

Remarks Prior to a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters
December 2, 2025

The President. It's nice to be with you. Welcome to the final Cabinet meeting of 2025, a year that will go down as the most consequential and successful first year of any administration. They're saying that. Not me. Oh, I say it too, actually. But a lot of people are saying it. And a lot of that is thanks to the men and women in the Cabinet Room. And we—the new and improved Cabinet Room, I might add.

We took pictures down from the vaults. We have vaults downstairs with lots of pictures that haven't been exposed to the world for, in many cases, over a hundred years. We brought them up, and we're using them as they should be used. But the Cabinet Room looks beautiful, like it should, now.

The Oval Office looks beautiful, like it should. It was not—it was like the rest of the country. It was in disrepair.

One year ago, our country was dead. And said to me by many leaders: We had a dead country. Now we have the hottest country anywhere in the world. It's true. The hottest country anywhere in the world. Think of that.

In four long years of the Biden administration, there were just \$1 trillion of new investments in the United States. In 10 months, we've secured commitments of over \$18 trillion. So, they had, in one year, less than—they had less than \$1 trillion. That's in a period of 4 years. Think of it. Four years, they had less than a trillion. In 10 months, we have more than \$18 trillion. Is that right, Scott? It's even going to be higher than that.

Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent. It will be higher by the end of the year, sir.

The President. And going up. And we're waiting for the Supreme Court case. And it's so important and so vital for this country, because we're not only respected again, we're putting out wars by our trade policies. And we're taking in hundreds of billions of dollars, and our country is wealthy again and secure again, and it's part of national security. And I hope that goes well. I think it's very important.

But we're—think of the number. We're going to be over \$18 trillion in 10 months and—which is a record, times probably 8 or 10 times—I think more than that—for any country. There's never been a country that's had that kind of an investment ever in history, and there's never been a country that's had half of that. It's a tremendous thing that's taking place.

We have companies moving in from all over the world—from Mexico; from Canada; from Europe; from China; from Japan, a lot. We just had—Toyota is going to spend \$10 billion, they just announced, on building new plants in this country. Our workers—they're going to be our workers. But they're spending a tremendous amount.

So the stock market has set 46 alltime highs, and this last Friday, which is called Black Friday, was the biggest ever online sales that there's ever been by a lot.

More Americans are working today than at any time in the history of our country. I mean, these are the facts we have to get out. And, you know, there's this fake narrative that the Democrats talk about: "affordability." They just say the word. It doesn't mean anything to anybody. They just say it: "affordability"—I inherited the worst inflation in history. There was no

affordability. Nobody could afford anything. The prices were massively high. Do you remember, when we took over, eggs? You did a great job on that, Madam Secretary.

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

The President. Agriculture, Brooke. Eggs were four or five times higher than they had ever been. We—they said, "Don't order eggs for Easter at the White House." And we ended up doing it, and we got the egg prices way down, lower than what they were before.

But the word "affordability" is a con job by the Democrats. They say "affordability"—I watched the other day where some very low-IQ Congresswoman talked about "affordability, affordability, affordability." She had no idea. Their prices were much higher.

As an example, energy, gasoline. We're now at about \$2.50 a gallon. We're going to be, I think, at \$2 a gallon. We could even crack that at some point. I'd love to do it, but—and we could do it more easily if we weren't building up the strategic national reserves, which Biden emptied out before the election so that he could try and get elected, meaning she. He started it, then he got thrown out of the race, and she took over, and she kept it going.

And they emptied out these strategic national reserves, which are really meant for something else. They're not meant to keep people happy with their gasoline price. They're meant for war. They're meant for problems—big problems.

He emptied it out, and then she continued it during the process of trying to get elected. Didn't work out too well for them. And they virtually brought it down to the lowest level, I believe, in history, and it didn't have much of an impact because the prices were very high.

But our prices now for energy—but for gasoline—are really low. Electricity is coming down. And when that comes down, everything comes down.

But the word "affordability" is a Democrat scam. They say it, and then they go on to the next subject. And everyone thinks, "Oh, they had lower prices." No, they had the worst inflation in the history of our country.

Now, some people will correct me, because they always love to correct me, even though I'm right about everything. [*Laughter*] But some people like to correct me, and they say, "48 years." I say it's not 48 years, it's much more. But they say it's the worst inflation that we've had in 48 years. I say ever.

But whether it's 48 years or ever, it's pretty bad. We had the worst inflation that we've ever had.

Since last January, we've stopped inflation in its tracks. And there is still more to do. There's always more to do, but we have it down to a very good level. It's going to go down a little bit further. You want to have a little, tiny bit of inflation; otherwise, that's not good either. Then you have a thing called deflation, and deflation can be worse than inflation. But we have it almost—we'll soon be at a perfect level, but we inherited the worst inflation.

But we have 20 States that are now selling gasoline at less than the \$2.75. Think of that: \$2.75. And it was at \$5 under Sleepy Joe.

Grocery prices are down, with the cost of Thanksgiving turkey this year down 33 percent. It was lower than—33-percent lower than under the Biden administration.

Egg prices are way down—86 percent. Thank you.

And mortgage rates, despite the fact that we have an incompetent Chairman of the Fed, a real dope, who should reduce rates—I saw even Jamie Dimon said he should be reducing rates. I never saw Jamie Dimon say that. I wonder why he said that, but he really said it because he's

right. But we have a guy that's just a stubborn ox, who probably doesn't like your President—your favorite President. But they're going to be coming down.

We'll be announcing somebody probably early next year for the new Chairman of the Fed. I talked to Scott about taking the job, but he doesn't want it. *[Laughter]* You've got the greatest job here?

Secretary Bessent. Yes, sir.

The President. Right? He said: "No, I want to stay Chairman. I want to stay—I want to stay right where we are, Treasury." And I think we're doing really great, aren't we? Huh?

Secretary Bessent. We're doing great, sir, and it's a great team to be a part of.

The President. Yes. No, it's amazing.

Under my Executive order to lower prescription drug prices, which I think is the single biggest thing we've ever done that nobody writes about, because you're fake news—I've made unprecedented deals, along with Bobby and Oz and all of the people that work on it—a lot of people—a lot of people that you wouldn't even think work on it, but they do—to slash drug prices by 200 percent, 300 percent, 400 percent, 500 percent, 600 percent, 700 percent, 800 percent.

Nobody's ever heard of it before, because I instituted favored nations, and no nation agreed to do it. And then I said to the nations, "If you're not going to do it, I'm going to charge you 100 percent tariff," which is more money than we're talking about. And they said, "Sir, we'd love to do it. Please. We would be honored to do it." And they agreed that they would go along with the whole thing.

Nobody thought you could do it because they felt, number one, you couldn't get the drug companies to do it.

So we're paying, as an example, for the—let's call it the "fat drug." The fat drug—f-a-t. For fat people. Anybody use it at the table? Don't ask. *[Laughter]*

But the fat drug was \$135—think of that—for certain people; \$1,300 for certain countries; \$1,300 in New York. So, in New York, it was \$1,300. And in London, it was \$135.

And a friend of mine called me. He said: "What is this? Why is it?" He got used to paying \$1,300.

Well, now what we have it down to is—Bobby, what's the number? Like, \$150 or something? We have it down to a low number, don't we? Huh? One fifty? One sixty?

Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Yes, it's around \$125, \$150.

The President. Yes, think of that. So we got it down from \$1,300 to \$125 to \$140 depending on various countries.

In other words, we're paying the lowest price—tied for the lowest price in the world. It's—people said you could never do that, because you couldn't get the countries to agree to it. I did. Every country agreed to it, because I said: "If you're not going to agree to it, that's okay. I'm going to charge you tariffs." And as soon as I said that, they said, "We agree."

And then we had to be a little tough with the drug companies, but they came along. The bigger problem was the countries. The countries just wouldn't go along with it, but they did. Every country.

So we have reduced drug prices by 500, 600, 700, 800, 900 percent—depending on the drug, depending on the company, depending on all of the different factors involved. Nobody has ever even thought of drug reductions like that, price reductions.

And I told you the story that, in my first term, I was so proud of myself because I reduced drugs. It was the first time in 28 years that drug prices were reduced. It was one-quarter of 1 percent—one-quarter of 1 percent. And I was so proud of myself. I said, "It's the first time in 28 years that drug prices went down over the course of a year, over the course of a Presidency." One year, one-quarter of 1 percent. I had a news conference. I was so proud.

Now I got them down not one-quarter of 1 percent; I got them down 400, 500, 600 percent, and more. And the fake news won't write about it. And it's going to have a huge impact on health care, because a big part of it's buying drugs—buying prescription drugs, drugs.

It's going to have a huge positive impact, because Obamacare is a disaster. I said it years ago, and I say it now, and the money should be paid—take it away from the insurance company. Obamacare was made to make the insurance companies rich. Their stocks have gone up a thousand percent in a short period of time because the money goes to the insurance company.

I want the money to go to the people. Let all the money go to the people, and let the people go out and buy their own health care.

And I see on television, people are advertising now: "We will help you buy health care. We will go out and help you buy"—that's becoming like an industry because of what I said.

So something is going to happen. It's probably not going to be easy, because the Democrats, frankly, they don't want to make a good deal for the people. They just want to make a bad deal for the country. They want to make a bad deal for the Republican Party.

But the Republican Party is united. And I will say that what I would like to do is the money doesn't go—trillions of dollars get paid to drug companies, and you still have lousy health care. Obamacare is horrible health care.

We want it to go to the people and then let the people go out and buy their own health care, and they'll do great. They'll do great. So we're negotiating that now with the Democrats.

While congressional Democrats want the largest tax hike in history, I proudly signed the largest tax cuts in American history with the "Great Big Beautiful Bill." The "Great Big Beautiful Bill," the biggest piece of legislation ever signed, and that includes the extension of the original Trump tax cuts.

