

**Remarks on United States Naval Ship Development and an Exchange With
Reporters in Palm Beach, Florida**
December 22, 2025

The President. Beautiful. Wow, it's beautiful. It's the first renderings of what we're doing.

So I want to wish everybody a big hello and merry Christmas. And welcome to Mar-a-Lago for this exciting announcement of the new Golden Fleet. We're calling it the Golden Fleet that we're building for the United States Navy. As you know, we're desperately in need of ships. Our ships are—some of them have gotten old and tired and obsolete, and we're going to go the exact opposite direction.

We're delighted to be joined by Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who's doing a fantastic job, and Secretary of the Navy John Phelan. Marco Rubio is here, who gave a great few words toward the end of last week. He spoke for a couple of hours on what a good job we're doing, which is true.

As Commander in Chief, it is my great honor to announce that I have approved a plan for the Navy to begin the construction of two brandnew, very large—the largest we've ever built—battleships. You know, you used to build the *Iowa*, the *Missouri*, the *Wisconsin*, the *Alabama*, many others. We had big battleships. These are bigger, but they will have 100 times the—they'll be 100 times the force, the power. And there's never been anything like these ships.

These have been under design consideration for a long time, and it started with me in my first term because I said, "Why aren't we doing battleships like we used to?" And the—these are the best in the world. They'll be the fastest, the biggest, and, by far, 100 times more powerful than any battleship ever built.

So, if you look at the *Iowa*, the *Missouri*, *Wisconsin*, *Alabama*, and others—but they're—they were similar in size, some a little bit bigger than the others. But if you take the biggest one, it's 100 times more powerful. They're longer by a little bit, but the—and they're bigger; they're bigger ships. But they hold much more—they use the word "lethality."

Battleships are the largest, sturdiest, and most heavily armed vessel built specifically for naval combat. While America has built many new warships over the years, they've been—they've tended to be smaller—much smaller and not conducive to where we are and where we're going in peace through strength.

But including—we've been building aircraft carriers. We're going to be upping that also. We're going to be going to a superior aircraft. We have the *Ford* class. We're going to be upping that to a different class of aircraft carrier. And we haven't built a battleship since 1994.

These cutting-edge vessels will be some of the most lethal surface warfare ships. They will be, actually, the most ever built other than our submarines. We have submarines which will have, in many ways, even more lethality. And we have many of them under construction.

Each one of these will be the largest battleship in the history of our country, the largest battleship in the history of the world ever built. And again, it's 100 times more powerful than the previous *Iowa* class. It's called—those are the big ones that you'd see on a show, "Victory at Sea." I don't know if anyone has seen "Victory at Sea," but it was a classic.

They'll help maintain American military supremacy, revive the American shipbuilding industry, and inspire fear in America's enemies all over the world. We want respect. We're going

to have it. We already have it. We're more respected now than we ever were. A year and a half ago, they laughed at us. Now they respect us again at levels that they've never respected us.

We envision that these two ships—we're talking about 10, but we're going to start with 2, and we're going to quickly morph into 10. And ultimately, we think it's going to be anywhere from 20 to 25 of these. But we're starting with the first 2 immediately, and we're going to then be very quickly involved with, I think—we're going to do another 8, and then we're going to ultimately, and pretty quickly, have a total of about 20 to 25. We'll make that determination.

We envision that these ships will be the first of a whole new class of battleships to be produced in the years to come, from *Theodore Roosevelt*, the Great White Fleet—you remember that?—the Great White Fleet, to the legendary USS *Missouri*, whose massive guns helped win World War II.

America's battleships have always been unmistakable symbols of national power. We stopped making them for whatever reason. I don't know. And I want to congratulate John Phelan, who is your Secretary, Secretary of the Navy. He came to me. And the first day we met, he talked about battleships, and I said, "You're absolutely on the right track." He said: "Why are we doing other things? We have missiles, which are much more expensive."

By the way, these battleships have tremendous numbers of missiles, but they also have guns. And, in many ways, guns can do the trick just as well as missiles at a tiny fraction of the cost.

Once completed, these new 30- to 40,000-ton-plus vessels will be the flagships of the American naval fleet, and they'll be never—there has never been anything built like them.

And I just want to—I want to be very clear that we're building them here. We're working with others, but we're building them here. We have great navy yards. We'll be negotiating with some of the companies that are running those yards, taking over the yards.

We used to build a ship a day during World War II. Now we don't do ships very much anymore. We do military ships. We do submarines. By the way, we're 15 to 20 years advanced in our submarines over anybody else. That was one of the things that I did in my first term.

We make the best submarines by far in the world. We're at least 15 years advanced, ahead of anybody else in submarine development. Most powerful—that's right. The most powerful weapon anywhere in the world. Undetectable.

So the battleships are going to be armed, just in terms of guns and missiles, at the highest level. They'll also have hypersonic weapons—many hypersonic weapons; state-of-the-art electric rail guns; and even the high-powered lasers that you've been starting to read about.

We have lasers where you aim the laser at a target, and it just wipes it out. We're going to have—they'll be the most sophisticated lasers in the world, and the most sophisticated laser in the world will be on the battleships that we're building.

They'll also carry the nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles currently under development, which will be instituted pretty quickly, but they're under development, and they've proven to be extremely lethal. The U.S. Navy will lead the design of these ships along with me, because I'm a very aesthetic person, alongside our partners in American industry.

