

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025*

## **Remarks at a Hanukkah Reception**

*December 16, 2025*

*The President.* Well, thank you very much. Nice place. I guess you've mostly been here, but you like it a lot better with Trump than you liked it with Biden. *[Laughter]* That I can tell you. That's because you're smart.

Well, I'm thrilled to welcome so many good friends to the White House as we celebrate the third night of Hanukkah. Right? Third night. *[Applause]* Time flies.

### *Shooting at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia*

Let me take a moment to send the love and prayers to our entire Nation, to the people of Australia, and especially all those affected by the horrific and anti-Semitic terrorist attack—and that's exactly what it is: anti-Semitic—that took place on a Hanukkah celebration in Sydney. What a terrible, terrible thing. We don't learn.

We're joined in mourning all of those who were killed, and we're praying for the swift recovery of the wounded. Some are very horrifically wounded, as you probably know. All nations must stand together against the evil forces of radical Islamic terrorism, and we're doing that.

### *Hanukkah*

Joining us tonight, our Commerce Secretary, Howard Lutnick, who's doing a fantastic job. Representatives Paul Gosar, David Kustoff, Claudia Tenney, Ronny Jackson—he was my White House doctor. Ronny was asked: "Who's the healthiest of all? Was it Barack Hussein Obama?"

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* "Was it Sleepy Joe Biden?"

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* "Or was it Donald Trump?" And he said Trump was by far the healthiest. He was the doctor for all three of us, and he said Trump was by far the healthiest. I love him. If he didn't say that, I would never have talked to him again. *[Laughter]* Where is Ronny? Is he here? Ronny Jackson, what a great legend.

Josh Gottheimer is here. Mr. SALT is here—Mike Lawler. He's the only guy that could have gotten that for New York. Nobody else. He worked so hard on that. Will you please focus on the midterms, please? Do you mind? Okay? Because you can do it.

Jared Moskowitz. Thank you, Jared. Thank you, Jared. Max Miller is here. Great old Max. He was my music man in the White House. He knew music better than any human being. Craig Goldman. Thank you, Craig. And Randy Fine. New to Congress, but he's done a great job. He's been great.

As well as the mayor of Boca Raton, Florida, Scott Singer. Thank you very much. Thank you, Scott. Good place. I love Boca.

National chairman of the Republican and Jewish Committee [Coalition; White House correction], Norm Coleman. Thank you, Norm. Looking good, Norm.

CEO of the Republican Jewish Coalition, Matt Brooks, who says Trump is the greatest president we've ever had, so I like him. No, I'll take Matt any day. Thank you, Matt.

CEO of the Israeli American Council, Elan Carr. Thank you.

Oh. We have a man. I have to take a little time, because every Saturday night—used to be Sunday. Then it—he did so well that they put him on Saturday too. Saturday night. Do you know who I'm talking about? Because there's only one that has Saturday and Sunday.

And Saturday is considered Death Valley, but it's not death because of ratings. Nobody gets good ratings, although, actually, my daughter-in-law is doing well, and you always did well.

The great one, Mark Levin. And much more importantly, his much more brilliant wife. Where are you? There you are. Would you—come on up here, both of you. Get up here. Get up here.

I get—look, every Saturday, every Sunday, I'm forced to watch television to listen to this guy talk about how freaking great I am. *[Laughter]* Because he does like Trump. There's no question about it.

Come on up here, Mark. Get up here. Come on up. What a beautiful couple. Did you get lucky? If you weren't a genius, you wouldn't have a wife like this. *[Laughter]*

Mark, say a couple of words. Come here, darling. And these people do like Israel.

*Radio program host Mark Levin.* Hold on. And he loves Israel too.

*The President.* It's true.

Thank you.

*[At this point, Mr. Levin addressed the President as follows.]*

*Mr. Levin.* Thank you. Two seconds. Just 2 seconds.

Six years ago, I was up here, and I said, "This is our first Jewish President."

*The President.* That's true. It's true. *[Laughter]*

*Mr. Levin.* Now he's the first Jewish President to serve two not——

*Julie Strauss Levin.* Not consecutive.

*Mr. Levin.* ——not consecutive Presidencies. We thank you for everything.

*The President.* That's right. That's right. Bad things happened on the second one. Namely, the election was rigged. And we found out. And you see that happening.

But——

*Mr. Levin.* And you are the greatest President.

*The President.* Thank you very much.

*Mr. Levin.* And God bless you. I miss you. I miss you.

*The President.* Thank you, Mark. Thank you.