But it's the biggest tax cut ever signed, and it includes no tax on tips, no tax on overtime, and no tax on Social Security. Nobody has ever seen anything like it. So think of that.

And, in addition, you get—if you buy a car—this is great for our car industry, because we have a lot of car plants. We're bringing back the automobile business. Sixty percent of it was stolen because we had incompetent Presidents or incompetent trade people. But 60 percent of it was stolen over the years, and now we're bringing—I think we're bringing it all back. I think we'll be bigger than ever—than we've ever been in the auto business.

That's not even to mention AI, where we're leading China. You know, we're leading China by a lot. They're not going to catch us. We have to be smart, but if we're smart, they're not going to be able to catch us. They know that. They told me that.

Next year is projected to be the largest tax refund season ever, and we're going to be giving back refunds out of the tariffs, because we've taken in literally trillions of dollars. And we're going to be giving a nice dividend to the people, in addition to reducing debt.

We—as you know, I inherited a lot of debt, but it's peanuts compared to the kind of numbers we're talking about. So we're going to be making a dividend to the people, and additionally, we're going to be able to reduce debt.

And as time goes by, over the next 2, 3, 4 years, those numbers are going to go up. And I believe that, at some point in the not-too-distant future, you won't even have income tax to pay because the money we're taking in is so great, it's so enormous, that you're not going to have income tax to pay—whether you get rid of it or just keep it around for fun or have it really low, much lower than it is now. But you won't be paying income tax.

We've slashed \$1 trillion in costly job-killing regulations, saving Americans an estimated \$2,100 for a family of four. The Biden administration was the exact opposite, but times four. They went up \$6,000. We went down \$2,100. Think of that.

To bring down energy, electricity, and utility prices, I ended the "green new scam." They call it the "green new scam," one of the greatest scams in the history of our country. They talked about global warming and all the crap. And—and what they've done to this country—what they've done by allowing 25 million people into our country, many of whom are criminals, many of whom—11,888 are murderers, and we have to get them out. And we're doing it. We're doing it.

I think what—what—the job that our law enforcement groups are doing—Kristi, you and Tom and everybody—amazing. What you're doing is amazing.

I terminated the insane electrical—electric vehicle mandate. And look, some people that make electric cars weren't happy with that, but we have to do that, because you have to have a choice, whether it's a gasoline-powered car—and we have so much gasoline. You know, China doesn't have gasoline. We do. And whether it's a hybrid, which really are working really well—the combination of electric and gasoline driven—but we—you know, everybody was supposed to—by 2030, everybody had to own an electric car, under the Biden stupidity. And not everybody wants to do that. I like electric cars. I like all cars. They're all good. They all have reasons. But you want to be able to go and buy what you want.

I imposed historic tariffs that are now bringing in so much money that we've never—nobody's ever seen anything like it. And countries that were ripping us off, including allies—but they were ripping us off for years. I won't use the names. I won't mention Japan. I refuse to mention South Korea. I will not mention names. *[Laughter]* But they were ripping us off like nobody has ever been ripped off before and taking horrible advantage of your country.

But now we're making a lot of money. We're making a lot of money because of the tariffs that are pouring in. And it's really national security. Among everything else, it's national security.

We've also rapidly turned the worst border crisis in world history—I believe we had the worst border ever in history. I don't care—if you had a fourth-world country—you know, we allow third-world country in—we would allow fourth-world countries in also. It doesn't matter. There was never a border that was as bad as our border. We allowed anybody in with no checks, no vetting.

So we've rapidly turned the worst border crisis in world history into the strongest border in the history of our country and probably one of the strongest borders in the history of the world, because we have nobody coming through.

And I want to thank our people. The Border Patrol is so amazing, ICE. And I want to thank the military for the backup, because they're standing right behind them. And that was really nasty for a period of months, and now it's no longer nasty.

Now they don't even come up. Nobody comes up. It's an easy job. Made your job a lot easier. *[Laughter]* Because they know they're not going to get through. And we take people in, but they have to come in legally.

For 6 months in a row, zero illegal aliens have been admitted into the United States. You believe that? Zero. We had millions of people coming in a year—millions. Now we have zero for

6 months. And these are given by radical-left people that do the numbers. I mean, they're not doing me any favor. That's—they're being—we don't have—we don't have—our net numbers are unbelievable. But we had zero people in the last 6 months.

Illegal border crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border have plummeted to the lowest level ever recorded—ever recorded. And nobody talks about that anymore. You know, it's crazy. They don't talk about it. They—you'd think they'd say, "Well, Trump has done a great job on the border." This country was being destroyed by the border.

But you always find something new like: "Is he in good health? Biden was great, but is Trump in good health?" *[Laughter]* I sit here—I sit here, I do news—four news conferences a day. I ask questions from very intelligent lunatics—you people. *[Laughter]* And I always give—I give the right answers. There's never a scandal. There's never a problem. I give you answers and solve your little problems. *[Laughter]*

You go back, and you can't find anything, but you do—you do stories about "Biden was in wonderful health." The guy couldn't—didn't do a news conference for 8 months. If I go one day—I had one day where I didn't do a news conference—"There's something wrong with the president." *[Laughter]*

You people are crazy. I'll let you know when there's something wrong. There will be some day. That's going to happen to all of us. But right now I think I'm sharper than I was 25 years ago. But who the hell knows?

I took—by the way, I took my physical. I got all A's, everything. *[Laughter]* But they said to me, "Would you like to take a cognitive test?" I said, "Is it hard?" *[Laughter]* They said, "Yes." I said: "Well, I'm a very smart person. Who was the last president to take one?" "No President has ever agreed to take one." Because when you get into the mid questions, meaning, you know, 10—question number 10, 11, 12, 28, 30, they get harder and harder.

And they said, "Would you like to do it?" I said: "Well, no reason to do it. Nobody has ever done it. I'll do it, maybe, but there's really no reason." They said, "Sir, the problem is, this is Walter Reed hospital, and that's a military hospital, and that means that things are, you know, sort of open. It's not, like, private, where you have—if you do poorly, we'll have to—probably, you'll—they'll find out." I said: "I won't do poorly. I'm a smart person, not a stupid person."

And, as the doctor will tell you, I aced it. Right, Susie? I aced. I got every question right. And these are tough questions. These are questions that I would say 99 percent of the people that I'm talking to right now—meaning the people that—from the fake news—would not do well on those exams.

But I'm the only one that took it. I got every single question right. And then I read in the New York Times, "Is Trump sharp?" Trump is sharp, but they're not sharp. That's why they're going out of business, the New York Times. I hear they're losing so much money, it's ridiculous. They're a bunch of fakers.

But we have—we can never let another thing happen like what happened to us with a fake election, with a rigged election, where a guy like Joe Biden assumes the Presidency, because the man was grossly incompetent. And he was incompetent 30 years ago, but he was really incompetent for those last few years. And our country was put at great danger because of it.

So, for 6 months in a row, we had zero people. Illegal border crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border have plummeted to the lowest level ever, ever, ever. Think of that. And the net benefit to our country is enormous, incalculable.

America is strong and respected again. On the world stage, we're really respected. In fact, I went to a NATO and they were calling me the President of Europe. [Laughter] We're doing very well. We have a lot of respect.

As you know, we have a problem with a war that our people are trying to settle now with Russia and Ukraine. We are not involved in the war monetarily anymore. Biden gave away \$350 billion like it was candy. That's a massive amount of money. And much of it in cash, a lot of it equipment.

I don't give away anything. We sell the equipment to NATO. The European nations pay us for the equipment a hundred-percent price. And then they bring it to Ukraine or whatever they do with it.

But we're trying to get that settled. I've settled eight wars. This would be the ninth. And our people are over in Russia right now to see if we can get it settled. Not an easy situation, let me tell you. What a mess.

It's a war that never would have happened if I were President. Not even a chance. And it didn't happen for 4 years.

We've renamed the Department of Defense the Department of War, and I thought that would be controversial. And frankly, I tell you what, I haven't met one person—there's not one person I've met that doesn't like it.

You know, think of it. We won World War I, World War II, everything in between, everything before it. And then we said, "Let's change the name." So we changed it back to what it was: the Department of War. And Pete is doing a great job.

We ended eight wars. Think of that: eight wars. But we're going to do one more, I think—I hope. I hope.

Every time I end a war, they say, "If—if President Trump ends that war, he's going to get the Nobel Prize." So I end that war. "Well, he won't get it for that war, but if he ever gets it for the next war"—[laughter]. Now they're saying, "If he ever ends the war with Russia and Ukraine, he's going to get the Nobel Prize."

What about the other eight wars? India-Pakistan. Think of all the wars I ended. I should get the Nobel Prize for every war, but I don't want it. I don't want to be greedy.

Actually, the woman who got the Nobel Prize said: "You've got to be kidding. Trump deserves the Nobel Prize." So that was very nice of her. I appreciate it. Which is true, actually. But I don't care about that.

You know what I care about? I care about death. I care about all the people that are dying. And last month, 27,000 young people died—mostly young people, mostly soldiers, despite some missiles being shot into Kyiv and other places. But think of it, mostly young people. Twenty-seven thousand people died between Russia and Ukraine last month. What a shame.

So we're restoring law and order to our cities and towns. If you look at what's happened—and I want to pay my deepest respects to those two incredible people from the National Guard. And West Virginia, they came from. I spoke to their parents. Sarah is gone. She passed away. She's looking down on us now, and she loves her parents, and they loved her. They were—somebody said, "How are they doing?" I said the word is "devastated." Doing? How are they going to do? They're devastated. The rest of their lives, they're going to be devastated.