And we're going to have Pete Hegseth and Marco and a lot of very talented people involved. But a lot of it's already been done. We've been doing this for months.

The construction will create thousands of American jobs. We're going to have the jobs be created. I mean, already we have factories being built, unrelated to this, although AI will be a big factor when it comes to these ships. They'll be very AI-controlled.

Today's announcement is yet another step in our mission to make the United States Navy stronger than ever before. Again, when you talk about 100 times the power of these massive ships that we had years ago, it's pretty amazing.

And next week, I'm going to meet with the defense prime contractors. I'm going to meet with them here, Florida. And we're going to be talking about production schedules, because they're too slow. We have many countries, allies that are wanting to buy. We make the greatest equipment in the world by far. Nobody is even close. But they don't produce them fast enough.

So we're going to be meeting with them to talk about the production schedules. We're going to have strong production schedules, and the only way they're going to be able to do that is to build new plants. Even with the F-35—we have many people want the F-35 fighter jet, and it takes too long to deliver them to allies or to ourselves. Takes too long.

The only way they're going to be able to deliver them is if they build new plants. They don't want to build new plants because that's expensive. So we're going to be discussing production schedules. We're going to be discussing CapEx spending. We'll be discussing the pay to executives, where they're making \$45- and \$50 million a year and not being able to build quickly. If they're going to make that kind of money, they have to build quickly.

Again, we make the best equipment in the world, but they don't make them fast enough. And we're going to be also discussing dividends. We want the dividends to go into the creation of production facilities. So we'll be talking about all CapEx dividends and the pay.

We're also going to be talking about buybacks. They spend so much money on buybacks. They want to buy back their stock. I don't want them to buy back their stock. I want them to put the money in plant and equipment so they can build these planes fast, rapidly, like immediately.

I mean, I have sold more planes than any President by far, times, probably, 20. Every time I go someplace, I sell a hundred planes. That includes commercial planes, Boeings, et cetera, but it also includes fighter jets. And I'm always having to say, "5 years," "6 years," "7 years." Helicopters—Apache helicopters, many years. India bought them. They want to get them. They don't want to wait a long time.

So we don't want to have executives making \$50 million a year, issuing big dividends to everybody and also doing buybacks. And then they say, "Well, we don't have the money to build a plant." They've got to build plants: plants to make F-35s, plants to make helicopters, plants to make the F-47 new jet. And that's it, and that's what I'm going to be talking to them about. They're going to start spending money on building airplanes and ships and the things that we need, not in 10 years and 15 years. We need them now. And we're strong about it.

Last week, the Navy announced a brandnew class of frigate, and they're going to be working with the South Korean company Hanwha. Good company. Recently agreed to invest \$5 billion in Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. We're opening up the Philadelphia shipyard. Once a great yard. Now, it was a long time ago decommissioned, but now it's reopening, working with the Navy and working with private companies.

The record-setting defense bill I signed last week authorized \$26 billion to build new ships, including destroyers and various others. We already have a lot of submarines, as you know, under construction. We're building a lot of submarines, I tell you. To be exact, we have, right now, 15 submarines under construction or ready to start. And we have, again, the greatest submarine in the world, with our technology, like they talk about chips—well, I would say submarines are a bigger deal than chips. We have—we're at least 15 years ahead of any other competitor. China, Russia, nobody can come close.

We're also building, right now, three large aircraft carriers in addition to the ones we have. And we have, actually—interestingly, we have a lot of submarines. How many submarines do we have now all together? Approximately.

Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan. Sir, over 30 today.

The President. Huh? What?

Secretary Phelan. Over 30—[inaudible].

The President. We have over 30. But these are the super-duper subs, and these—and there's nothing like them. So we're going to be doing from 12 to 15 brandnew submarines.

We have a couple of other things going on. We'll be building other—elements of Navy. We'll be fixing up headquarters. We'll be fixing up places for our great sailors to live. And we're going to be working very hard with companies, but we're also going to be penalizing companies that aren't doing a good job.

For instance, when they built the *Ford*—*Gerald Ford*, the cost overruns were ridiculous. That was done in Norfolk, Virginia. We're going to be talking about that with that company. The cost overruns were out of control.

In World War II, the United States built upwards of four ships per day. Can you believe it? Four ships a day, on average. And it's—now, they weren't all big warships, but they were ships, freighters, tankers. And it's a tragedy that we allowed this incredible capability to just go astray. We don't do that much anymore. We do build our warships, but that's about it. But that's a lot.

We're going to restore America as a major shipbuilding power. We're going to ensure the U.S.A. is the most powerful fleet anywhere in the world and long into the future, with battleships helping lead the way and the submarines. And again, nobody competes with us on submarines.

So I just want to thank everybody, and I'd like to ask Secretary Hegseth to say a few words, followed by the Secretary. But if you would—Secretary of the Navy. But Pete's doing a fantastic job.

By the way, we have—drugs are down 96.2 percent, coming into the United States—92.6, by sea. And soon we'll be starting the same program on land. The land is much easier. But every one of those boats that we knocked out saved 25,000 lives. So we save 25,000 lives every time we knock out one of those boats with the drugs pouring in. And you just have to see it. I mean, people say, "Oh, gee, do you think it was really drugs?" Well, just take a look. Bags all over the place. That's not fishing equipment. There's no fishing rods on those boats.