Take care of that guy. Take care of that guy. No, he's so great. Thank you, Mark, for both being here. Both, really, are amazing.

So Rabbi Yehuda Kaploun. Thank you, Rabbi.

Oh, no. Sid Rosenberg. There he is. Sid. Do you want to come up here, Sid? Mark, should I let Sid come up, Mark? I think so. Come on, Sid. So Sid has got the number-one radio show in New York. Got the number-one radio show in New York, like, by far. ABC. Works for a really

nice guy too. Actually, he's not that nice, but he's nice as far as I'm concerned. He works for a good man.

Say a few words, Sid. Thank you.

*Radio program host Sid Rosenberg.* First of all, I love you.

I love him. Do you all love him?

*Audience members.* Yeah!

*Mr. Rosenberg.* Has there been a President even close to this guy? Even close?

*Audience members.* No!

*Mr. Rosenberg.* And you know how I know how much I love him? He starts tonight talking about Australia. Good luck with anybody else in our Government starting with the Jewish people in Australia. Nobody better. And the fact you called me up on stage—I'm going to say this: My beautiful wife Danielle, is in the audience. The birth of my two children. Outside of that, President Trump, this right now is the greatest moment of my life.

*The President.* Thank you, man. Thank you. He's almost crying. He never cries. He hasn't cried since he's a baby.

*Mr. Rosenberg.* [*Inaudible*—to cry. Thank you.

*The President.* Well, he's a great guy and a great man, and he loves Israel. And, boy, it is—you got some good people.

Harmeet, thank you very much. Harmeet Dhillon is here. And she sues the ass off of anybody that is anti-Semitic. She's doing a lot of them right now. Harvard wished they never heard her name, right? They're going to pay a lot of money, right, Harmeet? Going to pay a lot of money.

Sid, it's an honor to have you up. And you do a great show, and we appreciate it. And say hello to the Catsimatidis person, who's fantastic.

And another person—I really love her. I think she's a beautiful woman. You're not allowed to say that anymore, because if you do, it usually means the end of your political career. But I've been threatened much worse than that. I think she's a beautiful woman inside and out. Liz Pipko.

Liz, thank—come up here. Enough with the Sid and the Mark. Come on up here. Look at her. She has been so strong for Israel and for our country.

Liz, say a few words, please. Hi, thank you.

*Former Republican National Committee spokesperson Elizabeth Pipko.* First, I want to address the elephant in the room, which is me, tonight. [*Laughter*] I am grateful to President Trump for so many things, but now most of all, I'm grateful for this tiny miracle which exists because Donald Trump ran for office in 2016. I met the love of my life on that campaign. And now, in addition to saving the world, I will have a child thanks to President Trump. So.

And much more importantly, the Jewish people have been through a lot, of course, the last few years, the last weekend. And I just hope on this holiday of miracles, we realize what a miracle it is to be in the greatest country on the face of the Earth, in the most beautiful building, and with the greatest President this world has ever seen.

*The President.* Thank you. Congratulations. That's right. She was on the campaign, and she was so effective and great.

And we always have to remember the ones that have been great in good times and bad. That's why Mark and the people I introduced—because I don't introduce them when they're just sort of good.

When they're good—a lot of—everyone is good. The day after I won the election, they were all: "Sir, I just want to tell you you're the greatest person I've ever seen. Thank you, sir. I'd love to have dinner sometime." Where have you been for the last 2 years? *[Laughter]* We know about—we have a lot of those people, mostly those.

Jason—how are you, Jason? Jason Greenblatt. Do you know Jason Greenblatt? He worked for me for years. He's a great lawyer. Then he made a lot of money, and he said, "I'm getting out." And you focused on Israel, right? That was the focus. He says: "I love Israel. I just want to focus on Israel." It's good to see you. I haven't seen you in a long time. But he was a great lawyer.

Here's another great lawyer. David, good to have you here. Good to have you here, David.

And we have another person that's a very special person. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She is a beautiful woman, actually, in my opinion. Another one. That's two reasons now. And through—by the way, Mark, we have three reasons, Mark—because your wife is incredible, always from day one.

But I think it's okay if we ask Miriam Adelson. Do you want to come up, Miriam? Come up here, Miriam. Miriam gave my campaign, indirectly and directly, \$250 million. She was number one. When somebody can give you \$250 million, I think that we should give her the opportunity to say hello. *[Laughter]* And, Miriam, make it quick, because \$250 million is not what it used to be. *[Laughter]* Okay?

Hello, darling. Come on. Incredible woman with a great husband, a man that loved Israel.

*Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Miriam Adelson.* Well, Mr. President, when you were in the Israeli Parliament, and you gave a speech and you saw me from far away, you could—and at that time, I came with a scooter to the Parliament just to hear you.

*The President.* That's right.

*Ms. Adelson.* I wanted to hear you live. And then, you say, "Miriam Adelson." And I stood for a second, but it was so painful, so I sat. And then, you screamed, "Miriam, stand up!" *[Laughter]* And I wish you would have known, but I stood up and heard all your compliment. And thank you very much.

*The President.* I saw you back there standing.

*Ms. Adelson.* Yes, you saw me? Thank you.

*The President.* She stood up bravely.

*Ms. Adelson.* And now I met Alan Dershowitz, and he said the legal thing about 4 more years. And I say, "Alan, I agree with you."

So we can do it. Think about it. I would be——

*The President.* Alan is here someplace. Where's Alan?

*Ms. Adelson.* Alan is here? Oh, he had a flight.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*Ms. Adelson.* Think about it.

*The President.* Thank you.

*Ms. Adelson.* Maybe I will be the first one who told you or second. Yes.

*The President.* She said: "Think about it. I'll give you another \$250 million." [*Laughter*]

*Ms. Adelson.* I will give.

*The President.* But her husband, Sheldon, was an amazing guy. And he'd come up to the office, and there was nobody more aggressive than Sheldon. I think I spent more time with him—and you, because you usually came up together.

But he'd call and say, "Can I come over, please?" I'd say: "Sheldon, I'm President of the United States. It doesn't work that way anymore. It's—like, maybe tomorrow? How about tomorrow?" "No, no, no. Please, just for a little while."

And I would—he'd always say 10 minutes. It turned out to be about an hour and a half, right? And what he did is, he fought for Israel. That's all he really fought for. He just wanted to take care—he just wanted to take care of Israel.

So he was a great guy. He was a fantastic man. And he loved you so much, he couldn't see straight. So, good. Thank you, darling.

Be careful. Be careful. Be careful. We don't want her falling. You know, when you fall, it's not good for politics. [*Laughter*] We had a man that fell a lot. I don't want to talk too much, because I'll have my day, I'm sure, you know? They're waiting, the press. See all that press back there? They're waiting. Oh, would they like to see Trump trip off the stage. I would never live it down.

But anyway. But it's—and we have so many friends. I can't mention everybody. We have so many friends.

Hello, my man. How are you? Boy, we have good people here tonight, huh? This is a—this is the A-list. This is the A-list of any list.

But it's an honor to have you all. It really is. It's true. What you've done and what you've gone through is incredible. And as a people, there's never been anything like it.

You know, I told Bibi—I said, "You know, it's amazing what you've done," because when you look at the Middle East, you take a map of the Middle East—I said: "The land is so small. It's so tiny. It's, like, hard to believe what you've been able to do."

Now, it helped the B-2 bombers that we sent in to wipe out the—[*laughter*—we gave them a lot of help. It helped when we were shooting all those drones down from jet fighters. Don't ever let anyone tell you a drone is better than a jet fighter.

A drone is very nice, but you have—when you have F-22s circling around them like this—nothing—just shooting the crap out of them, out of the air—don't let anyone convince you that a drone is better than an F-22 or an F-35 or any of that stuff. But they're nice. They're nice.

But we had our fighters shooting the hell out of—2,000 drones were launched at Israel, and they were just knocking them out. The only problem: On occasion, they'd run out of bullets. But every one of them took out a drone. And we did a great job.

And then we did—the best job of all, is we knocked out the Iran nuclear power. And they would have had that in—within a month, I think they would have been a much different story. Would have been talking from a much different place.

But the story of Hanukkah began more than 2,000 years ago in ancient Jerusalem, when the oppressive tyrant—and they were really oppressive—tried—and by way, a lot of things don't change so much. They'd be oppressive today if you didn't have strength. You need strength,

Mark, right? If you don't have strength and if you don't have a partner with a good President——don't forget, you had a President previously that believed in Iran. They ditched the entire world for Iran. That's why they signed the Iran nuclear deal that I terminated immediately. It was the worst deal.

And Bibi Netanyahu came over here to beg Barack Hussein Obama not to sign that deal, but he signed it. He signed it. It was a whole different world, and that's why I wonder—I got the highest Jewish vote.

Now, I have to say, in Israel, they say I'm at 99 percent. [*Laughter*] But over here, I was, like, at 50. It—it meant that 50 percent of the people over here voted for Kamala.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* Is that possible? Is that even possible, right?