She was an incredible person, highly respected, top of her class, everything. She was like a perfect human being. Twenty years old, just started. She was like a baby. She was so proud. They

were giving her a promotion. And she told her parents that she was getting a promotion, and they were so proud of her. Then they get a call that this happened.

And we have one young man who's fighting for his life. He's fighting very hard. I think he's probably doing better than anybody—they said he didn't have a chance. I'll tell you, the one who said he's going to live is his mother. I spoke to his mother. "Sir, he's going to live." I spoke to her very soon after this horrible event took place with this scum that was able to come into our country.

I spoke to his mother. "Sir, he's going to be okay, I'm telling you." No doctor thought that. Nobody thought that. He was hit in bad places. And she was, like, so positive. It was incredible. And it's possibly right, Pam, right? Possibly right. Boy, it would be amazing. If he lives, it would be amazing, a miracle, actually.

But we're very proud of those two people. We're very proud of the National Guard. We're very proud of our military and our police and our fire men and women.

If you go back and take a look a year ago, a year and a half ago, it all changed, I think, on November 5, the day of the election. But you go back before that, you couldn't get people to join the military, Pete, right?

Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth. That's right.

The President. They didn't want anything to do with military. They wanted nothing to do with joining the police or the fire. They wanted nothing to do with anything. They had no spirit. The country was—it had no spirit, nothing. And now we just had the highest recruitment in history, and we're getting great people. We're getting great people.

And I will say, despite what just happened, Washington, DC, has become a really safe place. And I guess this lunatic probably was upset that the National Guard is so effective, because we were really, really effective, and we are. And Washington, DC, is now considered a very, very safe city.

We had crime numbers a year ago that were so bad—embarrassment that the city, the capital of this country could be—have numbers like that. And Washington now is—I mean, no murders, no this. It's been a miracle, also, what happened here.

And now we're in Memphis, and we're going to New Orleans pretty soon, over there. The governor called me. He'd like to have us go there. Governor Landry—great guy, great Governor. He's asked for help in New Orleans, and we're going to go there in a couple of weeks, and we're doing a real job.

Even Chicago is down a little bit because of—we have a minor force there. We could knock it down within 4 or 5 weeks. We could bring it down to almost nothing. But we have a Governor that's grossly incompetent, and we have a mayor that's even more incompetent than the Governor. A very—he's a very low-IQ person. And typically, low-IQ people don't make good mayors.

So I want to thank all of our Cabinet members. They're high IQ. I—let me see—one.

[At this point, the President looked around the room.]

They are, generally speaking—right? *[Laughter]*

Secretary Rollins. More space.

The President. Couple of them, I'm a little concerned about. *[Laughter]*

No, but I want to thank—we have a great Cabinet—amazing Cabinet, amazing people. All of them, you know, sort of have become stars. We're getting credit for the good Cabinet, actually.

And I just want to wish everybody a great holiday. We've, I think, done a great job with the White House, bringing the White House back. You see the Palm Court that was redone. The Lincoln Bedroom was redone. The Lincoln bathroom is now gorgeous, like it should have been. It was terrible green tile. That was never the way it was supposed to be. It was done in the 1940s, actually, but it was not proper. And it's—we're restoring the White House, just like we're restoring the country, and people are thrilled.

But we—the First Lady has done a beautiful job with the Christmas trees and all the decorations. I see the wreaths on the windows. I've never seen that before on the windows of the White House. And you know, it's four stories high. I said, "How did they get that wreath?" They had people going up in a—a little dangerous. *[Laughter]* I wouldn't want to do it, but they put them up.

And we have wonderful people working in the White House, and they're really proud to bring the building back, because this building was a little bit like the country. It was mishandled, it was mistreated, and now it's being given love.

And we're building one of the great—I think maybe the greatest ballroom. We needed it. For 150 years, they've been asking. You see the trucks and cranes and excavators in the background, and you hear them. And every time I hear them, I love the sound. To me, I love the sound. *[Laughter]*

I wouldn't say my wife is thrilled. She hears pile drivers in the background all day, all night. They go until 12 o'clock in the evening. Day, night—pile drivers. "Darling, could you turn off the pile drivers?" *[Laughter]* "I'm sorry, darling. That's progress." *[Laughter]*

But no, we're doing great. It's going to be the—I think it's going to be the finest ballroom ever built, and we're going to have it here. They've wanted it for 150 years. Think of that.

So I will just end by saying I want to thank the Cabinet. It's been a great Cabinet. Now, let's think of it. Time flies, but this is our last of the year, I said, and I just think you've done a fantastic job.

And we're going to go around the room. We'll go quickly, but we're going to go around the room, and we'll start with Pete, and you'll tell us about some of the achievements. And some of you have achievements that are so big, I don't want you to go through the whole thing—*[laughter]*—because we don't have time. *[Laughter]* But we'll start with Pete, and then, if you want, we'll take some questions at the end.

Please, Pete.

Secretary Hegseth. Well, thank you, Mr. President, as you said, it has been a historic year at the Department of War. Recruiting and retention over this year are at the most historic levels our country has ever seen.

I had a chance to be on a aircraft carrier destroyer over Thanksgiving. The spirit in our ranks since the election under President Trump is unprecedented. I've never seen anything like it, as a soldier myself in uniform. And I know a lot of you feel the same way.

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

And then it's getting after and going after narco-terrorists and designated terrorist organizations in our own hemisphere. As I've said and I'll say again, we've only just begun striking narcoboats and putting narcoterrorists at the bottom of the ocean, because they've been poisoning the American people.

And Joe Biden tried to approach it with kid gloves. That allowed them to come across the border; cartels take over community, 20 million people; hundreds of thousands of Americans

poisoned. And President Trump said: "No, we're taking the gloves off. We're taking the fight to these designated terror organizations," and that's exactly what we're doing.

So we're stopping the drugs. We're striking the boats. We're defeating narcoterrorists. And we're standing——

The President. And—and, Pete, you may say one thing: that drugs coming in through the sea—by sea are down 91 percent. *[Laughter]* And I don't know who the 9 percent is.

Secretary Hegseth. I'm not sure either, sir, because——

The President. But down 91 percent by sea.

Secretary Hegseth. We've had a bit of a pause, because it's hard to find boats to strike right now—*[laughter]*—which is the entire point. Right? Deterrence has to matter. Not arrest and hand over and then do it again—the rinse-and-repeat approach of previous administrations. This is meant to get after that approach.

And I will just end by saying, as President Trump always has our back, we always have the back of our commanders, who are making decisions in difficult situations. And we do in this case. In all these strikes, they're making judgment calls and ensuring that they defend the American people. They've done the right things. We'll keep doing that, and we have their backs, Mr. President.

The President. Good job. Thank you very much.

Howard.

Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick. So we set out to stop the rip-off of the United States of America. This is about global change of trade. We've been ripped off since 1945 when we set this policy. So we set out, and together with my partners, Jamieson Greer and Scott Bessent, we set out to change that.

So we started. The first one was the U.K. deal, right? We—asymmetric—they pay us 10 percent, and we get charged nothing. That allows us to export, and that began the process.

Then we did the biggest: European Union—\$450 million people, \$20 trillion economy. They completely opened their borders to us, and we charge them 15 percent. That makes America \$100 billion a year and turns it back to where our economy is the best.

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

And the last thing I will say is: A year ago today, I was working on transition with President Trump—right?—to build the greatest Cabinet ever for the greatest President ever. And I—as I sit here today, I can't be more proud of how you did it, sir. You've created the greatest Cabinet. It is a joy to be at this table.

The President. You know, one thing we will mention. So they came to see me from Intel, and they had a problem. I said, "Look, we'll fix your problem, but I think the United States is entitled to 10 percent of your company." And the chairman looked at me, and he goes, "You have a deal." *[Laughter]*

How much money have we made since I made that deal?

Secretary Lutnick. It's only \$40 billion.

The President. Forty billion. We made \$40 billion. That was—what?—3 months ago. Does anybody write about it? Nobody writes about it. That's okay.

Mr. Secretary, how we doing with Transportation?

Secretary of Transportation Sean P. Duffy. Well, Mr. President, so just quickly on aviation. Many of you heard that we have an infrastructure made of copper. We have to transition to fiber. The last administration said it was going to take more than 10 years to complete the transition from copper to fiber. They had no plan to actually do it.

We have already completed a third of this transition from copper to fiber. Now, it's going to take longer for us to go from analog to digital.

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

And just the last point I'll make is, there was a big football game with the Merchant Marine Academy that falls under DOT. *[Laughter]* Actually, beat the Coast Guard with Kristi Noem. We beat them by one point. And so we're very proud of that.

The President. Nice.

Secretary Duffy. So well done, Kings Pointers. *[Laughter]* So——

The President. So, a little bit, in a nutshell, we're rebuilding the air traffic control. Under Buttigieg—it's supposed to be "boot edge edge"—*[laughter]*—who's another grossly incompetent person. He'd get on his bicycle, ride to work, and he was just terrible. What they do is, they take the fiber optics, and they take fiber, trying to hook it into copper. And fiber and copper don't mix. You can't do it. But people knew that for the last 30 years, since they started doing the fiber.

And they spent billions of dollars, and it didn't work. And you saw that by the helicopter crash. You saw that by—into the plane. You saw that by a lot of things.

So we're doing a brandnew air traffic control system, and it's going to be the best.

And it's going to be from top to bottom. And we have the three top companies in the world bidding on it, and it's going to be one bid, and we're going to have one company responsible. And it will be the best system, and it's going to make the sky—look, our skies are safe. Otherwise, we wouldn't let people fly. But we're going to have the safest skies. We're going to have the best system anywhere in the world.

We're also going to rebuild Dulles Airport because it's not a good airport. It should be a great airport, and it's not a good airport at all. It's a terrible airport.