They move fast. When you see a boat with four engines or five engines on—you know, going 40, 50 miles an hour, well, they get hit. We save 25,000 lives every single time we knock out a boat. And it's over 96 percent stopped by sea. We're trying to figure out who the other 4 percent are, frankly. And we're going to have the same success but even quicker, because it's much easier on land.

If they want to come by land, they're going to end up having a big problem. They're going to get blown to pieces, because we don't want our people poisoned. Three hundred thousand people died—probably last year, 300,000. A lot of people say it was 200. Somebody said last night, "It was only 175,000 people." That's like three stadiums—big football stadiums filled up with people died. But I think the real number is 300,000. We're not going to have that anymore.

So we're doing a great job, and we enjoy doing it. Our border is secure. Our country is strong. Trillions of dollars is coming into our country from other countries and companies. They're building factories and plants, including auto plants, all over the United States of America.

Without tariffs, they wouldn't be doing anything, although they were very happy with the November 5 election.

But it's only because they want to avoid paying tariffs that they're all coming in. And again, the biggest number was \$3 trillion in history. That was China many years ago. Now it's \$18 trillion, and that's just in 10 months. We think we could hit \$20 trillion. That's investment in the United States, including plant and equipment.

So thank you very much. And I'll ask Pete to say a few words, and then John. And if you have any questions, we'll take them. Thank you.

Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

Well, Mr. President, you're exactly right. There are no fishing poles, no fishermen, and no fishing boats, just drug dealers and narcoterrorists. And with every strike, we're saving American lives. No other President was willing to do real deterrence. That's exactly what's happening.

It's an honor to be here, Mr. President, Mr. Secretary, and Secretary Rubio, to talk about what peace through strength really looks like. You can talk about it or you can invest in it and you can build it, and that's exactly what President Trump is doing.

At the Department of War, we're restoring the warrior ethos. In fact, the President mentioned the NDAA. We put into law merit based. We put into law getting rid of DEI and political correctness. That's now part of how our military operates, and you've seen it in record recruiting and the spirit of the Department of War.

We're rebuilding the military—President Trump did it once; he's doing again—with historic investments today in shipbuilding. And we're reestablishing deterrence, whether that's at the border; whether it's through Golden Dome; what happened with Midnight Hammer and what Iran found out; those drug boats; and of course, the Houthis opening up the shipping lanes.

American strength is back on the world stage. And the announcement of the Golden Fleet, anchored by new battleships, the biggest and most lethal ever, accomplishes all three of those things and marks a generational commitment to American sea power.

Across the entire department, we are developing new operational concepts, deploying cutting-edge technologies, and making major investments, including in our Navy. This is all—this is happening in all domains, including space, as the President has talked about before anyone else.

So it's the highest of domains and the lowest of domains undersea and especially today in sea power that always has to be decisive, has been in the history of America, and will continue to be under the leadership of President Trump.

We will make sure that anything that flows from our country and with our allies—allies flows freely and uncontested. New and better ships will provide that deterrent today and for generations to come.

This new class, these new investments will be the types of things that for decades, for centuries, the American people will look back and thank President Trump for having the vision and the willingness to invest right now in capabilities we need today, tomorrow, and long into the future.

So, Mr. President, thank you for this investment.

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Secretary Hegseth. And I'll hand it over now to the Navy Secretary.

The President. Thank you.

Secretary Phelan. Mr. President, Secretary Hegseth, Secretary Rubio, thank you for being here on a very consequential day.

From my very first conversation with President Trump about serving as the Secretary of the Navy, he's talked about the great *Iowa*-class battleship and why America doesn't build ships anymore with that kind of offensive firepower that takes the fight to the enemy.

During my time in the job, I've talked extensively with our combatant commanders like Admiral Paparo and Admiral Cooper and our CNO, Admiral Caudle. And what I've learned is, is that not only is the President's idea a good one, it's something the Navy desperately needs and now has a formal requirement for.

The future Trump-class battleship, the USS *Defiant*, will be the largest, deadliest, and most versatile, and best-looking warship anywhere on the world's oceans. I want to thank the President for his vision to make this game-changing capability for the United States Navy.

The *Iowa* was designed to go on the attack with the biggest guns, and that's exactly what will define the Trump-class battleships: offensive firepower from the biggest guns of our era. This ship isn't just to swat the arrows. It is going to reach out and kill the archers. And for the first time in generations, we'll have a new leg in America's nuclear deterrence, because the Trump class battleship will carry the nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile.

Striking dominance isn't all that the Trump class battleship brings to the fight at sea. It has the size and capacity to serve as a flagship for our fleet commanders so that they can command and control naval forces far out to sea.

As shown in the series, and the President mentioned it, "Victory at Sea," Admirals Bull Halsey and Raymond Spruance commanded the war in the Pacific from their battleship flagships during World War II. Now this new battleship will command everything from warships to drones and everything in between.

We're going to make battle ship—battle groups great again, and this is just one piece of the President's Golden Fleet that we're going to build with the investments he talked about: a new frigate, the right frigate, the one our war fighters have told us they need; more amphibious power for our Marines with new capabilities, like medium landing ship.

As part of the Navy's high-low mix, we're moving out aggressively on unmanned vessels with funding from the President's "One Big Beautiful Bill" to bring options to the fight and pull new, nontraditional defense partners into the American shipbuilding ecosystem.

