

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

**Remarks During a Roundtable Discussion With the Memphis Safe Task Force in
Memphis, Tennessee**
March 23, 2026

The President. Thank you. [*Inaudible*]—letting the song go.

[*At this point, the President paused as Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the U.S.A." continued to play over the loudspeakers.*]

Thank you. Wow, this is a nice place with the best sound system. I don't know who did—sounds like the finest opera hall in—anywhere in the world. Let's come back here more often. So often, you have sound systems that aren't the greatest, and there's nothing worse making a speech when nobody can hear you. This is beautiful, and it's a great place.

And Memphis has to like me because I have a lot of friends here—and they were not happy a year ago, 2 years ago, 4 years ago.

And now they said, "We can't believe what's happened," in terms of crime, in terms of what's gone on and the job that these people and some of the great people—many of the great people in the audience have done.

And that's why I'm here today. In fact, we were going to cancel because we have a couple of events going on, as you probably noticed. So they said: "Oh, we'll cancel Memphis. We can"—I said: "We're not canceling Memphis for anything. We're not canceling." "We are not going to cancel Memphis."

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

But we do have some big things happening and very positive, I have to say. So, before getting to our important discussion this morning, let me provide a brief update on Operation Epic Fury, which is a very good name, as it turns out. That was a name—they showed me 20 names. "Sir, what name would you like?" I didn't like any of them. And then I get toward the end. I said, "You got to be kidding." "What?" "Operation Epic Fury. I love that name." [*Laughter*]

And it's very appropriate for what's taken place, if you know, in Iran, because we knocked out their navy, we knocked out their air force, we knocked out their anti-aircraft, we knocked out everything. And we did it with fury, actually.

As I announced earlier, based on preliminary conversations between the United States and Iran over the past 2 days, I've directed the Department of War to temporarily postpone planned strikes against major energy and electricity targets in Iran.

They have very, very big, new, actually, and very expensive—billions of dollars, it cost to build them. One missile—one of our powerful ones, and it comes down to the ground like it was made out of dust.

But to determine whether a broader agreement can be reached, we've had very good discussions. Very, very good discussions.

And you have to understand, I know my whole life has been a negotiation, but, with Iran, we've been negotiating for a long time. And this time they mean business. And it's only because of the great job that our military did is the reason they mean business. They want to settle, and we're going to get it done. And—[*applause*]. I hope.

So, hopefully, this will be possible. But no matter what, we'll ensure that Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon. They can't have a nuclear weapon. They would have had one if we allowed the Obama deal to stand. That was the Iran nuclear deal, they called it. They would've had one, Marsha. Three—well, I'll tell you what, Martha [Marsha; White House correction], we would have nuclear weapons up there when—would you say, 2 years ago, 3 years ago, or 4 years ago? We would have been in a position that nobody wants to be in. We won't allow ourselves to be in that position.

Over the past 3 weeks, the United States military and our partners have been decimating Iran's military capabilities with overwhelming firepower, skill, lethality, and force. And we're destroying their ballistic missiles and drones programs with launches down by more than 90 percent. We're hitting their launches at a level that nobody even thought of before: 90 percent. They don't—they can't launch them, and they don't have very many of them because most of them have been annihilated.

But we've annihilated their defense industrial base, eliminating their navy. We had—158 ships are down. I said to my people, "Why didn't you capture the ship?" I said, "Were they good or not?" They said, "They were great, sir." "So why didn't you capture it? We could have used them." They said, "It's more fun to put them at the bottom of the sea." But they're not there anymore.

So we eliminated their navy, Pete, right?

Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth. Yes, sir.

The President. And that's gone. We eliminated their air force. We eliminated all of their air defense, everything. We eliminated everything there is to eliminate. And we eliminated them. We eliminated their leaders.

We had the first set of leaders. They're gone. Then they met—88 people met. And it's sad. I mean, it's sad they couldn't have made a deal. We could have made a deal with them a long time ago. Then the second set, 88 people met to pick a new leader, and they're now extinguished. And then they're meeting again. But now nobody wants to be the leader. It's one of the few political jobs that nobody wants anywhere in the world. Nobody wants it. It's a very dangerous job. My job is dangerous too, but their job is worse.

In other words, we're systematically dismantling the regime's ability to threaten America. They're not threatening us anymore.