It was incorrectly designed—with a good building, actually. It's got a beautiful terminal. Saarinen was the architect—one of the greatest architects in the world at the time, a great architect. And so, they have a great building and a bad airport. But we're going to turn that around, and we're going to make Dulles airport, serving Washington and Virginia, Maryland, et cetera—we're going to make that into something really spectacular. We have an amazing plan for it.

And other things. But you're doing a really good job. I appreciate it.

Secretary Duffy. With those, the people movers of Dulles, we had a crash recently. So, we're going to announce that later today: the—a request for bids on this. But, again, it's a—not a great airport, which we can make great in this administration, Mr. President.

The President. We have a design that's amazing for Dulles. It's going to make—take Dulles and make it a really bad—it was a badly designed airport. We're going to make it into as good as there is in the country. It'll be exciting.

Okay. Please.

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Douglas A. Collins. All right. Well, Mr. President, it's good to be here at this meeting because, in 1 year, you can look around the table and see the change. And I think one of the biggest changes is how this Cabinet works together. And I want to start there.

It's often been said—I found out some things this year that I didn't know—that the Department of what was Defense, now is Department of War, and the Veterans Department had never really communicated.

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

Now, I have one thing for all the press who really enjoyed the first of the year, saying, "Oh, you know, they're going to cut all these jobs. Eighty thousand this, eighty thousand that at the VA." Mr. President, every success that I just gave you came after the fact or pretty much after the fact that we had 30,000 take early retirement. Early retirement, no risk, although you reported it as loss and risk. You can't help yourself. Thirty thousand took the retirement. Every bit of the success that I just told you about came with a reduced workforce. It was a motivated workforce that said, "How can we take care of veterans?" That's what this Cabinet does. That's what we're doing for—*[inaudible]*.

The President. Good. And you've got the highest approval rating we've ever had at the VA.

Secretary Collins. Yes, sir.

The President. So that tells you something. You're doing a great job.

Secretary Collins. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much.

Jamieson, please.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson L. Greer. Well, there's been some activity on trade this year. *[Laughter]* You know, for about 75 years, we had a system—global trading system that was premised on the United States having totally open borders, right? Not just on immigration, but on goods and services, and everyone else generally kept higher tariffs, higher nontariff barriers, et cetera.

Obviously, the outcome was we had a huge trade deficit. You took it head on. You gave all of us who work on the file a lot of leverage. So we spent the past, you know, 10 months, or whatever we've been doing now, just going around the world and flipping the script. So now we're in a situation where we protected our industries, we have the tariffs, and the other countries have decided to take their tariffs down and nontariff barriers.

And we've done it in a very constructive way. We've achieved agreements on reciprocal trade, which are a new kind of trade agreement that's really focused on making sure we have balanced trade, we have reciprocal trade, that we're treating each other fairly. And it's been embraced by the international community. And it's going to be exciting to see what it's like 5 years, 10 years from now, because you've changed it, and that's how it's going to be now.

And I think you should be commended for it, and we look forward to seeing what comes in the next few years.

The President. Thank you very much. You're doing great. He's doing a great job. Thank you very much.

Please.

Office of Management and Budget Director Russell T. Vought. Thank you, Mr. President. Last time I was here, I said that the amount of dereg that we had for regulatory was 30-to-1. Since then, it's up to 48-to-1. Your goal had been 10-to-1——

The President. Wow.

Director Vought. ——which was in excess of 6-to-1 in the first term. It's actually much higher than that, but I made my team redo this—the threshold a little bit because it sounded so unbelievable. But the amount of work that's being done with this entire team is astronomical.

And another detail in that is that when we propose a rule—so when—some of the biggest ones that you care the most about don't go into that count until they are finalized. So next year we should be even more eye-popping.

One of those to talk about is the Federal Acquisitions Regulations, which you gave us a charge six months ago to dramatically reduce. In six months, we've lowered it by 25 percent, 500 pages, 2,700 mandates, which is a third of the mandates. That's going to lead to savings, competition, and speed. So probably \$40 billion for the agencies and savings over the course of 10 years. When we get up and running, it will be north of between \$200- and \$400 billion.

Competition—about 45 percent of Government bids are—only have one bidder. So you've got no competition in that situation. That will now change.

And then we're just getting faster—months, and hopefully, we turn it into years, which means you all around this table can buy things that you need quickly and that you have better vendors to come, many of them small businesses who want to participate in the Federal procurement process.

So making all sorts of improvements on that front. It's very exciting. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. That's great. And great on the regulations. We're cutting them at levels never seen before, and I have the record from the first 4 years, but we're blowing that record away. So it's been really great.

Good. Scott.

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development E. Scott Turner. Yes, sir, Mr. President. Great to be with everyone. And you know, when you were giving your report, which was fantastic, and I listened to the report of all my colleagues here and those that will come, it reminds me—when I played in the NFL, we had this thing called game film. You know all about film. And we had a saying that said, "The film don't lie."

The film tells a real story. And I hope that the American people, when they watch the film that's going on now in this time in our history, that they will see that America is greater today than it ever has been.

And so I thank you for that, and thank you for giving us good stories that we can tell for the American people.

The President. Scott, we're saving our country.

Secretary Turner. Yes, sir.

The President. Okay, and I don't want to be braggadocious. We're saving our country. Our country was going down and would never have been able to come back. We're saving—all of us, but we're saving our country.

All right. Go ahead, please.

Secretary Turner. So, at Housing and Urban Development, in keeping with your executive order, sir, in making America's streets safe and beautiful again, we've been very intentional about making public housing in our country safe. And I want people to know—our colleagues know this—but people in America know that we actually care about people that live in public housing around our country. A lot of public housing is wrought with crime, sex trafficking, drug trafficking, illicit drugs, illegal aliens living in public housing.

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

And, sir, you talked about affordability. HUD has supported over 1 million Americans in homeownership and affordability. And over 560,000 are first-time homebuyers, so I hope that the press will write about that good news: that a million people are able to own a home and to refinance their homes.

And, sir, we are moving our building from DC to Alexandria, Virginia. So, thank you for your support.

The President. Thank you, Scott.

Secretary Turner. We're going to save the American people about \$500 million.

So that's my report. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Scott, very much.

Brooke.

Secretary Rollins. Well, coming off of Thanksgiving, moving towards Christmas, I think it's the season of thanksgiving, and two words for me are "gratitude" and "joy."

Gratitude to you for, as Howard said, bringing this team together. I say it a lot, but I'll say it again, that this is like family at this point. And I don't know that there's ever been an organization like this—at least in Government, like this—in the history of our country.

The—these jobs are hard, but the joy every day in getting to fight for America and save the country is the privilege of all of our lifetimes, I believe. So thank you for that.

The President. Thank you.

Secretary Rollins. At U.S. Department of Agriculture—the people's department; Abraham Lincoln launched this department in 1862—but under your leadership, we have finally, again, put farmers and ranchers in rural America first.

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

As Joe Biden was working to buy an election a year ago, he increased food stamp program funding by 40 percent.

The President. Yes.

Secretary Rollins. So, now, as we continue to roll that back.

So, the partnership in making America healthy again is also in food stamps. But a lot of what we're going to—Bobby and I are doing together is really remarkable. But again, just gratitude and joy for this work and so, so grateful to you.

The final thing I'll say: A lot of gratitude to Secretary Marco Rubio for wearing his Aggie maroon tie as a reflection of Texas A&M beating Florida handily about a month ago. *[Laughter]*

So, Marco, I want to thank you, and much gratitude and joy in my heart as well. Yes.

The President. I think we——

Secretary Rollins. But thank you, sir.

The President. —we—

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. I thought this was an orange tie. [*Laughter*]

The President. —also have to say something about China with one of the largest purchases ever in our country, the soybeans.

Secretary Rollins. Yes, sir.

The President. And so I want to thank President Xi. We had a great meeting. We were in South Korea, and I went to a lot of other places too, but we met in South Korea, and President Xi was great. And China gave us among the largest orders in the history of your world, agriculture, so—

Secretary Rollins. That's right. And, sir, may I say, this is the remarkable result of real leadership and your real leadership. Just a couple of days ago, China announced that they were going to halt all purchases from Brazil because they had found some irregularities in some of the soybeans they're buying from Brazil.

And what that means is a continued signal that this country and our farmers produce the best, highest-quality soybeans, sorghum, et cetera, in the world. And what you've been able to do is open those markets up, and again, move toward an era where our farmers are not so reliant on Government checks, but have—they have the markets—

The President. Yes.

Secretary Rollins. —to sell their product.

Having said that, we do have a bridge payment we'll be announcing with you next week, as we're still trying to recover from the Biden years.

The President. To help them, yes.

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. To help the farmers.

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. We're going to help the farmers. They did not help the farmers.

Secretary Rollins. That's right.

The President. Thank you very much.

Secretary Rollins. Thank you, sir.

The President. Scott.

Secretary Bessent. Mr. President, it's been a great year on the economy, but the best is yet to come. The tens of trillions of dollars that have come in in investment, both the portfolio investment, investment by companies, investment—the—by countries, that—it's turning into a CapEx boom for the U.S.—capital expenditures up 15 percent. In history, the—when CapEx is up, jobs will follow.

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

And you came in—immigration—I called it the three I's—immigration, interest rates, and inflation—that were killing the American people. Closed the border. The promise kept. Interest

rates are down, and 10-year bond, again, best year since 2020. And inflation, led by energy prices, is going to roll next year. I think it's going to be a fantastic year.

We can look back, be very proud of this year, but I think 2026 is going to be——

The President. Hope so.

Secretary Bessent. ——great for the American people thanks to you.

The President. Going to be great. Thank you very much.

Mr. Vice President.

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance. Thank you, Mr. President. It's an honor to serve with this great team that you've assembled.