And we're making a generational investment in support ships. Logistics wins wars, and that kind of shipbuilding is the spark that will ignite the industrial base and help power the commercial shipbuilding that the President has called for.

Under your leadership, Mr. President, we will have more tonnage and firepower under construction than ever before in our history.

Building the President's Golden Fleet means jobs across the United States now. There will be work for shipyards everywhere, from Philadelphia to San Diego, from Maine to Mississippi, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast, and for manufacturers that will build components for this battleship in every State.

The President has been clear: We must bring back our American maritime industrial might. And he has told me many times that, as Secretary of the Navy, it is my job to equip our sailors to win the fight at sea with the finest ships in our history.

To conclude, the USS *Defiant* battleship will inspire awe and reverence for the American flag whenever it pulls into a foreign port. It will be a source of pride for every American when it brings home our brave sailors, who will sail *Defiant*, raise their fists and say, "We are peace through strength." And our adversaries will know when the Trump class USS *Defiant* appears on the horizon, American victory at sea is inevitable.

Thank you, Mr. President. Now when a conflict arises, you are going to ask not one but two questions: Where are the carriers? And where are the battleships? Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

I just want to mention that John Phelan is one of the most successful businessmen in the country—in our country. Been a tremendous success. And he wanted to do this, and for nothing. He's taken probably the largest salary cut in history. But he wanted to do it. He wants to rebuild our Navy, and you needed that kind of a brain to do it properly.

So I just wanted to give you a little information on him, which is probably enough. But one of the most successful men in the country, and he's that because he understands it, and he understands finance, in addition to what we're talking about.

Somebody who's doing a fantastic job is Marco Rubio, Secretary of State. And, Marco, maybe say a few words, and then we'll answer some questions. Thank you.

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. Thank you, Mr. President. And I don't have much to add. This is a phenomenal presentation. Thank you, Mr. President. This is American industrial power returning. This is the ability, once again, to rebuild, to have industry in the United States. This is generational in the change, not just in terms of applying American war power, increasing our ability to protect the seas. The U.S. Navy is the single biggest source of peace in the world of all of our forces because it gives us a global footprint, but it rebuilds American industrial capacity.

The ability to make things again in our country has been critical to what the President's agenda has been all about, and this is a tangible reminder of it. And I know the country is grateful for it, and generations of Americans will be grateful for it.

So thank you.

The President. Thank you, Marco.

By the way, I think—I'd just like to point out that these ships are made of steel as opposed to aluminum. It's a big difference, as you know. The battleships—the great battleships had 6- and 7-inch steel hulls, and these are going to be, likewise, made out of very powerful steel. Our steel industry is coming back very strongly, by the way. It's coming back at record numbers, and we're going to be using them for the steel, but as opposed to an aluminum side, which, in all fairness, is not the same.

So, John, we're going with all steel, I understand.

Secretary Phelan. Yes, sir.

The President. And that's going to be something that people are surprised. More expensive, but not even comparable in terms of the importance and the strength.

Yes. Please.

Timeline for Ship Construction and Delivery

Q. What's your timetable for these first two ships? And do you see them as a counter to China?

The President. I—yes, we'll start—we're going to start almost immediately, and we're probably talking about 2½ years.

China

Q. And in terms of the mission, do you see it as a counter to China?

The President. It's a counter to everybody. It's not China. We get along great with China. I have a great relationship with President Xi. And not China. It's just everybody. You don't know who comes along. But we just wanted peace through strength. Hopefully, we never have to use them, but there will never be anything built like these.

Think of it. Those battleships are incredible. These have 100 times the power. Think of that. I mean—and they were big, and they were powerful.

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

You know, I thought about taking some that are in dry dock and changing them. And then, when I said that, you know, if we did, it would be about—we could increase—if we doubled them, they'd be at, like, just a tiny fraction of what one of these was. This is the new technology, which is incredible. So we decided pretty early on not to do that.

Yes. Please.

Venezuela/U.S. Drug Interdiction Efforts

Q. Mr. President. Julio Rosas with MostlyPeaceful.media. You just referenced the lower amount of illegal drugs are coming by sea, and you just said that you're going to start that same program on land soon. Are you just referring to Venezuela?

The President. No.

Q. Or are you referring to——

The President. No.

Q. ——to other countries——

The President. Anywhere.

Q. ——in Latin America?

The President. Anywhere drugs are pouring in. Anywhere. Not just Venezuela. No.

Yes.

U.S. Seizure of an Oil Tanker in International Waters

Q. Speaking of Venezuela——

The President. Yes.

Q. Oil. What are we going to do with the oil that we have?

The President. Going to do with what?

Q. The oil that has been seized. The United States seized 1.9 million barrels of oil on December 10th.

The President. We're going to keep it.

Q. Where——

The President. We're keeping it.

Q. Where is it going to—are we going to sell it or put in the strategic oil reserve?

The President. I mean, we're going to keep it. Maybe we'll sell it. Maybe we'll keep it. Maybe we'll use it in the strategic reserves. We're keeping it. We're keeping the ships also.

Yes, please.

Venezuela

Q. About Venezuela, sir. Have you spoken to American oil companies that have had their assets seized about what a post-Maduro——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——Venezuela would mean for them——

The President. I have——

Q. ——and what——coming back and restarting operations?

The President. All of them. The big ones. Yes, I have.