As Commander in Chief, it's my sacred responsibility to protect our country from all threats. For decades, Iran refused every opportunity to renounce its nuclear ambitions, and, in a recent months, its own negotiators bragged to our representatives about having enough material to make nuclear weapons.

And that was supposed to deter me, but it didn't deter. It made me more anxious. And it just made it much more important. This mission that we're all on together was much more important, and we did it quicker.

Iran's missile capabilities were also growing so fast that it would soon have become virtually impossible to stop them. Once they have a missile, once they have—what they were building was incredible. And you got a little glimpse of it by the fact that when they came out, they started shooting all of their neighbors. Their neighbors weren't fighting with them. They were getting along okay with their neighbors. And I was surprised, they were surprised—everybody was surprised. And it actually worked in reverse, because their neighbors then turned against them.

Now Iran has one more opportunity to end its threats to America and our allies, and we hope they take it. Either way, America and the entire world will soon be much safer and we'll be a much more secure planet.

In addition to all of this, we're working on so many different things. You know, our economy was fantastic. We had a Dow at 50,000. They say it couldn't happen in 4 years, it wouldn't happen during my term, but we—if I got anywhere close, it would be a great success.

Well, in my first year, we hit 50,000. And with the S&P, they said—even more difficult, they said you—it would be impossible to hit 7,000 on the S&P. And we hit that in our first term.

And then unfortunately, I came—I called Pete. I called General Caine. I called a lot of our great people. We have great people. And I said: "Let's talk. We've got a problem in the Middle East. We have a country known as Iran that, for 47 years—there's been a—just a purveyor of terror, and they're very close to having a nuclear weapon. We can keep going and get that 50,000 up to 55 and 60—there's no end—or we can take a stop and make a little journey into the Middle East and eliminate a big problem."

And, Pete, I think you were the first one to speak up, and you said, "Let's do it." Because you can't let them have a nuclear weapon.

So we are now having really good discussions. They started last night—a little bit the night before that. And I think they're—you know, I think they're very good. They want to—they want peace. They've agreed they will not have a nuclear weapon, you know, et cetera, et cetera. But we'll see. You have to get it done. But I would say there's a very good chance.

And it began when I said that I won't be—we were planning tomorrow on shooting down some of their power plants, and we're not going to—we are going to hold that up. Hopefully, we won't have to do it. And hopefully, we can make a deal that's good for all of us, including the Middle Eastern allies that have been very good to us, including Israel. That's been a great partner in this fight. They've really been a good partner in the fight. They fought hard.

But we'll see what happens. I think there's a very good chance we're going to end up in a deal. And so we're giving it 5 days, and then we're going to see where that takes us. And I would say, at the end of this period, I think it could very well end up being a very good deal for everybody.

As good as if we went all the way and just literally annihilated the place, which, if we don't have to do that, that would be a good thing, not a bad thing.

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations/Election Reform

In addition, after the appalling lines and massive disruptions at major airports nationwide last weekend, I'm again demanding that Democrats in Congress immediately end their disgraceful shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security and they restore the full funding for airport security and the TSA.

They are holding it up because they want to take care of illegal immigrants coming into our country. They want to take care of criminals that are in sanctuary cities. They want to take care of transgender for everybody, literally the mutilization of our children. Men in women's sports.

But what they don't want to do is give us anything to do with citizenship for voting or voter ID. Can you imagine? We're the only country that doesn't do voter ID. Every country does voter ID. You know, brought to my attention today that we're the only country that doesn't—that does mail-in voting. Mail-in voting means mail-in cheating. I call it, "mail-in cheating." And we got to do something about it all.

And it's part of Homeland Security, and I'm suggesting strongly to the Republican Party: Don't make any deal on anything. The most important thing we can have is what's called the SAVE America Act.

Don't make any deal on anything unless you include voter ID, and you have to be a citizen to vote. You have to show citizenship to vote. Very easy to do. It's very insulting when they say people can't do it because they don't know how to do it. Anybody that can't do it, I think it's a very insulting thing to say.

The Democrats are fully to blame with the struggle of the great American public is going through at the airports. They're going through a big struggle right now, and we just put ICE in charge. And they're helping TSA, the agents. And they're working together, so far, very well.