And I just want to pick up on something you said, Mr. President, because you hit the nail on the head: that it is absurd that Democrats talk about an affordability crisis that they created and the people around this table work every single day to address.

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

But I think for congressional Democrats in particular, if they want to talk about affordability, they ought to look in the mirror. We are fixing what they're broken. We're proud to do it. It's the job that we were elected to do. But I think 2026 is going to be the year where this economy really takes off.

The President. Thank you very much.

Vice President Vance. Thank you, sir.

The President. Great.

Pam.

Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi. President Trump, thank you for talking about Sarah. Heart breaks for her family. And Andy is doing well. His parents Melody and Jason wanted me to tell you—and I was with them yesterday in the hospital—he's a miracle. I was there when the surgeons came in. And he—they wanted you to know this: He's a miracle. And if everyone in this country can continue to pray for that family.

The President. That's great.

Attorney General Bondi. He's got a long road ahead of them, but he is a miracle.

The President. Great.

Attorney General Bondi. And of course, our DC initiative is led by our amazing—oh, and the monster will be held accountable, who did this.

The President. Yeah.

Attorney General Bondi. Our marshals, of course, are leading the D.C. Safe effort. We have made over 7,000 arrests. At your direction, DC is safe again, working with everyone around this table—Pete and everyone. Scott and I were in Memphis together last week, and everyone—and, Bobby, your HHS doctors and medics are on the ground to help people in Memphis and DC. In Memphis, we've made over 3,500 arrests so far. And Homeland Security—Kristi, you've been instrumental in this.

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

President Trump, we've charged more than 500 defendants with assault on federal officers, thanks to your directive. And, also, we have dropped countless cases against Americans that were prosecuted under the Biden administration, including J6, COVID, FACE Act, and more.

And, as everyone knows, we cannot talk about pending grand jury investigations, but no one is above the law, and that includes what happened in Arctic Frost.

I hope everyone has a very merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and happy holidays. Thank you for fighting for our country.

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Please, Lori.

Secretary of Labor Lori M. Chavez-DeRemer. Great. Well, thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for allowing me to be at this table. When I came on board, I knew really none of you in this last year. And it's been a year, Mr. President, since I've had the pleasure to serve this country on the workforce.

Everybody said the Department of Labor would be quiet, fly under the radar. You won't have to do too much. [*Laughter*]

Absolutely not, because you made the American people realize the American dream is real for the American workforce. And it's been under your leadership, Mr. President, that over 2 million jobs that has been created since you started have been native-born workers. And that is the difference between this Presidency, this administration, as opposed to the Biden administration, were mostly foreign-born or Federal Government jobs.

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

And it's an honor to serve under this administration and to talk to the American workers who believe in the American dream again—the pride on their face, the pride of the American worker, the skilled men and women who build with their hands. It's an honor.

The President. Thank you, Lori.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. So thank you.

The President. Thank you.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. And merry Christmas.

The President. Very good job. Thank you very much.

Secretary Chavez-DeRemer. Thank you.

Secretary of Energy Christopher A. Wright. Awesome.

The President. Chris.

Secretary Wright. Mr. President, I am honored and, frankly, inspired to sit at this table with this incredible team of leaders that work every day for one and only one constituency: the American people. Not this group or that group—the American people.

The price of energy is very much on the mind of Americans. The biggest determinant of the price of energy is politicians, political leaders, and policies. That's what drives energy prices.

Under your leadership, what we've seen in the United States is just a steady drop in the price of gasoline—a huge consumer cost for Americans. As you mentioned early on, well below \$3 a gallon right now and trending downwards. There are a number of stations in the heartland of

America with \$1.99 signs flying today. That's simply impossible without the leadership and changes you've brought.

Now, of course, you can go to California, where the average price of gasoline is between \$4.50 and \$5 a gallon today in California. That's just bad political leaders there and bad policies in California.

The President. And taxes.

Secretary Wright. And taxes.

The President. The taxes they charge on gasoline are just insane. Terrible.

Secretary Wright. And electricity prices is a very parallel story, but it's a bigger moving ship, so the changes are a little bit slower. But Americans are outraged at, you know, a roughly 30-percent rise in the average price of electricity across this country. But everything we are doing together is going to reverse that—not just stop the rises, but start a downward trajectory in electricity prices.

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

So thank you for allowing me to be part of this team, for people here who are focused on winning. Special thanks to Howard and Scotty, who were there with me to see the Denver Broncos win on Monday night. [*Laughter*] Now we want nationwide wins on energy for three more years.

The President. And we're doing more energy production than we've ever done by far right now.

Secretary Wright. Records across the board that will continue to be reset every year you're in office.

The President. Good. Thank you very much.

Kristi, please.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem. Well, Mr. President, thank you for giving me a very interesting job. [*Laughter*] Some days, it's a little controversial too, but it's been an honor to work for you. You are a great American. The fights that you pick are the right fights, and they're always on behalf of this country. So I appreciate the chance to do this job, heading up this department.

If you think about what Joe Biden did with the Department of Homeland Security, he used this department to invade the country with terrorists. He opened up the borders, let anybody come in that wanted to. He put them on airplanes. He let them through our airports. With—if they could figure out a way to get to our shores and in our country, he just opened the door and invited them in.

So it's our job to get them out. And I want to thank you for this team, because I look around the table, and I think every single person here has helped me do my job over the last year. They've supported us at the border and given us resources. Marco negotiates all the travel documents and relationships with other countries to take their people home.

Two million people have gone home already. The people that were here illegally, you've removed from our country and sent home, and we're going to send more home for the holidays too and make sure that they get to be with their families——

The President. And mostly the bad ones. [*Laughter*]

Secretary Noem. ——in their countries.

Yes.

The President. Mostly the bad ones.

Secretary Noem. That's right. Pam——

The President. The focus is the bad ones——

Secretary Noem. That's right.

The President. ——and there are a lot them.

Secretary Noem. Terrible, horrible people.

And Pam makes sure she's fighting for us in court so that we can get up every day and be bold. We're going to have—hire—our 10,000th ICE officer will be on the job within 10 days. So we have hired——

The President. Great.

Secretary Noem. ——10,000. We've had hundreds of thousands of applications. We've got—within the department, TSA went through this Government shutdown without any delays. They all showed up for their shifts and worked hard doing security, and they have been absolutely fantastic.

Sir, you made it through hurricane season without a hurricane.

The President. Yes. *[Laughter]*

Secretary Noem. And so FEMA—FEMA——

The President. I've been watching.

Secretary Noem. You—even you kept the hurricanes away. *[Laughter]* So we appreciate that. And FEMA is deploying resources and dollars 150-percent faster than ever before. So, somebody does have something bad that happens to them, you are immediately there, helping them, and telling them they have the resources to get back up on their feet.

So we have built and deployed hundreds of miles of border already. You have cut the fantanyl flow over the southern border——

The President. Yes.

Secretary Noem. ——by over 56 percent. You've saved hundreds of millions of lives with the cocaine you've blown up in the Caribbean.

And you know, you told me to look into Minnesota and their fraud on visas and their programs. Fifty percent of them are fraudulent, which means that that wacko Governor Walz either is an idiot or he did it on purpose, and I think he's both, sir. *[Laughter]*

He brought people in there illegally that never should have been in this country, said they were somebody that they're not. They said they were married to somebody who was their brother or somebody else, fraudulent visa applications, signed up for government programs, took hundreds of billions of dollars from the taxpayers, and we're going to remove them, and we're going to get our money back. And we're going to——

The President. Good.

Secretary Noem. ——this next year, make sure that we only put people in leadership positions in this country that love this country and have its back.

So thank you for letting us get up every day and have a purpose. We appreciate you.

The President. Thank you very much. Thanks, Kristi. Appreciate it.

Administrator of the Small Business Administration Kelly L. Loeffler. Mr. President, you're exactly right. We are saving this country. We're doing it one Main Street at a time, and we're doing it at record speed and at record levels.

Under your leadership, small-business optimism, according to the U.S. Chamber Index for small businesses, has reached an alltime high in the history of that index. So, on Main Street, the economy is coming back, thanks to your leadership, thanks to getting Biden inflation under control.

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

And so I want to also, finally, thank you for bringing faith back to the White House, to this administration. I want to thank Brooke for hosting the Cabinet Bible study and invite everyone tomorrow—*[laughter]*—to Bible study. And making this country something that we can be so proud of under your leadership, and I am so blessed and honored to be part of this team.

So thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Kelly. Thank you very much.

Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard. Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership. I am truly grateful to be a member of your team here at this table to help support you in delivering on the promises that you made to the American people.

You came in with a very clear mandate of taking on the rampant weaponization, politicization of the intelligence community and Federal law enforcement, experiencing yourself the deep state abusing their power as they have against you, your family, and so many of the American people; bring out accountability, truly, for those who have abused their power; making sure that the intelligence community is supporting your efforts in keeping the American people safe, secure, and free; and being the President of peace.

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

We are focused on these tasks and this imperative for the American people and just appreciate your leadership, Mr. President, and empowering us to be able to conduct this service. And merry Christmas.

The President. Thank you very much.

Director Gabbard. Thank you.

The President. Merry Christmas. That's a—merry Christmas. We say it loud and clear. *[Laughter]*

Lee.

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee M. Zeldin. Mr. President, your team at the Trump EPA has been crushing it all year to fix the big mess that we inherited and deliver amazing results for the American people. I've had the opportunity to visit all 50 States since confirmation earlier this year and to hear from real people where they meet—where they live and to bring their great ideas and their asks back to us to be able to deliver for them.

At the Trump EPA, we have proven that you can both protect the environment and grow the economy. On the environmental front, since you were sworn in earlier this year, we have averaged a big environmental accomplishment every single day.