Yes, please.

Illegal Immigration/Tren de Aragua Criminal Organization

Q. Why do you feel like this initiative was neglected for so many years? And does this come amidst the rising tensions between the U.S. and Venezuela?

The President. We're talking about with Venezuela?

Q. Yes.

The President. Well, you had a different kind of a President before me. They didn't mind being ripped off. They didn't mind being robbed. They didn't mind drugs pouring into our country. They didn't mind the jails of Venezuela and Tren de Aragua being emptied into the U.S., where they take over Colorado and other places. I do mind. So you had a different kind of a President. I hope people are enjoying it, because we've never been respected more than we are now.

Yes, please.

Department of Justice Files Concerning Deceased Convicted Sex Offender Jeffrey Epstein/Former President William J. Clinton/National Economy/Consumer Prices/Prescription Drug Prices

Q. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. Were you surprised by the number of photos of Bill Clinton in the Epstein files? And you—can you commit to their full——

The President. By what?

Q. In—were you surprised by the number of photos of Bill Clinton in the Epstein files? And can you commit to their full release by the end of the year? Some of the victims were protesting that too many of them are redacted.

The President. I know there are a lot of people that are angry about all of the pictures of other people, you know? But I think it's terrible. Look, I don't like the—I like Bill Clinton. I've always gotten along with Bill Clinton. I've been nice to him. He's been nice to me. We've always gotten along. I respect him. I hate to see photos come out of him. But this is what the Democrats—mostly Democrats—and a couple of bad Republicans, are asking for.

So they're giving—there are photos of me too. Everybody was friendly with this guy. Either friendly or not friendly, but they were—you know, he was around. He was all over Palm Beach and other places. The head of Harvard was his best friend, Larry Summers. And Bill Clinton was a friend of his. But everybody was. I actually threw him out of Mar-a-Lago. And as a—you know, as a person that was in Mar-a-Lago, I threw him out. Mar-a-Lago is—this is Mar-a-Lago. It's the hottest place in—I think it's the hottest place in the world, but it's the hottest place in Florida. And everybody would come here. He'd come here. We actually threw them out.

But no, I don't like the pictures of Bill Clinton being shown. I don't like the pictures of other people being shown. I think it's a terrible thing. I think Bill Clinton is a big boy. He can handle it. But you probably have pictures being exposed of other people that innocently met Jeffrey Epstein years ago, many years ago, and they're, you know, highly respected bankers and lawyers and others. And they'll end up, because of guys like Massie, who's a real low-life—whose polls are down to about 9 percent, by the way, in the great State of Kentucky. If you look at Kentucky, Kentucky is such a great place. But I don't know, they've got a couple of people in there that are very strange in terms of leadership. But Massie is a loser, and he likes it, and he works with the Democrats. He's just being used by the Democrats.

Because what this whole thing is with Epstein is a way of trying to deflect from the tremendous success that the Republican Party has. Like, for instance, today we're building the biggest ships in the world, most powerful ships in the world, and they're asking me questions about Jeffrey Epstein. I thought that was finished. I believe they gave over 100,000 pages of documents.

And there is tremendous backlash. It's an interesting question, because a lot of people are very angry that pictures are being released of other people that really had nothing to do with Epstein, but they're in a picture with him because he was at a party, and you ruin a reputation of somebody. So a lot of people are very angry that this continues. A lot of Republicans are angry because of the fact that it's just used to deflect against a tremendous success.

Look, we have \$18 trillion coming into our country. We have—I believe we're going to have the most successful economy in history. We inherited a mess. Now prices are coming way down. Gasoline is less than \$2.00 in some States. \$1.99, \$1.97, \$1.95 a gallon. \$1.95—think of that—a gallon. Nobody ever thought they'd see that.

They don't want to talk about that. They want to talk about Epstein. And the problem is a lot of Democrats are being caught up in the web, like Larry Summers. Larry Summers was the head of Harvard. He's now been forced to resign from every board he's on, and he was thrown off the Harvard board. Now, he was—you know, he was at Epstein's island a lot. I wasn't. I never went there, by the way, but—fortunately. It's nice, but I never went there. But a lot of people did go there.

But instead of talking about the battleships, or instead of talking about most favored nations, drugs—we're bringing down drug prices like at a level that has never even been thought of, by thousands—think of it—by 1,000 percent, by 1,200, 1,300, 1,400 percent in some cases. A drug that sells for \$10 in London is costing \$130 in New York. We're bringing it down to \$20, and they're going to go up to \$20. So they're going from \$10 to \$20, which is a doubling. It's a doubling. That's a lot, but it's a doubling. But we're going down to \$20. So we're going down. If you can do the—your own math, but it's—it's 2,000 percent, 3,000 percent. It's pretty amazing.

And you know, the New York Times had a story about it, a small story, way in the back of the paper. It's the single biggest thing to happen in—with respect to drugs probably in 50 years. There's never been anything like this.

In my first term, I was able to get drug prices down one-quarter of 1 percent. It's the first time in 28 years that they went down. One-quarter of 1 percent. I was so proud of myself. Now we're doing them 2,000 percent, 1,500 percent, 1,200 percent. That pill that sold for \$130 will now be selling, as an example, for \$20, because the rest of the world took advantage of us. Without tariffs, I could have never done it.