I actually suggested that in the airports, they take off their masks, and they did that. In the airports, I didn't like—I'm a big believer in the mask, because we have—you know, Biden allowed hundreds of thousands of killers into our country. We're rapidly getting them out, by the way.

But they would go after these people if they knew exactly who they were, but in the airports it's different. I didn't like—I didn't love the look in the airport, as you get off the plane. So I made a request, and they agreed to it. So they're not going to be doing that.

We would also bring out—if we don't have enough, we will bring out the National Guard and, you know, where we need it to help out at the airports, but we're not going to let this happen.

It's extortion by the Democrats. They're holding up money that's already been approved. And now, they're willing to go \$5 billion reduction in ICE in order to get the approval on a deal that they approved—the "Great Big Beautiful Deal," which is the biggest tax cut in history, the biggest regulation cut in history.

They want to basically renegotiate a deal that they already approved, and they're doing it for—largely for a criminal element.

So, also the Democrats are putting our country at great risk during this period of time, a period that they call a war. They call it a war. We call it a military operation.

Their leaders during this time are as, you know—as—as you want to say, they're in a never-never land.

Schumer is gone. I mean, he's a Palestinian. He should be fighting on the side of Palestine. He's actually become a Palestinian leader. [*Laughter*] I don't know. I've never seen a man change so much. He used to be pro-Israel. Now, he's pro-Palestine. I've never seen anything like it.

And, you know, he's got—he's worried he's going to lose his next election, which it only depends if anybody runs against him. If anybody runs against him, he'll lose. But he's gone very wacky and very, very dangerous for our country.

But we want all of those things. We have to have them. We want voter ID. We want proof of citizenship as part of our funding. We want to merge them so that we can get the Great Big Beautiful Bill in action, and we can get—we can get the America and—SAVE America.

You know, they called it the SAVE Act, but nobody knew what the SAVE Act was. So, I said, "You have to call it—you have to—under any circumstances, you have to call it the SAVE America Act, because everybody knows what that is."

So they want funding taken away from the ICE patriots who are responsible for getting rid of the criminals that Sleepy Joe Biden, the worst President in the history of our country, and his

gang of thugs in the White House, who—you talk about weaponization. They weaponized everybody.

You know, when we even look—when Pam looks at somebody—"Oh, it's weaponization." They've indicted me. They—what they've done to me and everybody else, it's a disgrace. They're the weaponizers, and what they've done to people—can never let that happen again. We can never let them get away with it again. They are the greatest weaponizers.

Fortunately, it didn't work, because here I am with you. So, it didn't work out too well. Right? [*Laughter*]

Attorney General Pamela J. Bondi. That's right.

The President. Didn't work out too well.

Illegal Immigration

But they want to have people come into our country. And so many of these people are murderers. They're drug dealers. They're the worst criminals anywhere in the world. They want them in our country. They don't want them to come out. They make it almost impossible. But we get them out anyway. They should have never been allowed to enter our sacred ground. These people should have never—they came from all over the world. They came from all over.

They came from the Congo in Africa. They came from all over South America, Asia, everywhere. And they were from jails and mental institutions. They were drug dealers. They were murderers—11,888 murderers.

In any event, the Democrats are being blamed by the American people for the catastrophe going on right now at our airports and at other points of transportation and beyond. And we want the public to know we're not going to let them out of this trap that they created for themselves.

Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act

And I'm suggesting very strongly that the Republicans, in going for the SAVE America Act, that you weld it into exactly this, because voter ID is part of homeland security. Think of it. We're talking about two separate items, but they're really the same. Voter ID is part of homeland security, and citizenship—proof of citizenship is part of homeland security.

So I think it should be welded in. I think it should be together. You should vote together because the public has not liked what they've done at the airports, and they've done it and the public understands it. They've gotten wise to them.

Republicans, do not settle with Democrats and let them out of this hole that they've buried themselves in. You have to take the votes in the Senate to approve. You need votes to approve. We have to get Democrat votes.

And at a certain point, if you could get rid of the filibuster, it would be great. It would be great. Get rid of the filibuster, and get it all done.

So we'll get it done. We want another thing. We can and we—we don't have to—add those other items. And, by the way, they say they're 80/20 items. They're not 80/20. They're 99/1. Men playing in women's sports is a 99/1. You look at transgender mutilization of our children, that's a 99/1. And we have that in the bill too.

