debate with him. *[Laughter]* He said he was a six. I said, "You're not a six." And he said, "Well, I'm an eight." I said: "That was quick. I picked up two." But he's not a hundred. He's not a hundred. So—but it's a great game. And I hope you guys get to play a little bit of it.

But frankly, I'm more excited about the icebreakers, if you want to know the truth. *[Laughter]* So, anyway, I want to thank you all. Great job. Coast Guard, great job. We're proud of you. You're going to have the best equipment in the world, and it's coming rapidly.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Lt. Comd. Wilde. Thank you for your support, Mr. President.

Lt. Col. Rockwood. So, that concludes the presentations. If you have any closing remarks, that will be it.

The President. Well, I do have closing remarks. I just want to say how proud I am. You look at the people that we just dealt with. These are the top people in our country. These are just beautiful people inside and out. They're brave. They're smart. They're brilliant.

And I just want to say it's an honor to be with you. It's an honor to be working with you. We have the strongest country we've ever had. We make the best equipment in the world. We have the best military in the world. Nobody can even come close, and everybody knows it.

And they respect us now again. A year ago, 2 years ago, 4 years ago, 3 years ago, they didn't respect us at all. They laughed at us. Nobody is laughing anymore.

So I just want to thank you all very much. I'm very proud of you. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Okay. We can cut that, then. We can cut that.

Hello.

Q. Hello. Good to see you. Thank you so much. Happy Thanksgiving.

The President. Thank you. You too.

Attack Against National Guard Servicemembers in the District of Columbia/Withdrawal of U.S. Military Forces From Afghanistan

Q. A question about this tragic shooting——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——in Washington, DC. U.S. officials say that the suspect worked very closely with the CIA in Afghanistan for years, that he was vetted, and the vetting came up clean.

The President. He went cuckoo. I mean, he went nuts. And that happens too—it happens too often with these people. You see them. But look, this is how they come in.

[*The President held up a printout of a photograph.*]

This is how—they're standing on top of each other. And that's an airplane. There was no vetting or anything. They came in unvetted. And we have a lot of others in this country. We're going to get them out. But they go cuckoo. Something happens to them.

Q. Actually, your DOJ IG just reported this year that there was thorough vetting by DHS and by the FBI of these Afghans who were brought into the U.S. So why do you blame the Biden administration for what this man did?

The President. Because they let him in. Are you stupid?

Q. Well, no——

The President. Are you a stupid person? Because they came into—on a plane along with thousands of other people that shouldn't be here. And you're just asking questions because you're a stupid person.

And we—there's a law passed that—it's almost impossible not to—to get them out. You can't get them out once they come in. And they came in, and they were unvetted. They were unchecked. There were many of them. And they came in on big planes, and it was disgraceful.

And if you look, you'll see there was a law passed—it makes it almost impossible not to let them on—not to certify them, so to speak, once they come in. And they came in, and they shouldn't have come in. And frankly, the whole thing was a mess.

The whole Afghanistan situation was a mess. We shouldn't—it should have never taken place. If we're going to go out—and we would have gone out because I had everybody ready to go. We were going to go out with strength and dignity and precision, and we would have left from Bagram—and we would have kept Bagram, by the way, because of its very close relationship to China and where they make their missiles.

But when you let the people come in by the thousands and thousands and thousands—they made a terrible mistake. But they were incompetent.

Yes.

Shooting of West Virginia National Guard Members Spc. Sarah Beckstrom, USA, and Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe, USAF

Q. Mr. President, thank you for having us here tonight. Have you spoken with Sarah and Andrew's family and——

The President. We have a call in a little while, actually——

Q. And——

The President. ——right after this.

Q. Do you plan to speak——

The President. Well, the family is devastated, as you can imagine. But we have—we have spoken—I mean, my people have spoken with the family. We'll be speaking tonight or tomorrow. You have to give them a little—they just found out about their daughter. You know, you can't just call 2 seconds later.

Q. Yes, of course. It's a little early.

The President. It's a very, very tough situation.

Q. Obviously. It's a—[*inaudible*].

The President. She was so outstanding. I mean, I just heard outstanding in every single way.

Q. It's in the early stages, obviously. But do you plan to attend Sarah's funeral?

The President. I haven't thought about it yet, but it certainly is something I could conceive of. I love West Virginia.

You know, I won West Virginia by one of the biggest margins of any President, anywhere. And it's—you know, these are great people. I love the people of West Virginia. I love the people of our country.

But I haven't given it any thought, but it sounds like something I could do, yes. It's very——

Suspected Gunman Ramanullah Lakanwal

Q. The suspect——

The President. It's very raw.

Q. Yes, of course.

The suspect does have a wife and five children who live in Washington. Do you plan to deport them?

The President. The suspect has?

Q. The suspect.

The President. Well, we're looking at that right now. We're looking at the whole situation with family. It's a tragic situation.

Yes, Jeff [Jeff Mason, Reuters].

National Guard Deployments/Use of Military Personnel in U.S. Cities

Q. Mr. President, are there any changes you want to make to improve safety for national guardsmen who are being sent into these cities?

The President. No, just—I want to have more. We—as you know, we're sending 500 more. We had very little crime in Washington now for, you know, many months—record-setting low crime. And this happened. And I don't know how you put this on the scale of that. This is sort of different.