*Audience members.* No!

*The President.* So, anyway—but they suppress the Jewish worship and imposed foreign rules.

[*A medical event occurred.*]

Are we okay over there? Just—I want to make sure you're okay. You okay?

*Audience member.* Yes.

*The President.* Good. I want to make sure you're perfect. Okay?

*Audience member.* [*Inaudible*]

*The President.* Thank you very much. Yes.

Yes, is there a doctor? Get a doctor over there, please. Just——

*Audience member.* Yes.

*The President.* ——just in case.

Go ahead. Hop over there, please. Okay? Good.

Thank you very much. Everything good? Okay.

Great person.

Against overwhelming odds, a small band of Jewish fighters rose up to defend the Jewish people's right to worship freely.

When they reclaimed the holy temple, they found only a single flask of sacred oil, just enough to keep the menorah's light burning for 1 night. They wanted that light to burn just for 1 night. Yet, as the story goes, that small flame endured for 8 days.

Do you know that story? Does everybody know that story?

For thousands of years, the miracle of Hanukkah has reminded us of God's love for the Jewish people, as well as their enduring resilience and faith in the face of centuries of persecution—centuries, and it continues. It continues.

Who would believe this could continue? And it sort of started here with schools and universities, and Harmeets taking care of that situation very strongly and the Department of Justice. Right? Who would believe it?

But we're grateful to be joined by another reminder of that unbreakable strength: two courageous survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, Jerry Warartski [Wartski; White House correction] and Michael Bornstein. Where are they? Where are you guys? Boy, you look good. You look better than I do. *[Laughter]* You look fantastic.

Jerry was only 9 years old when the Nazis invaded Poland. He lost both of his parents in the camps but refused to let their murder defeat him.

After the war, he came to New York, where he had an incredibly successful career—became very successful—and became a good friend of Melania and myself. And I want to thank you, Jerry. And that's incredible, what took place. Thank you very much. Thank you, Jerry. Thank you very much.

And Michael Bornstein lost both his father and mother in Auschwitz when he was just a very young man—a toddler, actually. Through the love and sacrifice of other family members, he managed to survive and reunite with his mother.

In later years, they would come to America, where Michael received a scholarship to college and eventually earned a Ph.D. in chemistry and became one of the most brilliant chemists anywhere around.

So, Michael and Jerry, I want to just thank you. We're honored to have you. This whole group of people are very honored to have you both. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, Michael.

As president of the United States, I will always support Jewish Americans, and I was always—I will always be a friend and a champion to the Jewish people. I have been. I always will be.

And I will say, you know, if you go back 10, 12, 15 years ago, at the most, the strongest lobby in Washington was the Jewish lobby. It was Israel. That's no longer true. You have to be very careful. You have a Congress, in particular, which is becoming anti-Semitic. You have A.O.C. plus three. You have those people. Ilhan Omar, she hates Jewish people.

*Audience members.* Boo!

*The President.* And you have to be very careful, because there's been a big change.

You know, if you go back 15 years ago—I'm not Jewish, but my father was very friendly with many, many Jewish people, was honored by Federation. I would go with him to Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and many other things, and we grew up respecting and loving Jewish people. You know, you don't even think about it—in Brooklyn and Queens, mostly.

And my father didn't go to Manhattan. He never went to Manhattan, from the standpoint—he could never understand how, in Brooklyn, you could buy a piece of land for \$3 a foot and how in Manhattan you had to pay \$1,000 a foot. *[Laughter]* He said, "I can't get that. I don't like it. I like to buy it for three." So it was different. It's a different thinking.

In a way, I'm glad he didn't do that, because he let me have some of that fun. *[Laughter]* And it was—I had a lot of fun in Manhattan. We did great.

But my father would tell me the most powerful lobby that there is in this country is the Jewish lobby. It's the Israeli lobby.

It's not that way anymore. You have a lot of people in your way. You have a lot of people that don't want to help Israel. You have a lot of people in Congress that don't like Israel. You have a lot of people in Congress that, in a way—I think, Mike, we could say it—right?—you're there; you're doing an amazing job, Mike Lawler. You—they hate—they hate Israel. They hate Israel.

And if you would have told me 15 years ago that that was possible, Jason, I would have said there's no way. There's no way that's possible. But it's happening. And obviously, it's getting progressively worse. Less so in the Senate, but the Senate is starting also. You get glimmers. You know, when I'm in the back rooms talking to people, you get glimmers of statements that you say, "Whoa, where did that come from?"