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

It's a new day at the EPA, where we will protect the environment and grow the economy. We will deliver on the Trump mandate every day, and we will fight with just one constituency front of minds, and that is the American people.

Thank you, Mr. President, for being willing to take a bullet for this country. And if you were to ask me what I'm grateful for, whether it's at Thanksgiving, it's at Christmas, at Hanukkah, New Year's—any time of year, the fact that this President, after 4 years serving in office, he could have just left it in the rearview mirror and went on to really enjoy retirement, but he is willing to take a bullet for all of you tuning in at home because he believes in this flag, our freedom, our liberties, and to save the greatest country in the history of the world.

So I'm grateful——

Secretary Rollins. Amen.

Administrator Zeldin. ——this holiday season for you, Mr. President. You're willing to take a bullet for all of us. And by all of us, it's the American public.

The President. Thank you.

Secretary Rollins. Well said.

The President. That's really nice. Thank you.

Linda.

Secretary of Education Linda E. McMahon. Mr. President. Good morning, everyone.

Well, in spite of the fact that your charge to me is to fire myself—[*laughter*]*—*we've really been incredibly hard at work making sure that we can return education to the States.

And as I sit and listen to all the emergencies that we are addressing in this country, from the economy to our borders to everything that we're doing, I would say, sir, that if we do not fix education in our country with this hard reset that you are expecting, I think the greatest national emergency we could face is our education. Because if we are not going to educate our children, we're going to continue to fall behind the rest of the world. When there are only 30 percent of 12th graders, 8th graders, and 4th graders that can read at proficiency level, that is an incredibly harsh statement to make about our country.

[*Secretary McMahon continued her remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And going into next year, I can honestly say that we've got a lean, mean machine operating at the Education—at the Department of Education. There's only half the workforce when we started and we're more efficient, and I think we're going to see better results as we move into next year.

So thank you for this——

The President. Thank you.

Secretary McMahon. ——incredible opportunity.

The President. Thank you very much.

Bobby.

Secretary Kennedy. Thank you, Mr. President, during this holiday season, for empowering us at HHS—me, Dr. Makary, Jay Bhattacharya, and Dr. Oz—to change the trajectory of this agency towards public health and away from the tradition of serving the mercantile interests of the medical industrial complex and the big pharmaceutical companies.

Two weeks ago, we ended, under your leadership, a 20-year war on women by removing the black box warnings from hormone replacement therapy. The medical cartel was telling women that hormone replacement therapy during menopause was dangerous for them.

In fact, here's what the science said. It ends—it diminishes the risk of fatal heart attacks by 25 percent, cardiac disease by 50 percent, Alzheimer's by 35 percent, bone fractures by 50 to 60 percent. It improves appetite. It improves sleep. It improves energy. It improves happiness.

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

On deregulation, HHS proudly is now leading the pack. And, you know, thank you for your help on that, Russ. But today we announced the retraction, the revocation of the nursing home rule, which was overburdening rural areas across this country, Indian reservations, with regulations that were going to destroy the nursing home industry in those communities. And that is going to be a \$25 billion savings.

Those are some of the things that we're doing because of your leadership. President Trump, thank you so much, and merry Christmas to you.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Bobby, very much. Great job.

Doug.

Secretary of the Interior Douglas J. Burgum. Well, Mr. President, you've assembled an incredibly talented group here. If you took a look at this group compared to any Fortune 500 leadership team, any group of startup folks, I mean, this is an amazing group in the breadth of what's being accomplished.

And the timing couldn't be better because, with your leadership and vision, you've set us up for this age of abundance as we head into next year, the 250th anniversary of this country. And what are we heading into that year? As we've talked around the table, you heard about massively lower taxes, massively lower regulation, abundant energy, record capital investment coming in, job growth. I mean, we are set up to really have something to celebrate next year.

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

We are doing so many things, whether it's hundreds of homeless camps, thousands of graffiti sites, cleaning up ponds and fountains, preparing this thing—the United States is never going to be performing better economically. It's never going to be looking better, just like the White House has never looked better, all because of your vision and leadership.

So, again, thank you, sir. You've given an incredible Christmas gift to Americans by setting us up for an incredible 250th anniversary.

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

Marco.

Secretary Rubio. Well, thank you, Mr. President. First of all, this is a very talented team, as you've seen and as you know, because you picked every single one that's on. You deserve tremendous credit for doing that. It's an honor to be in this role.

It's also an honor to be involved in and be a witness to what I believe is the most transformational year in American foreign policy since the end of the Second World War, at least. And it's transformational because, for the first time in a long time, we have a president who basically puts America at the forefront of every decision we make in our relations with the world.

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

I close with this. And I know I'm last, so I wanted to be fast, but there was a lot to cover. [Laughter] I do want to say this is the most wonderful and magical time of the year. By that, of course, I'm referring to the college football playoffs. [Laughter]

And I just want to say the—as a point of personal privilege, if—and I'm a Florida Gator, but if the University of Miami gets screwed out of the college—the football playoffs after going 10 and 2 and beating Notre Dame, the whole thing should be scrapped, and you're going to have to take over it next year, Mr. President. [Laughter]

The President. Good.

Secretary Rubio. Thank you.

The President. That's great.

Secretary Rollins. Amen.

The President. Well, thank you all very much. That was terrific.

I hope it wasn't too long, but it was very concise. And we've done a lot. This group has done a lot. Amazing. Everyone, everybody at this table has done a fantastic—and, Susie, thank you for doing a great job as our Chief of Staff.

First female Chief of Staff in the history of our country, which is pretty amazing, when you think of it, right? And she's the best. Thank you very much. Great job.

So, after that, do you want to ask any questions? [Laughter]

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Federal Reserve System Leadership

Q. Mr. President, you—there's been a lot of speculation about who the next Fed Chairman could possibly be. You said you have somebody in mind.

The President. Yes.

Q. How many names were you given on the final list? And does that person currently work on the Board of Federal Reserve?

The President. Well, I'd say that we probably looked at 10, and Scott interviewed some people that I didn't know and—but he knew. And a lot of people were involved in the process, actually. And Howard was involved. But I think we probably looked at 10, and we have it down to one.

Q. Can you tell us who that is?

The President. No. [Laughter]

Former White House Senior Adviser Elon R. Musk

Q. No? I want to ask you about Elon Musk, if I could. You talked about Elon Musk, you had him at dinner here in the White House. Is he now back in your circle of friends?

The President. Well, I really don't know. I mean, I like Elon a lot. He was a very—he really helped during the election with his endorsement. He felt strongly.

Look, we had one problem. You know, I didn't want to have everybody have to have an electric car, and he makes electric cars. And yes, I think we get—I think we get along well.

Q. And on affordability, if I could. On affordability.

The President. Go ahead. You finish, yes.

2024 Presidential Election/Consumer Prices

Q. Yes. One more, yes. When you talk about affordability, is—going forward, are the American people, do you believe, getting impatient with the reforms that you're making? They've talked about—it's about a—

The President. No, I think they're getting fake news from guys like you. Look, "affordability" is a hoax that was started by Democrats who caused the problem of pricing, and they didn't end it when—look, they lost in a landslide. We won every swing State. We won the popular vote. We won everything. You take a look at districts: It was 2,750 to 500—525.

Because—that was an affordability problem. We brought it down. Look at energy. Look at—look at the gasoline price. That's, like, the simplest, and it's the biggest, because if energy comes down, everything comes down. That's the way it works. We are going to be at \$2.50. You said \$1.99, in some places in the country, right, Chris—

Secretary Wright. Yes.

The President. You said it. I didn't say it. And they won't check you. They'll check me.

So, you know, I'd like to use your number: \$1.99 a gallon. Unthinkable, if you go back a year and a half ago. It's unthinkable.

So, no, we're bringing the prices down, way down. Beef is coming down now. We've done certain magic, and beef is coming down. But we inherited horrible prices. We inherited, really, the worst—again, the worst inflation in history. We inherited that. When I came in, that's what he had.

And we fixed inflation. And we fixed almost everything, if you want to know the truth, including eight wars. We got one to go, but including eight wars. But when—they always say—I watched today where they have a race going on right now in Tennessee, and this woman goes, "Affordability, affordability." They're the ones who caused the problem. The prices were way high. We're bringing the prices down.

But they're like scam artists. You know? They're con—I call them con men and women. They come out, they say, "Affordability," like, "Oh, oh, I see prices." We're going to get prices down still further, but we brought them down from the prices they cost. The reason that they had the highest inflation in the history of our country is because they had the highest prices. But we brought them down, and now we have normal inflation.

Yes, please.

Q. Mr. President, thank you so much for taking questions—

The President. Thank you.

Q. —with your assembled Cabinet.

The President. Sure.

U.S. Airstrikes on Suspected Drug-Trafficking Vessels in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific/Opioid Addiction Epidemic/Illegal Immigration

Q. I wanted to clarify something that you had said on Sunday regarding the boat strikes near Venezuela. You had said that you didn't know if the second strike on that one boat had happened, but you wouldn't have wanted it. Now that your administration has acknowledged that it happened, do you support that second strike?

And, Mr. Secretary, I wanted to clarify something you had said in the interview back in September, I believe on Fox News. You said that you would watch that strike live on television in real time. Did you know that there were survivors after the initial strike?

The President. Well, look, all I know is this: Every boat that you see get blown up, we save 25,000, on average, lives. Twenty-five thousand lives. And they've been sending enough of this horrible fentanyl and other things, like cocaine and other things, but fentanyl right now is the leader of the pack to kill our entire nation, because a little speck on the head of a pin can kill somebody. It's very dangerous stuff. I know so many people where their sons weren't drug addicts. They had one little sample, and they died. They died. They were—they couldn't believe it.