This is a terrorism threat, and this was done because they're so effective. If they weren't effective, you probably wouldn't have had this done. But this was done because the National Guard has been so effective. You know, you went from having a tremendous amount of crime—and death, killing, everything else—to having none. And this happened, I assume, because it was so effective.

And maybe this man was upset because he couldn't practice crime. Who knows what his motivation was, but what he did was horrible.

Afghanistan/U.S. Refugee Admissions Policy/Somali Refugees in Minnesota

Q. And you've changed—you've made changes for Afghans' ability to apply for asylum. Do you blame all Afghans for this one man's mistake—not mistake, but this one man's actions?

The President. No, but we've had a lot of problems with Afghans because they had a lot of them coming in on these planes.

[*The President held up the printout.*]

Again, I showed you this picture. We had a lot of them coming in on these planes that are—look at them: there was no checking. They just poured into the plane.

And many of these people are criminals. Many of these people are people that shouldn't be here. And many of them have been gotten out. I mean, we've gotten out some—a lot of the people that—you know, we've taken a lot of them out of here.

Q. But many of them are here legally, right?

The President. Yes, I know this—the old story. Many are wonderful. Yes, I'm sure.

Q. No, I said many are here legally though. What should they think in terms of their prospects?

The President. Well, they can't be happy. Okay? They can't be happy.

Because what's taking place between that—if you look at Somalia, they're taking over Minnesota. And they are—we've got a lot of problems with the gangs, with all of the things taking place in Minnesota. We have an incompetent Governor, a dope. We have a dope governor.

They can't be happy about what's going on. And if you talk about the Afghans, you know, there's a problem, because so many bad ones came in on the planes. They just walked on, whoever the strongest people were—physically, in a way—but whoever the strongest, they got on the planes. There was no checking. They just swamped the planes. They took off. We had no idea who those—who they were.

Yes, do you want to ask a question? Behind?

Q. Me?

The President. Yes.

Q. Hi, sir. Happy Thanksgiving.

The President. Sure. Hi.

Somali Refugees in Minnesota/Representative Ilhan A. Omar

Q. What do the Somalis have to do with this Afghan guy who shot the National Guard members?

The President. Nothing. But Somalis have caused a lot of trouble. They're ripping us off for a lot of money. There's a tremendous amount of money going back to Somalia. What the hell are we paying money to Somalia for? But they're ripping off our country at a level that few people have been able to see before.

That's about the only thing I—you talk about competence. We have Ilhan Omar, who does nothing, but complain about our country and our constitution. And she comes from a country with practically—it's practically no country. It's devastated. It's crime-ridden. It's a mess. It's a

disgrace. And we took their people at tremendous—we're not taking their people anymore. We're not taking their people, and we're getting a lot of their people out because they're nothing but trouble.

Okay?

Q. Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much, everybody.

Go ahead.

Suspected Gunman Ramanullah Lakanwal

Q. One question about this asylum claim that is being floated. Of course, you just detailed that this suspect was flown in under the Biden administration.

The President. Yes.

Q. But was he granted asylum under your administration?

The President. When it comes to asylum—when they're flown in, it's very hard to get them out. No matter how you want to do it, it's very hard to get them out. But we're going to be getting them all out now.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Take that picture if you want to, press.

The President's Message on Thanksgiving

Q. Mr. President, what are you most thankful for this Thanksgiving?

The President. The fact that America is great again. We've made America great again. America was a dead country. We've made America great again.

[*The President held up a printout of a photograph.*]

Here you go. Got it?

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:32 p.m. at the Mar-a-Lago Club. In his remarks, he referred to Evalea and Gary Beckstrom, parents of Spc. Beckstrom; King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. J. Daniel Caine, USAF; and Gov. Timothy J. Walz of Minnesota. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on November 29.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : U.S. servicemembers, video conference and question-and-session from Palm Beach, FL; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Palm Beach, FL.

Locations: Palm Beach, FL.

Names: Beckstrom, Evalea; Beckstrom, Gary; Beckstrom, Sarah; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Caine, J. Daniel; Cruise, Tom; DeChambeau, Bryson; Farricker, Christopher M.; Gardner, David W.; Gilchrist, Ross W.; Guyette, Brian; Haley, Catherine; Haley, Rick; Lakanwal, Rahmanullah; Omar, Ilhan A.; Rockwood, Charlie A.; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Spanier, Seth W.; Stallone, Sylvester; Trimble, Thomas N.; Trump, Melania; Walz, Timothy J.; Weber, Ryan; Wilde, Alexis; Wolfe, Andrew; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Afghanistan, withdrawal of U.S. military forces; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Border security; China, President; China, trade

with U.S.; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; District of Columbia, shooting of National Guard servicemembers near White House; Economic improvement; European Union, trade with U.S.; Florida, President's visit; Football; Geographic names, efforts to restore American greatness; Golf; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Japan, trade with U.S.; Joint Chiefs of Staff; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Mexico, border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Minnesota, Governor; Minnesota, Somali refugees; National Guard; News media, Presidential interviews; Refugees and migrants, U.S. admission policy; Saudi Arabia, King; South Korea, trade with U.S.; Suspected drug-trafficking vessels, U.S. airstrikes in Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific; Tariffs; Thanksgiving; U.S. Border Patrol; U.S. Coast Guard; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; U.S. servicemembers, service and dedication; U.S. Space Force; Venezuela, drug trafficking.

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