So they won't sign it. They let the people reject them. And what we have to do is, we have to win the midterms. This is the most important election, because all of the gains that we've made—we built the greatest economy, the greatest military. I built the military in my first term, and we

built the greatest military in the world. We're showing it now with Venezuela, with Iran. We—everybody knows we have the greatest, most powerful military in the world.

And we're in a position that we haven't seen. We're respected. You know, our country now is respected all over the world. A year and a half ago, we were a laughingstock. We were a laughingstock.

The King of Saudi Arabia told me a year and a half ago—he said: "President, I can't believe what's happened to America. One year ago, you were a laughingstock. Nobody thought you could ever, ever survive. Now you're the hottest country." He used that expression. He said, "Now you're the hottest country anywhere in the world."

And we are now. Congratulations, because we're all partners in this deal. You're the hottest country anywhere in the world. It's really amazing. So I congratulate you. It's a great feeling, because we were laughed at for 4 years with this guy that should have never been President.

So I'm tying homeland security into voter identification with picture and proof of citizen—citizenship in order to vote. And those two items are the most important thing having to do with homeland security. So it's part—it should be part of the Homeland Security bill. And I'm requesting that the Republican Senators do that immediately.

You don't have to take a fast vote. Don't worry about Easter, going home. In fact, make this one for Jesus. Okay? [*Laughter*] Make this one for Jesus. That's what I tell them. That's—it'd be a damn good thing.

The most important part of homeland security is voter ID and proof of citizenship. Nobody can vote on Homeland Security without voter ID or proof of citizenship, and you can't have homeland security without voter ID or proof of citizenship. So we're tying them together.

Roundtable Discussion With the Memphis Safe Task Force

So, now, if you don't mind, let's get to the reason why I am in Memphis and why you're doing so well, because Fred Smith—everybody know Fred Smith? He was a friend of mine, and he created from a sort of failed report at, like, Harvard or whatever—he did a business report—a concept he had—that was his thesis—a concept he had to build a company, and it was FedEx.

So he gave this thing where he takes packages, he delivers them. Who the heck knows what he put down? The bottom line is, they gave him a lousy mark. I don't know if they passed him or not, but they didn't give him a good mark. They say: "This is the most ridiculous business plan we've ever seen. Fred, go back to the drawing board and try something else because this won't work."

Well, he decided to go for it, and he built FedEx, and it's an amazing story. And he was a very good friend of mine.

But he would tell me that he didn't know what to do about Memphis. It was so dangerous that they would have a board meeting, and the board members—they were demanded that they could not walk one block to their hotel. You know the hotel I'm talking about. It was so dangerous.

And now they tell me this is like an entirely different place. It's like Washington, DC.

In Washington, DC, we had the same thing. And now it's amazing. It's such an honor too. If only more Governors—your Governor called, and he said, "We love it." Your mayor has been terrific. Your mayor has been terrific. But look at the results that you've got. Look at the results.

And everybody should do it. You know, if I were Chicago—Pritzker—the guy's a—he's a failed Governor. All he has to do is say: "President, we're having a problem in Chicago. Could

you come in and fix it?" We'd have it fixed in 2 months. It would be good—it would be good in 2 months. It would be great in 4 months. You'd have almost no crime.

But he can't do it. And it just keeps going the same way.

So that's the reason I'm here: to tell you how well you've done, how well we've done. I mean, I just came in, and people greeted me, "Sir, thank you very much for what you've done." I said, "Oh, where are you from?" "Memphis." "What did I do?" "You stopped crime." And your sheriffs are so thankful.

And—oh, you haven't seen it yet. You know, we've just been here a short while. In another 2 or 3 months, you're going to have, like, no crime. And, you know, we take these criminals—is that our handsome Senator down there, Bill? Is that our handsome Senator, Bill? You got both of them down. But you're going to have a new Governor here soon, I guess, huh? Going to have a very new Governor.

Would you two stand up? As Senators, please stand up. Two of the greatest people. Two of the greatest people. They never let me down. You know, some let me down. They never let me down. Thank you.

Last September, my administration launched the initiative modeled on DC Safe Task Force in our Nation's capital—one of the most amazing things.