As far as the attack is concerned, I did—you know, I still haven't gotten a lot of information, because I rely on Pete. But to me, it was an attack. It wasn't one strike, two strikes, three strikes.

Somebody asked me a question about the second strike. I didn't know about the second strike. I didn't know anything about people. I wasn't involved in it. I knew they took out a boat. But I would say this: They had a strike.

I hear the gentleman that was in charge of that is extraordinary. He's a extraordinary person. I'll let Pete—Pete speak about him, but Pete was satisfied. Pete didn't know about a second attack having to do with two people. And I guess Pete would have to speak to it.

I can say this: I want those boats taken out. And if we have to, we'll attack on land also, just like we attack on sea. And there's very little coming in by sea. I think we've knocked out over 90 percent of it. There's very little—and I understand that. There's very little.

We're saving hundreds of thousands of lives with those pinpoint attacks. It's an amazing thing when you see a boat going along, and, you know, a lot of the press would like to say they're not—you see the boat—they're not, maybe, drugs. You see these boats. First of all, who has five engines on the back of a boat going in weird directions and loaded up with lots of white containers? [*Laughter*] They're all—they're bags of things. No, they've done an amazing job, and Pete has done an amazing job.

Pete, you could probably——

Secretary Hegseth. Yes, sir.

The President. ——better answer the question——[*inaudible*].

Secretary Hegseth. No, you're spot on, sir. I think you've got to start with the baseline—which Marco laid out, everybody's laid out. You've got 20 million people invading our country over four years. We don't know where they're coming from. That includes Tren de Aragua and cartels and violent criminals. They bring drugs, and you mentioned it, Mr. President, poisoning—an intentional poisoning of the American people, killing hundreds of thousands of Americans.

So the President had the courage to designate these cartels as designated terrorist organizations. Now, a number of us here served in the military and spent 20 years fighting terrorists like Al Qaida and ISIS on the other side of the world. How do you treat Al Qaida and ISIS? Do you arrest them and treat them—pat them on the head and say, "Don't do that again"? Or do you end the problem directly by taking a lethal, kinetic approach? And that's the way President Trump has authorized the War Department to look at these cartels.

And I wish everybody could be in the room watching our professionals—our professionals like Mitch Bradley, Admiral Mitch Bradley, and others at JSOC and SOCOM and other commanders. The deliberative process, the detail, the rigorous—the intel, the legal, the evidence-based way that we're able to—with sources and methods that we can't reveal here that make sure

that every one of those drug boats is tied to a designated terrorist organization. We know who's on it, what they're doing, what they're carrying. All these white bales are not Christmas gifts from Santa. This is drugs running on four-motor fast boats or submarines that we've also struck. No one's fishing on a submarine. And I have empowered them to make that call.

Now, the first couple of strikes, as you would—as any leader would want, you want to own that responsibility. So I said, "I'm going to be the one to make the call" after getting all the information, and make sure it's the right strike. That was September 2. There's a lot of intelligence that goes into that—building that case and understanding that. A lot of people providing information. I watched that first strike live.

As you can imagine, at the Department of War, we got a lot of things to do. So I didn't stick around for the hour or 2 hours, whatever, where all the sensitive site exploitation digitally occurs. So I moved on to my next meeting.

Couple of hours later, I learned that that commander had made the—which he had the complete authority to do; and by the way, Admiral Bradley made the correct decision—to ultimately sink the boat and eliminate the threat. He sunk the boat—sunk the boat—and eliminated the threat. And he was the right call, we have his back, and the American people are safer because narcoterrorists know you can't bring drugs through the water and eventually on land if necessary——

The President. You have to do that.

Secretary Hegseth. ——to the American people. We will eliminate that threat, and we're proud to do it.

Q. So you didn't see any survivors, to be clear, after that first strike? You personally.

Secretary Hegseth. I did not personally see survivors, but I stand—because that thing was on fire. It was exploded and fire or smoke. You can't see anything. You got digital, there's—this is called the fog of war.

This is what you in the press don't understand. You sit in your air-conditioned offices or up on Capitol Hill, and you nitpick, and you plant fake stories in the Washington Post about "kill everybody"—phrases on anonymous sources, not based in anything—not based in any truth at all. And then you want to throw out really irresponsible terms about American heroes, about the judgment that they made. I wrote a whole book on this topic, because of what politicians and the press does to warfighters.

President Trump has empowered commanders—commanders—to do what is necessary, which is dark and difficult things in the dead of night on behalf of the American people. We support them, and we will stop the poisoning of the American people.

Q. And, Mr. Secretary, on the second strike. You said it happened more than an hour after the first. Did I hear you correctly?

Secretary Hegseth. I couldn't tell you the exact amount of time.

Q. Minutes or—you had left the room, is what you're saying?

Secretary Hegseth. I already stated my answer quite clearly.

The President. So remember this. We lost, last year—I think it was more than that, but, you know, people don't like saying it, because I always said 100,000, 115,000—numbers we've been hearing for years. So we lost, last year, more than 200,000 people. Dead people. Ruined families beyond the 200,000. And those 200,000, that family will never be the same. But these people have killed over 200,000 people, actually killed over 200,000 people last year.

And those numbers are down. Those numbers are down. They're way down. And they're down because we're doing these strikes, and we're going to start doing those strikes on land too.

You know, the land is much easier. It's much easier. And we know the routes they take. We know everything about them. We know where they live. We know where the bad ones live. And we're going to start that very soon too.

And you know what? When we start that, we're going to drive those numbers down so low. And then you're going to have families be able to live without the fear of their son or daughter just having a pill to have a little fun and ending up dying within a period of 60 seconds. Right?

No, we're not going to let that happen. We're not going to let it continue to happen.

What Biden did to this country by allowing all these people—and I call them animals, in many cases; I think they're animals—to come into our country and destroy our country and let all those drugs pour in, let people just walk across the border like it was nothing. You look at them, a lot of them, you know, and you say, "Oh, let's not discriminate." I'm not talking about color. I'm just talking about you look into the eyes of some of these people—we're smart—and you see a killer. "Come on in. Just come on in." 11,888 murderers. Many of them committed more than one murder. He allowed them into our country totally unvented, totally unchecked.

But he also allowed drugs to come in at record numbers, and hundreds of thousands of people a year died. And we're taking those son of a bitches out.

Yes.

Q. Thank you so much, Mr. President, for taking our questions. I think this is the most transparent administration I ever seen in my life.

The President. I'm impressed by these people that—I'll tell you, how strong are you? You been holding that thing for—[*laughter*—]for 2 hours. You know, there are very few physically—there are very few people who could do—I'm very proud of you, whoever the hell you are.

Q. Thank you.

The President. I have no idea who you are, but you're strong. [*Laughter*]

Q. Thanks.

U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities/Kurdistan/Iraq

Q. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, last week, militia groups in Iraq attacked the Kurdistan region's gas field—the largest gas field—which even the U.S. companies invested in the energy sector in the Kurdistan region. And the Kurdistan Prime Minister requested the United States to provide them some sort of means and defense system to defending their civilian infrastructure and U.S. investment in the Kurdistan region. Are you willing to providing them this support?

And if I add this question: Tomorrow the United States going to open and integrate one of the——

The President. Could you speak louder?

Q. Yes, of course.

The President. Is that possible? [*Laughter*] Boy, you have the most gentle, beautiful voice, but——

Q. Thank you.

The President. —you're a very gentle person. [*Laughter*] Go ahead. Just take fewer words and louder.

Q. Yes, sure. I'll repeat my first question.

Last week, the Iraqi militia groups attacked one of the largest gas field in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, which even the U.S. companies have invested in these gas fields.

The President. Yes.

Q. And then——

The President. Are you from Iraq?

Q. I'm from Kurdistan—Iraqi Kurdistan.

The President. Okay.

Q. Yes. I'm working for Rudaw Media Network. And the Kurdistan region Prime Minister—he requested the United States to providing them some sort of defense system to defending these gas field and U.S. investment in the Kurdistan region. Are you willing to helping them?

The President. Well, we're going to look at it. I heard about it, and I'm hearing about it more now, frankly. It wasn't at the top of my list. It's a very unusual question, I think. But I assume you're from the area and, to you, it's a very important question. And to me, it is also because people are being killed.

I will say this: Iraq has been much different in terms of us than they were prior to us taking out the nuclear capability of Iran.

You know, Iran has gone down many, many steps in terms of its fear factor. They were the bully of the Middle East, and they're really not the bully of the Middle East anymore. And Iraq was being bullied by Iran, yes. We had a President that thought it was brilliant to blow them up, and they blew them up, and, all of a sudden, instead of having a power that was basically equal to Iran, they had Iran ruling the Middle East for a long period of time.

But Iraq [Iran; White House correction], from the day we hit them with those B-2 bombers and knocked out and obliterated—because CNN said, "Well, maybe it wasn't total obliterated"—well, it turned out it was totally obliteration. It was—every single one of those missiles hit its target. It was actually amazing, but it was wiped out. Totally wiped out.

I will tell you, Iraq has been a much friendlier place. They talk to us. The Prime Minister actually nominated me, along with about 78 other countries, for the Nobel Prize. I am the only one that was nominated by almost 100 countries that didn't get it, but that's okay. But I saved a lot of lives. I saved a lot of lives.

But Iraq nominated us for the Nobel Prize, and that was a great honor. You know, we didn't expect that from Iraq.

Iraq has been a much different place since the taking out of Iran and the nuclear capability.

Yes. Let's get to another question.

Here we go. This guy is a beauty. Go ahead.

Russia/Ukraine

Q. Secretary Rubio mentioned the meetings ongoing in Russia today. Do you have any update from Mr. Witkoff or Mr. Kushner on that?

