

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026*

**Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Des Moines, Iowa**

*January 27, 2026*

*The President.* Hello, everybody.

I have a—I had a great conversation with the highly respected President of Syria. And all of the things having to do with Syria and that area are working out very, very well, so we—very happy about it.

Tom Homan, as you know, is in Minnesota now. He's meeting with the Governor, and he's meeting with the mayor, I think, later. And I hear that's all going very well also.

I'm going to Iowa. Some of you are coming with me. But I'm going to Iowa.

And what can I say? The economy is good. It's all good. Prices are coming way down, and we have a lot of very positive news.

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

*Death of Alex J. Pretti in Minneapolis, Minnesota*

*Q.* Mr. President, do you believe that Alex Pretti's death was justified?

*The President.* Well, you know, we're doing a big investigation. I want to see the investigation. I'm going to be watching over it. I want a very honorable and honest investigation. I have to see it myself.

Yes.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

Yes.

*Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem*

*Q.* Is Kristi Noem going to step down?

*The President.* No. No.

*Interim President Delcy Rodriguez Gomez of Venezuela*

*Q.* Mr. President, the President of Syria—the President of Venezuela said that she is done with taking orders from you. What do you have to say about that?

*The President.* Well, I don't know exactly what's going on there, but I haven't heard that at all. No, we have a very—we have a very good relationship.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Mortgage Interest Rates*

*Q.* Sir, mortgage rates. How far would you like to see—how far would you like to see mortgage rates drop to?

*The President.* I'd like to see interest rates go down. Everything else is going down. We have the energy and fuel going down. We have gasoline in many states now at \$1.99. Groceries are going down. We inherited a mess with very, very high prices—very, very high prices—and I will tell you, we've made a lot of progress. So we have the groceries going down. We have the energy

going down. We have gasoline going down at a record clip, and that's what I want to do. We're doing well.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Death of Alex J. Petti in Minneapolis, Minnesota*

*Q.* What do you say, Mr. President, to Alex Petti's family?

*The President.* Well, I'm looking at that whole situation. I love everybody. I love all of our people. I love his family. And it's a very sad situation.

Yes, please.

*Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem/Border Security/Illegal Immigration*

*Q.* Are you happy with Kristi Noem right now?

*The President.* I am, yes. I think she's doing a very good job.

*Q.* What'd you talk about yesterday?

*The President.* I think she's doing a very good job. The border is totally secure.

You know, you forget we had a border that I inherited where millions of people were coming through. Now we have a border where no one is coming through. They come into our country only legally. So you have to remember those things.

You know, people forget. As soon as you accomplish something, it goes into history, and nobody ever wants to talk about it.

We had a border that caused all of this problem. Biden caused—and the Democrats caused this problem. They allowed tens of millions of people to come in. Many of them were murderers. Many were drug dealers, drug addicts, people from mental institutions. They allowed these people to violate our country, to come into our country. And that's what we're talking about.

So, if you remember, we had a horrible border—the worst border we've ever had, ever, in history. People were flowing through by, we think, 25 million people, not to mention drugs and everything else. And that border is absolutely closed.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

*Illegal Immigration/Political Demonstrations in Minneapolis, Minnesota*

*Q.* Mr. President, on that. What's your message to unite Americans right now, after everything goes on in Minneapolis? How can we unite Americans?

*The President.* Well, our country is doing so well. Prices are coming down. The border is really strong. You know, if you remember, I probably got elected, more than anything else, on the border. We had a border that was open with 25 million people coming through with an open border policy, which was insane, and that's the one that—that's the policy that caused the problems that we have.

With all of that being said, with the outset—with the—other than, I would say, just to put it accurately, Minnesota, and, in particular, Minneapolis, because it's not all of Minnesota—every city that we've gone to has been—like, literally, crime has gone down 50, 60, 70, 80. In Washington, it's gone down. There's practically no crime.

You know, Washington is a great example, but you take a look at other cities. Memphis, Tennessee, the crime is down 78 percent. And you know where else it's down? It's down in

Minnesota. It's down in Minneapolis, and it's down very much because of the fact that we're there. So we——

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

——we have to——we can't lose sight of the fact that we have to take murderers and drug lords and people from mental institutions that were dumped into our country through open borders of Joe Biden—of the Democrats, of Biden, and we're doing a great job. We're doing a great job.

The other thing is that Tom Homan is there right now. He's with the Governor, and he's with the mayor, and I hear things are going very nicely.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

#### *Ukraine/Russia*

*Q.* How close are we to the deal after talks in Abu Dhabi that Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff held? Is your meeting with President Putin in Budapest back in play?

*The President.* We're looking at some very good things happening on Ukraine and Russia. Very good things——

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

——very good things are happening on Ukraine and Russia.

*[Several reporters spoke at once.]*

#### *Hostages Held in Gaza, Palestinian Territories*

*Q.* On the Board—in Gaza, Mr. President? Where do we stand on Gaza, Mr. President?  
*[Inaudible]*

*The President.* I think Gaza is going very well. As you know, we got the last hostage back—the body of the hostage. And a lot of people thought that was impossible. So we got all of the hostages back, both living and dead.

*Q.* Sir——

*The President.* And I can tell you, you have parents that really appreciate it.

*Q.* What about the Hizballah, sir? The Hizballah?

#### *Death of Alex J. Petti in Minneapolis, Minnesota*

*Q.* Sir, was Mr. Petti acting as an assassin. Do you think he was acting as an assassin in Minneapolis?

*The President.* Who is that?

*Q.* Mr. Petti. Your Deputy Chief of Staff said that.

*The President.* No, not as a—no.

*Q.* Can you say a few words on the Hizballah, sir?

*Q.* Did ICE make a mistake? Sir, was this latest shooting a mistake?

*Q.* On South Korea. Are you introducing tariffs on South Korea?

*The President.* With that being said, you know, you can't have guns. You can't walk in with guns. You just can't. And you can't——

*Q.* What about the Second Amendment?

*The President.* Listen.

*Q.* Yes.

*The President.* You can't walk in with guns. You can't do that. But it's just a very unfortunate incident.

*Q.* But what about the Second Amendment, sir?

*South Korea*

*Q.* Tariffs on South Korea. Are you introducing tariffs on South Korea?

*The President.* We'll work something out. We'll work something out with South Korea.

*Q.* Mr. President, you said——

*Q.* [*Inaudible*]—Minnesota?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to boarding Marine One. In his remarks, he referred to President Ahmad Husayn al-Shara' of Syria; White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan; Gov. Timothy J. Walz of Minnesota; Mayor Jacob L. Frey of Minneapolis, MN; and Alex J. Petti, who was killed during a confrontation with U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents in Minneapolis, MN, on January 24. Reporters referred to U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff; the President's son-in-law Jared C. Kushner; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; and White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Stephen Miller.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Frey, Jacob L.; Homan, Thomas D.; Noem, Kristi L.; Petti, Alex J.; Shara', Ahmad Husayn al-; Walz, Timothy J.

*Subjects:* Border security; Crime rates; Gasoline costs; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Grocery prices; Illegal immigration; Minnesota, death of protesters in Minneapolis; Minnesota, Governor; Minnesota, political demonstrations in Minneapolis; News media, Presidential interviews; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Secretary of Homeland Security; South Korea, trade with U.S.; Syria, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Venezuela, relations with U.S.; White House Border Czar.

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