So we have to be—Sid, we have to be very careful, because it's—bad things are happening. And then you see what goes on in Australia or October 7. How about October 7? And then you have people that deny it ever happened.

How about the people that deny—like, they deny the Holocaust? But you know, you figure, "Well, that's just many years"—well, October 7 is not many years at all. And you have people that deny October 7—I saw tape that I never—I wish I never saw it, actually. I wish I never saw it. I got to see tape that some of you got to see. But as President, I got to see things I wish I never saw.

But there's no denying it. But then they'll say: "Oh, the tape was a rigged tape. It was a tape that never existed. They made it up. It's just propaganda." I don't know if they believe it. I don't think they believe it, but you have to be very, very careful. Bad things are happening, and we're not going to let that happen.

While I'm President—and the DOJ and Harmeet, we're not—we're not going to let it happen.

But please, please be vigilant and careful, because you have some bad people that are now in Congress that were unthinkable—unthinkable to be in Congress 12, 13, 14 years ago, 15 years ago.

Within days of taking office, I signed a historic Executive order to combat the vile scourge of anti-Semitism. As you know, it's the strongest executive order of its kind ever signed.

And we're also mobilizing Federal resources to protect Jewish students and faculty. The faculty is under siege. The students are under siege. When you look at Columbia, you look at Harvard, you look at some of these schools—what's going on.

But the faculty on campuses across America—and are deporting foreign jihadist sympathizers and terrorist supporters at record levels. We're deporting them. We're not putting them in jails. We're deporting them.

I terminated the disastrous Iran nuclear deal. And this summer, we obliterated Iran's nuclear program like nobody has ever seen.

And even that—CNN fake news, they're back there, the camera is roaring; their light will go off in—any second now. They hate when I mentioned their name, because they know it's only bad, because they're crooked as hell. *[Laughter]* They're fake news. You know the term. I think it's one of my better terms, Sid, right?

I don't think anybody takes it away. We had some good ones, "Pocahontas," and—*[laughter]*—but I think—I think "fake news" is probably pretty good. The only problem is, it's actually not strong enough. You know, fake—it's crooked, corrupt, disgusting news, but we'll have to do with fake. But fake—Sid, fake isn't strong enough. That's the only problem. It's actually—I wish I could come up with a word that's really more powerful than fake, but fake is good enough.

But CNN, with the attack on Iran, they said, "Well"—I used the word we "obliterated" them. You know why? Because the pilots told me. They know better than anybody. And the pilots told everything, and then we had visuals. These pilots are coming back after having endured the most dangerous ride. I said, "Did you guys"—you know, I had them all to the Oval Office after—two



weeks after the attack, I had them all. I had the pilots, and I had people that maintained the planes. I had the people that fly the tankers.

You know, we had 52 tankers because we had the seven major planes. We also had four planes flying in different—of the B-2—flying in different directions. Iran didn't know what the hell was happening. *[Laughter]* But we had a whole force of F-22s, the most beautiful fighter jet ever made, most powerful fighter jet ever made. And F-35 is a brandnew one. And they're stealth—believe me, they're stealth—because they went into Iranian airspace, and Iran never saw anything.

And it was—think of this, 2 o'clock in the morning. It was dark at night. There was no moon at all, no light, no nothing. And every single bomb went right down those air shafts into granite mountains, right down those air shafts. At 2 o'clock in the morning with no vision, every single bomb hit its target.

And CNN said, on the way back—they were on the way—they hadn't even landed yet, "Well, maybe the attack wasn't that bad," because I use the word "obliteration." I turned out to be right. The Atomic Energy Commission, shortly thereafter, said it was total obliteration. Iran actually said it was total obliteration.

*Audience member.* Touchdown.

*The President.* In fact, they said—touchdown, yes. It was a touchdown. But they—it was amazing. And we've never had an apology from CNN, you know? So you have fake news against you. Fake news.

And I didn't fight for you. I wasn't fighting for you there. I was fighting for those pilots that were so brave to go there. When they came into the Oval Office, I said, "You can't seriously enjoy this." They said: "Sir, we enjoy every minute of it. We were practicing this"—this and the predecessors—"We were practicing for 22 years," they said. For 22 years, they were practicing, and no President had the courage to let them go and do that.

They wanted to do it for 22 years, and the predecessors—meaning, the young pilots at the time. But for 22 years, three times a year, they were practicing that run. And I'm the one that said: "Let's go get them. Let's do it." And if we didn't—and they thanked me.