I called up the heads of the countries. As an example, France: I spoke to a very good man, President Macron of France, and I said, "Emmanuel, you have to raise your drug prices." He said: "No, no, no. We will not do that." I said, "You have to." He said: "No, I don't want to do that. Look, you're asking me for—to go to \$10 to \$20. You're going to come way down to \$20. We don't want to do that."

Now, in all fairness, no other President even tried. But if they did try—there was actually a fake story in stupid USA Today. I didn't even think they make it anymore. I haven't—but I saw a story where Biden was—was trying to do this. Biden never tried to do it. Biden didn't know he was alive. He never tried to do it.

But they're taking it from \$10 to \$20. So he would say—and the other leaders said the same thing. "No, no, we won't do it." I said, "No, no, you're going to do it, 100 percent." They said: "Nope, we're not doing it. We're not going to double our price." Because, again, if you go from \$10 to \$20, they're doubling their price. We're coming down, though, from \$130 to \$20, because we're going to get the lowest drug prices in the world. Whatever the lowest price is—called favored nations—we're going to have the lowest price.

So I said, "No, no, you're going to." "No, no, I will not do this. Politically, it's unacceptable." I said: "Emmanuel, you're going to do it 100 percent. Please accept it now. Be nice. You're going to do it 100 percent." "No, no, no. I will not." I said, "Yes, you are." He said, "Why do you keep telling me I am when I'm not?" "Because if you don't do it, I'm going to put a 25-percent tariff on everything France sells into the United States of America, and that's approximately 20 times more than I'm asking for with respect to drug prices." He said, "Oh, I see. I agree to do it."

Every other country said the exact same thing. They all said, "Nope, I will not do it." I said, "All right, on Monday morning, you'll have the 25-percent tariff, everything you sell." In the case of France, it was wine, champagne, cars, everything they sell.

It's 25 to 30 times the price of what we're talking—at 25 percent. Every single country agreed. And that was a big problem. The drug companies were difficult but fine, because we have a certain control over the drug companies. We had no control over these foreign nations. So, every single country has agreed to do this.

So we will take that pill price down. As an example—talking about not just pills; we're talking about everything. We'll take it down from \$130 a pill down to \$20 a pill, and the rest of the world will take it from \$10 a pill up to \$20. It's the biggest thing ever to happen, and it's covered—barely covered in the New York Times, because it's a fake newspaper.

Yes.

Manufacturing Workforce/U.S. Shipbuilding Industry

Q. Mr. President, on shipbuilding, how does the administration plan to ensure that there's sufficient workforce availability as you're producing these ships?

The President. Could you speak up?

Q. How does the administration plan to ensure there is sufficient workforce availability as you're producing these ships?

The President. We're going to have it.

Q. Enough workers.

The President. We're going to have tremendous workforce availability. We're also going to have robots helping us. We're going to have a lot of robots helping us, because we need it and—because we're going to town. We're building a lot, between the AI and the auto plants. So we're going to need robots. We're going to have robots.

But that's going to help us. We're going to have tremendous workforce, and in order to operate the—you're always going to need people. You know, you could have robots, but you're going to have to get somebody to start those robots, and you're going to have to improve the robots.

But we're going to have robotic factories plus manpower. So, we're going to have enough. We're going to need the help of robots and other forms of—I guess you could say employment. We're going to be employing a lot of artificial things. But the beauty is, we're going to have more jobs than we've ever had.

Just so you know, a figure—a number came out the other day: We have more jobs right now in the United States—more people are working right now in the United States than at any time in the history of our country. Think of that. Pretty amazing.

So we'll have the help of—you know, mechanical help, if you want to call it that. But we'll have tremendous employment. They'll be paid a lot of money. They'll make—they'll do better than they ever did. Okay?

Yes.

President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela/Illegal Immigration

Q. Mr. President, some may have been expecting a different kind of announcement today, hearing your Secretary of War and Secretary of State here. You mentioned strikes on land in Venezuela more than 15 times—even now, just in your recent remarks. Why should Maduro take your threat seriously? And what——

The President. He can do whatever he wants.

Q. What's your endgame——

The President. Maduro?

Q. What's your endgame here?

The President. No, he could do—there's no answer. He could do whatever he wants. I mean, we have a massive armada formed—the biggest we've ever had and by far the biggest we've ever had in South America.

He can do whatever he wants. It's all right. Whatever he wants to do. If he wants to do something, if he plays tough, it will be the last time he's ever able to play tough.

But they sent their prisoners in to us. They sent people from jails and prisons. They sent people from mental institutions and insane asylums into the United States. Just walked right in, because Biden had an open-border policy.

What the Biden administration did to our country can never be forgotten. They took in millions and millions—25 million people over the course of 4 years. Many of those people were murderers and drug dealers, prisoners—rough prisoners—11,888 murderers. More than half of them killed more than one person. They came into our country.

Now, I spoke to Kristi Noem today. I spoke to Tom Homan today. He came down to see me, and we had a great meeting. They've done an amazing job. We're getting them out. We're getting them out very fast.

But this should have never happened. But Venezuela was one of the—Venezuela took advantage of the open borders that Biden created more than any other country. Tren de Aragua—we had gangs all over.

Look, I mean, you have a very weak Governor in Colorado. Look what happened in Colorado, where they would occupy apartment houses, and he didn't want to do anything about it because he was scared.