The President. No. No update——

Q. Or what are you hoping to get out of those?

The President. —because I've been spending too much time with you. [*Laughter*] I mean, we're spending a lot of time in here. [*Laughter*]

We wanted to do this very—you talk about being open and transparent. This has to be the most transparent administration in history.

Q. How high are your hopes for that meeting?

The President. You know, we spend a lot of time answering your questions and giving you a lot of good—you know, good results. I mean, I think everybody here gave you good results.

But no, I don't. I will have after I leave here.

Q. Do you hope for a breakthrough, or is it not quite at that stage yet?

The President. I don't know. I don't know. Look, I don't know. All I can tell you is that we're trying very hard to get—to save 25- to 30,000 people—mostly men, mostly soldiers—every month—25,000 to 30,000 soldiers. It's impossible. That's half a stadium. Take a big football stadium, that's—take half of those people in a stadium, and they're wiped out. They're killed every month.

It's crazy. That war is crazy, and it would have never happened with me, and it would ha- — and it didn't happen for four years.

Colombia/Venezuela/Illegal Immigration

Q. And you just mentioned potential land strikes. Can you elaborate anything on that? Are you talking about—

The President. Yes, I'll elaborate.

Q. —Venezuela, presumably?

The President. If they come in through a certain country or any country or if we think they're building mills for—whether it's fentanyl or cocaine—I hear Colombia, the country of Colombia, is making cocaine. They have cocaine manufacturing plants. Okay? And then they sell us their cocaine. We appreciate that very much.

But yes, anybody that's doing that and selling it into our country is subject to attack.

Q. So not necessarily just Venezuela?

The President. No. Not just Venezuela, no.

Venezuela has been very bad. Venezuela has been really bad in something else, probably worse than most, but a lot of other people do it too. They would send murderers into our country. They would empty their jails into our country. They sent people into our country that we don't want. They sent their drug dealers and their drug people into our country. They sent people from their mental institutions into our country. And we're getting them out.

That was bad. That was real bad, and they also sent drugs.

Yes.

Governor Timothy J. Walz of Minnesota/2028 Presidential Election/Somali Immigrants in Minnesota/Representative Ilhan A. Omar

Q. On Tim Walz, Mr. President. Do you think he should resign over the fraud scandal in his State?

The President. That who should?

Q. Tim Walz. Over the fraud scandal in his State, do you think he should—

The President. Look, I think the man is a grossly incompetent man. I thought that from the day I watched J.D. destroy him in a debate. [*Laughter*] I was saying, "Who was more incompetent, that man or my man?" [*Laughter*] I had a man, and he had a man. They were both incompetent. And I had a man and a woman. I thought she was very incompetent too, but now she's leading the field. And I think she's leading the field in this—for the nomination.

Anyway, look, that's up to them. That's up to the Democrats.

You know, the problem with them is, they have really bad policy, and I'm not going to say what it is, because I don't want them to change it, necessarily—[*laughter*]—because I want to run against it, whether it's—it's not going to be me. It's going to be somebody that's going to—probably sitting at this table. Could be a couple of people sitting at this table. Could be a couple of people running together sitting at this table, you know. [*Laughter*]

But I want them to win, because we've done a great job for this country, and I want that to be carried forward. And you know, I think we have a tremendous bench, really a tremendous bench.

But no, I think that Walz is a grossly incompetent man. There's something wrong with him. Okay? There's something wrong with him. And when you look at what he's done with Somalia, where Somalia, which is barely a country—you know, they have no—they have no anything. They just run around killing each other. There's no structure.

And when I see somebody like Ilhan Omar, who I don't know at all, but I always watch her—for years, I've watched her complain about our Constitution, how she's being treated badly, our Constitution. "The United States of America is a bad place." Hates everybody, hates Jewish people, hates everybody. And I think she's an incompetent person. She's a real terrible person.

But when I watch what is happening in Minnesota, the "Land of 1,000 Lakes," or however many lakes they have—[*laughter*]—they've got a lot of lakes——

Secretary Duffy. Ten thousand.

The President. But this beautiful place, and I see these people ripping it off. And now I'm understanding—and you're going to look into that, Scott?

I hear they ripped off—Somalians ripped off that State for billions of dollars—billions—every year, billions of dollars. And they contribute nothing. The welfare is like 88 percent. They contribute nothing.

I don't want them in our country, I'll be honest with you. Okay? Some of you'll say, "Oh, that's not politically correct." I don't care. I don't want them in our country. Their country is no good for a reason. Their country stinks, and we don't want them in our country.

I could say that about other countries too. I can say it about other countries too. We don't want them the hell—we got to—we have to rebuild our country.

You know, our country is at a tipping point. We could go bad. We're at a tipping point. I don't know if people mind me saying that, but I'm saying it. We could go one way or the other, and we're going to go the wrong way if we keep taking in garbage into our country.

Ilhan Omar is garbage. She's garbage. Her friends are garbage. These aren't people that work. These aren't people that say: "Let's go. Come on, let's make this place great." These are people that do nothing but complain. They complain. And from where they came from, they got nothing. You know, if they came from paradise, and they said, "This isn't paradise"—but when

they come from hell and they complain and do nothing but bitch, we don't want them in our country. Let them go back to where they came from and fix it.

Secretary Hegseth. Hear! Hear!

Secretary Rollins. Hear! Hear!

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much.

President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela

Q. Mr. President, has Maduro offered to leave?

The President. He would.

Q. No, I think he was answering——

Q. Are you sure?

Q. Absolutely.

Q. Mr. President, did you say he will? Did you say he will? Mr. Secretary, has Maduro offered to leave, sir?

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:49 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Vice President Kamala D. Harris, in her capacity as the 2024 Democratic Presidential nominee; Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell; James Dimon, chairman and chief executive officer, JPMorgan Chase and Co.; Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Mehmet Oz; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; White House Chief of Staff Susan Wiles; Venezuelan opposition leader and Nobel Prize for Peace recipient María Corina Machado; Spc. Sarah Beckstrom, USA, and Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe, USAF, members of the West Virginia National Guard, who were shot in an ambush-style attack during a patrol near the White House in Washington, DC, on November 26; Evalea and Gary Beckstrom, parents of Spc. Beckstrom; Melody Wolfe, mother of Staff Sgt. Wolfe; Rahmanullah Lakanwal, suspected gunman in the shooting; Gov. Jay R. "J.B." Pritzker of Illinois; Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago, IL; Lip-Bu Tan, chief executive officer, Intel Corp.; former Secretary of Transportation Peter P.M. Buttigieg; Adm. F. Mitchell Bradley, USN, Commander, U.S. Southern Command; and Prime Minister Muhammad Shia' al-Sudani of Iraq. Secretary Kennedy referred to Commissioner of Food and Drugs Martin A. Makary; and National Institutes of Health Director Jay Bhattacharya. Reporters referred to Prime Minister Masrour Barzani of the Kurdistan Regional Government; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff; and the President's son-in-law Jared C. Kushner. Secretary Hegseth referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on December 3.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Beckstrom, Evalea; Beckstrom, Gary; Beckstrom, Sarah; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela J.; Bradley, F. Mitchell; Burgum, Douglas J.; Buttigieg, Peter P.M.; Chavez-DeRemer, Lori M.; Collins, Douglas A.; Dimon, James; Duffy, Sean P.; Gabbard, Tulsi; Greer, Jamieson L.; Harris, Kamala D.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Homan, Thomas D.; Johnson, Brandon; Kennedy, Robert F., Jr.; Lakanwal, Rahmanullah; Landry, Jeffrey M.; Loeffler, Kelly L.; Machado, María Corina; Maduro Moros, Nicolas; McMahon, Linda E.; Musk, Elon R.;

Noem, Kristi L.; Omar, Ilhan A.; Oz, Mehmet; Powell, Jerome H.; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Rollins, Brooke L.; Rubio, Marco A.; Sudani, Muhammad Shia' al-; Tan, Lip-Bu; Trump, Melania; Turner, E. Scott; Vought, Russell T.; Walz, Timothy J.; Wiles, Susan; Wolfe, Andrew; Wolfe, Melody; Wright, Christopher A.; Xi Jinping; Zeldin, Lee M.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Agricultural production, strengthening efforts; Air traffic control system, modernization efforts; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Attorney General; Border security; Cabinet meetings; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid; China, President; China, trade with U.S.; Christmas; Columbia, drug production and trafficking; Director of National Intelligence; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; District of Columbia, shooting of National Guard servicemembers near White House; Economic improvement; Egg prices; Electric and hybrid vehicles, promotion efforts; Environmental Protection Agency; Federal regulations, reduction efforts; Federal Reserve System; Gasoline costs; Health care costs and affordability; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Illegal immigration; Illinois, crime in Chicago; Illinois, Governor; Inflation; Intel Corp., U.S. Government ownership stake; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Iraq, Prime Minister; Iraq, security cooperation with U.S.; Japan, trade with U.S.; Louisiana, Governor; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Mexico, border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Minnesota, Governor; Minnesota, Somali refugees; National Guard; Nobel Prize for Peace; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Office of Management and Budget; Oil and natural gas, domestic production; Opioid epidemic, efforts to combat; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Secretary of Agriculture; Secretary of Education; Secretary of Energy; Secretary of Health and Human Services; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Secretary of Labor; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Interior; Secretary of the Treasury; Secretary of Transportation; Secretary of Veterans Affairs; Secretary of War; Small Business Administration; South Korea, trade with U.S.; Suspected drug-trafficking vessels, U.S. airstrikes in Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific; Tariffs; Tax Code reform; U.S. Border Patrol; U.S. diplomatic efforts, expansion; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Trade Representative; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; Venezuela, drug production and trafficking; Venezuela, President; Veterans, health and medical care; Vice President; White House Ballroom construction project; White House Border Czar; White House Chief of Staff.

DCPD Number: DCPD202501155.