But I did say to the pilots, "You know, enough is enough." I said, "Do you really like being in that plane when they're waiting for you, they know you're coming, it's dark, it's cold, it's—everything is—and you're in a plane and there are bullets flying all over the place?" "Sir, I wouldn't trade this for anything in the world." Can you believe these people?

And I love you people, but I'm not getting in that plane. I love you guys, but these people are unbelievable—the talent they have, the way they can fly those things, the way they can aim it at a target in the dark of night—the darkest you've ever seen. They want it to be as dark as possible. They didn't want anything.

And the only time anybody could see those planes was when those bomb chutes open up, because it becomes totally unstealth. When it goes—I explained that to Mark Levin once. You're going in—you go like this.

*[The President made hand gestures to imitate a door opening.]*

And as soon as it goes like this——

*[The President repeated the hand gestures.]*

——for some reason, the plane is totally visible. Not good. *[Laughter]*

And I watched it happening—just, it's like, I'm sitting home watching it. You know, it's amazing. The Situation Room is an amazing place. But I watched them go bing, bing.

*[The President made hand gestures to imitate a door opening and closing.]*

*[Laughter]* It went bing, bing——

*[The President repeated the hand gestures.]*

——and two massive 100,000-pound bombs come pouring out, and the job they did was incredible.

I mean, compare that to—I mean, I—look, I thought he was a nice man, but compare that to the Jimmy Carter attack on Iran. That was not good, with the helicopters and the men running all over the place trying to get the hell out of there. This was not good.

This was the single greatest military attack that anyone has ever seen. And that sort of put an end to—we helped Israel very much, as you know, with their attacks on Iran before that, but that really put an end to it, because they were about a month away from having a nuclear weapon.

I officially recognized the true capital of Israel—and opened the American Embassy in Jerusalem.

Is Julie good? She's right—or is—where is Julie?

*Audience member.* Right here.

*The President.* Oh. Oh, good. I thought it was you that went down. Did—it wasn't you? Oh, good. I was worried about—I didn't care about anybody else. I said, "Is Julie in trouble?" I thought it was you. Good. It's somebody else. I wish them good luck, but I don't want that to happen to Julie. That's Mark's wife, by the way. And here, we love Julie, but I didn't see Julie ever going down. She's not—she's like a rock, right, Mark? She's a rock. I wouldn't want to have her as my enemy. She—also, a great lawyer, by the way.

I also recognized the Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, right? And that's one they didn't even ask me. Even Sheldon, who was the most aggressive human being there is in the entire world—*[laughter]*—this incredible woman, although she's—she had total control. He was aggressive with everybody but Miriam. Miriam—he wouldn't play games with Miriam, but he was actually a sweetheart.

But he never even asked me about the Golan Heights because he said, "That's a step too far." I actually gave it because I called up—I heard so much about "Golan Heights, Golan Heights." From Jason Greenblatt, I heard it. From so many people.

And I actually asked David Friedman. I said—he was the Ambassador at the time. Good guy. He said—and by the way, Mike Huckabee is doing a great job now. Great job. Two good ones. Two very good—but I asked David Friedman—I don't know if David is here—but I—I asked him because he is so Israel-oriented. I mean, he's great. I said, "David, tell me about Golan Heights in 5 minutes or less." You know, I'm taking in, like, a thousand years of history in 5 minutes.

I said, "Give it to me—give it to me in 5 minutes or less." And after about 2 minutes, I said, "I understand. You need it so badly for so many other reasons. You need it—you need it for defense."

You know, in the old days, before we had all the sophisticated radar and all the things, it was everything, because you were up high. But I learned enough, and I signed the Golan Heights—the rights to the Golan [Golan; White House correction] Heights over to Israel. Nobody thought that was possible to get. They've been working on it for 70 years, Mark. Seventy years.

You know, planes would fly into places. They'd have meetings that would last two, three days. All they talked about was the Golan Heights. Right, Jason? And nobody ever did anything, but I did it, and we did it quickly. And I say, "Good luck to you."

Then I found out the value of it: trillions of dollars. It could be worth—if you think, trillions of dollars. I said, "You know, maybe I should have asked him for something." [Laughter]

But with Jared Kushner's help—Jared has been a great fan of Israel—the Kushner family.

And by the way, how good is Steve Witkoff doing, right? You know, I got Steve involved in Russia-Ukraine and the Middle East.

We have—by the way, we have—bottom line, we have legitimate peace in the Middle East. You know, you may have a little outbreak every once in—but we have 59 countries all signed on. They want to—they'll do whatever is necessary.