Any other questions?

Yes, go ahead, please.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Colombia/Drug Production and Trafficking

Q. Yes. So, in response to the United States taking sanctioned oil from—from Venezuela, Colombian President, Gustavo Petro, criticized the United States by saying, "Well, the Southwest has stolen land and that it should be returned to Latin America." I just wanted to know what your response to that is.

The President. Well, he has to watch because, you know, he's got drug factories. They make cocaine in Colombia, and he's no friend of the United States. He's very bad—very bad guy. And he's got to watch his ass, because he makes cocaine and they send it into the United States of America from Colombia.

We love the Colombian people. I love the Colombian people. They're great people—energetic, smart, great. But their new leader is a troublemaker, and he'd better watch it.

They—he'd better close up those cocaine factories. They have at least three major cocaine factories. We know where they are. He better close them up fast.

Yes.

Q. Sir——

The President. By the way, it's made and sold into the United States. Comes through Mexico.

Greenland/Denmark

Q. Thank you, sir. You've named Governor Landry to be the new Special Envoy to Greenland.

The President. Yes.

Q. How do you—what do you see that role entailing? And do you—is it still your intention that Greenland become——

The President. Well, he called me, and, you know——

Q. ——part of the U.S.?

The President. ——he viewed—Louisiana, the Louisiana Purchase—he said, "I'm Governor of Louisiana." And he said, "I would love"—I didn't call him. He called me. He's very proactive. He's a great guy. He's a deal guy. He's a dealmaker-type guy.

And we need it for national protection. We need Greenland for national protection. They have a very small population.

And I don't know, it's—they say Denmark, but Denmark has spent no money. They have no military protection. They say that Denmark was there 300 years ago or something with a boat. Well, we were there with boats too, I'm sure. So we'll have to work it all out.

But he felt very strongly. We need it for national—we need Greenland for national security. Not for minerals. We had so—we have so many sites for minerals and oil and everything. We have more oil than any other country in the world. We need Greenland for national security.

And if you take a look at Greenland, you look up and down the coast, you have Russian and Chinese ships all over the place. We need it for national security. We have to have it.

And he wanted to lead the charge, so we're making him—Marco, today—a Special Envoy—
—

Secretary Rubio. Yes.

The President. —to Greenland. Greenland is a big deal.

Yes.

Ukraine/Russia/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr. President, on Ukraine, can you give an update on the talks that took place this past weekend, and could a trilateral discussion of sort be the next step for Ukrainian, U.S., and Russian delegations?

The President. So the talks on Ukraine-Russia are going along. They lost, as you know, 27,000 soldiers last month—mostly soldiers, some people, but—some people in Kyiv, et cetera, but mostly soldiers. And the talks are going along.

And I say that, you know, there's tremendous hatred between these two leaders. Between President Putin, President Zelenskyy—tremendous hatred. And I hope we can get it done. We are talking. Talks are going okay.

But you know, I've solved eight wars, and Thailand is starting to shape up. You know, they started—with Cambodia, they started up again. But I think, Marco, we have that in pretty good shape to have that stopped.

So we stopped eight wars. And I thought this would be in the middle of the pack, but—maybe easy, but in the middle of the pack. But there's a lot of hatred between those two people. And when there's hatred, there's, you know—but we stopped one war, 38 years; one war, 35 years; one war was going on for 32 years, and we stopped—think of it. We stopped a potential nuclear war between Pakistan and India. And the head of Pakistan, a highly respected general—he's a field marshal—and also the Prime Minister of Pakistan said, "President Trump saved 10 million lives, maybe more, by getting that war." You know, eight planes were shot down. That war was starting to rage. And he actually said the other day that President Trump—saved 10 million lives, maybe more. So we solved all these wars. The only one I haven't solved yet is Russia-Ukraine.

Q. Are you still pushing for the Christmas day deadline with Russia and Ukraine? And have you spoken with Putin or Zelenskyy or plan to, to push the deal?

The President. Well, I'll do whatever I have to do. I mean, I'd like to see it stopped.

Look, we don't lose any money in that war anymore. You know, Biden gave \$350 billion, and who knows what happened to it. We now sell missiles, planes, all of the best military

equipment. We sell it to NATO. We got NATO to go from 2 percent GDP to 5 percent. Nobody believed that, to this day. Nobody's going to write that, but—nobody believed it. And they take that money, and they pay it to the United States for weapons.

So we sell weapons to NATO. We sell—full price. We sell weapons to NATO, and NATO takes those weapons and probably distributes them, but gives a lot of them to Ukraine. So we're not—we don't lose any money like we did with Biden. He was spending money like a fool. He was a fool. What he did to our country is so horrible.

But he gave them \$350 billion, between cash—he gave a lot of cash—350 between cash and weapons.

You remember, at the beginning of that whole thing, I gave them Javelins. Javelins are the antitank busters. And President Obama, at the time, gave them sheets. I gave them Javelins. They gave them sheets.

But, you know, the bottom line: It's time for—I think they're all tired of that war. Everyone's tired of that war. It's got to stop.

Yes, please.

Venezuela/Oil Supply and Refining

Q. The U.S. was in active pursuit of an sanctioned oil tanker yesterday. Are you able to share what became of that tanker? Was the U.S. able to seize it?