And Hamas—what—say what you want, Hamas—you know, we got back all of the hostages and all of the dead, young, beautiful people that were dead, and nobody thought that would happen. In fact, I even said, "The toughest are going to be that final 20. We're never going to get them." But we played very tough, and we were very tough. We meant it. And we wanted to get back the 28 dead. Twenty-eight dead—young, beautiful people, dead—most of them, I think, pretty young—all of them, pretty young.

And the parents came up to me—and I told this story before; we had another little celebration of Hanukkah before—but I told the story before, where the parents were as dedicated to getting their dead son back as they were to getting the live son back. It was an amazing and a beautiful thing, but I didn't think it would be possible.

And then, when we got the 20 back—when we got the live back, we didn't have anywhere close to the 28 dead. And I said, "There's no way." But I said: "You've got to get them back. You've got to get them back." I told that to Hamas, "You've got to get them back." And you know what? One by one by one, we got them back. And we got the last one back. We got them all back.

And amazing though—those parents were as dedicated—I can't say "more," but they were as dedicated as the parents who knew their son was alive, and they begged to have them. And I'm very proud of it.

I thought the last one—and it was tough. [Inaudible]—know.

But Steve Witkoff was great. Jared Kushner was great. And you know, Jared is a brilliant guy, we all know, but Steve is a great dealmaker. But I noticed one thing about him: He had the greatest personality. He was a real estate guy in New York. He knew less about rivers and metes and bounds in Russia and the various places he's working on. He knew nothing about it. But I recognized—for 20 years, I've been dealing with everybody in New York. I said, "Steve has the best personality." I have other guys, they're great dealmakers, but you have to go into World War III before the deal. We didn't want that. I said, "Everybody loves Steve." He's a great dealmaker, but everybody loves him, and that's what turned out to be. People love Steve.

And I think we're going to be pretty close. I mean, we're going to see. I thought the easiest war to settle would be Russia-Ukraine, because I have a good relationship with Putin. It would have never happened if I were President. That would have never—and it didn't happen for 4 years. Putin understood, it would have never ever happened.

But Steve has done a fantastic job, and he loves Israel, and he's done a great job.

So, we did Israel, and we did peace in the Middle East, and we have a real peace. That's a real peace. If Hamas acts up, they know it's big trouble.

And we have Hizballah, as you know, in Lebanon, and they're big trouble. But we have peace, and we have many countries that want to go in and take out Hizballah if it happens, if we want to do it—not just Israel. Many countries would do it.

There's tremendous unity now in the Middle East. And we really do—we really have peace in the Middle East for the first time ever. So it's an honor. It's an honor.

So we did our cease-fire agreement to end the war in Gaza, which everybody said was an impossibility, and we begin the new era of that beautiful peace in a place that nobody thought peace was possible: the Middle East. So congratulations to everybody in this room. Everybody wanted it.

But the story of Hanukkah reminds us that light will always prevail over darkness, and faith and—triumph over fear.

Together, let us honor the eternal flame and the faith that has always protected the Jewish people. You are protected. You are special, special people. You are special people.

So I want to thank everybody. I want to wish you all a happy Hanukkah.

And you know, this is the first time that I've ever brought up notes to make a speech for—we do—we call them the Christmas dinners. I call them the Christmas-Hanukkah dinners, if that's okay. I hope you don't mind. But I call them New Year's dinners too.

But I've made about 20 of them so far. I've never had any notes. I brought this up. You know why? I've done so much for Israel that I have to read—look at it. I got, like, pages, and I don't want to leave anything out. I don't want to leave Golan Heights out. I want to tell you what we did.

But it's an honor to—it's an honor to help. You have so many friends, and you—a lot of you are right in this audience. A very special group of people.

You know, for every time we have one of these parties, we have to turn down 10 people for every 1 that makes it. It's the White House. Soon you'll have a ballroom that's so big I can handle a—and we just won the case today. Did you know that? Mark, we just won the case. We got sued. We're donating a \$400 million ballroom, and we got sued not to build it.

For 150 years, they've wanted a ballroom, and we're giving them—myself and donors are giving them, free of charge, for nothing. We're donating a building that's approximately \$400 million. I think I'll do it for less, but it's 400. I should do it for less. *[Laughter]* I will do it for less. But just in case, I say 400. Otherwise, if I go \$3 over, the press will say, "It cost more." I built—I build under budget and ahead of schedule. Right, Jason? Always. I know how to build under budget. I build good.

But we won the case. They asked for a restraining order to stop us from building a magnificent ballroom. I said, "Who would ask for a restraining"—we're giving them, Sid, a \$400 million—it will be the most beautiful ballroom, and it will handle Inaugurations. It's got 5-inch-thick glass windows. It—impenetrable by anything, but a howitzer. It's impenetrable.

Now, I will say, if I'm up making a speech someday, Mark, and I hear "ding, ding, ding," I'm out of there. *[Laughter]* But we have a—it's going to be one of the greatest—I think it'll be the greatest ballroom anywhere in the world.

But I said, "Who else but in our country would sue to stop a \$400 million beautiful ballroom that people have been after for the White House?" The White House has wanted a ballroom for 150 years.

You know, they used to use a tent, and they have a tent. And the tent would go in a very low area because it's the only area that can handle a big tent. And if it rained, the rain would go over the woman's beautiful shoes, with the high heels—about 6, 7 inches worth of water. They'd be sitting in the water. And people said, "We'd rather have that than a brand-new"—this ballroom is going to be amazing.

Also, designed to handle the Inauguration so that you have total safety from not only the weather—January 20 is always a disaster, from coldness standpoint. But you know, we had it in the Capitol, and there was nothing more beautiful, but from a safety standpoint, we can do better.

So we're going to have something that's really, really spectacular. And I thank the judge on the case for the courage in making the proper decision, because we didn't want to be held up. We would win that automatically, anyway, but we didn't want to be held up or delayed. We want to go.

And right outside, you see the pile drivers going "boom, boom, boom," and my wife is being driven crazy. *[Laughter]* She said, "This is not what I had in mind." You know, the first day, she was great. She heard these pounders, piles that go down 150 feet into the ground: "Boom." Second day, she was okay. Third day, she wasn't thrilled. And after that, it's been brutal. *[Laughter]*

But you know what? You're going to have the greatest ballroom anywhere in the world, and you're going to love it. It's going to fit beautifully with the White House.

Happy Hanukkah. Have a great year. We love you, and we love Israel.

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you, Mark. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Thank you, David.

So many friends. *[Inaudible]* Good luck, everybody.

Go—go get them, Harmeet. Don't disappoint these people.

Thank you, everybody. *[Inaudible]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:36 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Yehuda Kaploun; Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Harmeet K. Dhillon; John A. Catsimatidis, founder, Red Apple Group; former U.S. Special Representative for International Negotiations Jason D. Greenblatt; Alan M. Dershowitz, Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law Emeritus, Harvard Law School; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; former Vice President Kamala D. Harris, in her capacity as the 2024 Democratic Presidential nominee; Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna S. Pressley, Ilhan A. Omar, and Rashida H. Tlaib; Sen. Elizabeth A. Warren; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and Richard J. Leon, judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. He also referred to his daughter-in-law Lara J. Trump, in her capacity as host of Fox News Channel's "My View With Lara Trump" program; and his son-in-law Jared C. Kushner. Mr. Rosenberg referred to his children Gabriel and Ava. Ms. Pipko referred to her husband Darren Centinello. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on December 17.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Hanukkah reception.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Adelson, Miriam; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bornstein, Michael; Brooks, Matthew; Carr, Elan S.; Catsimatidis, John A.; Coleman, Norm; Dershowitz, Alan M.; Dhillon, Harmeet K.; Friedman,

David M.; Goldman, Craig; Gosar, Paul A.; Gottheimer, Josh; Greenblatt, Jason D.; Harris, Kamala D.; Huckabee, Michael D.; Jackson, Ronny L.; Kaploun, Yehuda; Kushner, Jared C.; Kustoff, David F.; Lawler, Michael; Leon, Richard J.; Levin, Julie Strauss; Levin, Mark; Lutnick, Howard W.; Miller, Max; Moskowitz, Jared; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria; Omar, Ilhan A.; Pipko, Elizabeth; Pressley, Ayanna S.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rosenberg, Sid; Singer, Scott; Tenney, Claudia; Tlaib, Rashida L.; Trump, Lara J.; Trump, Melania; Warren, Elizabeth A.; Wartski, Jerry; Witkoff, Steven C.

*Subjects:* 2024 Presidential election; Anti-Semitism; Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division; Australia, shooting at Bondi Beach in Sydney; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Hanukkah; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; Israel, Prime Minister; Israel, relations with U.S.; Israel, U.S. Ambassador; Israel-Hamas cease-fire agreement implementation; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary organization; Middle East, regional integration and security; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of Commerce; Tax Code reform; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions; U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; White House Ballroom construction project.

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