The President. No, it's moving along, and we'll end up getting it. Yes, we're actually pursuing it. [Laughter]

Q. Why have—why don't you think you've——

The President. Can you imagine?

Q. —seized it yet?

The President. Because it came from the wrong location. It came out of Venezuela, and it was sanctioned.

Yes, please.

President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela

Q. Is your ultimate goal in Venezuela to force Maduro from power?

The President. Well, I think it probably would. I can't tell that. That's up to him, what he wants to do.

Q. Would you like to see——

The President. I think it would be smart for him to do that. But, again, we're going to find out.

Look, Venezuela did terrible things to the United States. They sent hundreds of thousands of people, millions of people into our open border. They sent their criminals. They sent their prisoners. They sent their drug dealers. They sent their mentally insane and incompetent people into our country, more than any other country. Others did too. The Congo did. Others did too. And we just let them come right in, because we were run by a stupid President, but you don't have a stupid President anymore.

Health Insurance Reforms

Q. Mr. President, have you set up the meeting with the health care insurers just yet? And what are you hoping——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——to get? How are you hoping to——

The President. I'll be setting it up.

Q. ——lower costs?

The President. I think we're going to meet with health care—the health care insurers, the insurance companies.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. So what I'm asking for in health care is very simple. Obamacare is a disaster. I call it the "Unaffordable Care Act"—"Unaffordable," as opposed to the—it's unaffordable. They're going to have a tremendous increase in premiums, which is Obamacare, which is them—the Democrats' fault. They'll try and blame Republicans—it has nothing to do with us. It's the Democrats' fault.

What I want to do is—we spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year that go to insurance companies. I want that money to go to the people and let the people buy their own health care. And everybody loves it. It's become our issue.

Now, before I do that, I'll meet with the insurance companies, just as I met with the drug companies, as you know. We're meeting with four other drug companies—Johnson and Johnson—but they've all agreed. We're meeting with them this week. It's coming—it will be a similar meeting. They've all agreed.

But nobody would have thought the drug companies were going to do what they did, where they're giving away free drugs and they did—they were so—they've been so great. Okay? And we have most favored nations. Nobody thought that was possible. I don't think any other President ever tried to get it because they never thought they could.

But with respect to the insurance companies, I want to meet—there's essentially 14 of them—10 big, but there's a total of 14, pretty much, who have—all pretty big. And I want to meet with them, and I want to say, "I want you to cut your rates way down—way, way down." And maybe, if they do that, we'll be able to not cut them out. We'll be able to continue to deal with them, which is probably a little easier process. I think the best process is pay the money directly to the people, let them buy their own health care.

But I'm going to meet with them the first week back. I'd do it now, but they're trying to come up with a schedule. They want to meet badly. They've told me. But they want to come up with a schedule. I said: "Make it a good schedule. Your rates have to come way down."

We're also going to meet with other insurance companies, because, under Biden, the insurance rates have gone through the—you know, roof—auto insurance, home insurance. I mean, insurance companies are making far more than they're entitled to make. So we're going to be doing that.

But just, in the meantime, we'll be meeting with the insurance companies in the first week—the first few days back in Washington, because they're trying to come up with a proposal that will satisfy me.

Thank you very much, everybody. Appreciate it. I hope you're going to enjoy the battleships. They're going to be beautiful. Thank you.

And have a great Christmas, if I don't speak to you. Thank you very much.

Q. Merry Christmas.

The President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. at the Mar-a-Lago Club. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence H. Summers; Rep. Thomas H. Massie; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Gov. Jared S. Polis of Colorado; Gov. Jeffrey M. Landry of Louisiana; President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; and Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan. Secretary Phelan referred to Adm. Samuel Paparo, USN, Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command; Adm. Brad Cooper, USN, Commander, U.S. Central Command; Adm. Daryl Caudle, USN, Chief of Naval Operations. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on December 23.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : U.S. naval ship development in Palm Beach, FL;
Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Palm Beach, FL.

Locations: Palm Beach, FL.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Clinton, William J.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Homan, Thomas D.; Landry, Jeffrey M.; Macron, Emmanuel; Maduro Moros, Nicolas; Massie, Thomas H.; Munir, Asim; Noem, Kristi L.; Obama, Barack; Petro Urrego, Gustavo; Phelan, John C.; Polis, Jared S.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Sharif, Shehbaz; Summers, Lawrence H.; Xi Jinping; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Border security; Cambodia, relations with Thailand; China, President; China, relations with U.S.; Christmas; Colombia, drug production and trafficking; Colombia, President; Colorado, Governor; Critical minerals, supply chain improvements; Defense contractors, production improvement efforts; Department of Justice files concerning deceased convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein; France, President; Gasoline costs; Greenland, ownership and administration; Health care costs and affordability; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Illegal immigration; India, relations with Pakistan; Louisiana, Governor; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Pakistan, Prime Minister; Pakistan, relations with India; Prescription drug costs, reduction efforts; Robotics and automation, expansion efforts; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Navy; Secretary of War; Suspected drug-trafficking vessels, U.S. airstrikes in Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific; Tariffs; Thailand, relations with Cambodia; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; U.S. naval ship development, improvement efforts; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Venezuela, drug trafficking; Venezuela, oil supply and refining; Venezuela, President; Venezuela, Tren de Aragua criminal organization; White House Border Czar; Workforce development, improvement efforts.

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