I mean, I hate to say it—now I can say it—but our Nation's capital was one of the most dangerous places on Earth. People were being killed. They'd go in from Iowa, they'd go from Indiana to see the Washington Monument, and their parents would get a phone call they'd been killed. And it was happening a lot. It was really bad. And like this—actually, yours was at a level higher, to be honest with you. It was really bad, but it was happening a lot.

And now, you walk down Washington, it's like—everybody that sees me in Washington—we've been doing that another couple of months longer. Everybody sees me in Washington, and they say: "Thank you, sir. Thank you." And I immediately know why.

You know, they could thank me for a lot of things. I said, "Are they thanking me for the economy?" I know immediately.

We have people working in the White House, young women. They walk—I would say, normally, beautiful young women. Ever since I got elected, I don't like to say that, because usually when you say "a beautiful woman"—"isn't she beautiful?"—that's the end of your political career. [*Laughter*] So I never say that.

But young women coming up to me, and they're saying, "Sir, thank you so much." I know immediately what they're talking about. I say, "How big a difference is it?" They say, "We walk to work. We were afraid to walk into an Uber. We were afraid to walk into a car. The car would be—it didn't matter. The car was being robbed when we were in the car." And it was much more than being robbed. Being robbed was the least of it.

And we took out over 3,000 people. And you know, there's an expression that 90 percent of the crime is caused by 2 percent of the population. And when you hear that, you realize why we could do such a good job.

We moved 3,000 people out—permanently out of—these were career criminals. Many of them came in through the Biden open border disaster. They came in. They weren't there. They came in. They said, "We want to live in Washington, where they'll take good care of us, give us plenty of welfare." And we got them all out. We moved them back to their countries.

Sometimes we'd put them in prison because they were so dangerous. We had one person killed four people in a short period of time. Many of the people—11,888. Fifty percent of them,

in our country, they came from jails. Other countries opened their jails and let them into our country, because Biden and her—his great border czar—the border czar who never once went to the border, never once called Border Patrol. But his great border—perhaps you've heard her, Kamala. Has anyone heard of Kamala? She was the border czar. That was like having nothing as a border czar.

And they poured into our country, and they made our country very, very unsafe.

And the job that ICE and Border Patrol have done—they don't get the appreciation they deserve. They are great American patriots. They're incredible people.

So we brought together 22 Federal agencies, State and local police, and 1,500 members of the incredible National Guard to smash the grip of the violent criminals on this iconic American city.

The city is incredible. People love it so much, but they're so—they're just fed up. They can't stay, and now they're staying.

I had somebody backstage say, "Sir, I was ready to leave, and now we're staying." I said, "Don't worry, it's going to get much better." It just takes a little more time.

Like our DC efforts, the Memphis Task Force has been led by our director of U.S. Marshal Services, Gady Serralta, who's incredible. Where's Gady? Gady, you are unbelievable. And I want to thank you for the work.

He did a job in Washington. So, when I heard Memphis, I said, "I want the same guy that did Washington," because that went—you're going to tell us when you get up which was more difficult. All right?

But Members [Memphis; White House correction], known all over the world as the home of Graceland. You know, I'm going to see Graceland after this? I think. Is that right? I love Elvis. [Laughter] I never met Elvis. Everyone said, "Did you"—I met them all. I met Sinatra. I knew all of them. I never met Elvis. Sometimes, I feel I should tell the little fib, said "I knew him well." [Laughter] I—I love Elvis, but I never met him.

But I'm going to go see Graceland after this, I think. I'm sure it's not going to be a very long stay, but I want to see that.

But for years, prior to our involvement, Memphis had become known for something else: being the murder capital of the U.S.A. That's not a good title. It was averaging far more than one murder per day, with a crime rate higher than Colombia, Mexico City, or Baghdad.

In the year—I shouldn't be saying this—what's—because—but here's the good news: It's been fixed. All right? I hate to say this because it's so negative. It's so negative.

In the year before I took office, Memphis saw more than 12,500 violent assaults, 429 rapes, and 7,600 burglaries and armed robberies. And I mean, it was—and getting worse.

This catastrophe was a result of years of local politicians, judges, and prosecutors who sided with violent criminals over law-abiding citizens. Basically, liberals—or now they like to go with the word "progressives." You don't hear "liberal." They're liberal. I don't like "progressive" because it's a beautiful word. You know, they use "progressive" because that's the only thing they're good at: politics, I guess.

You know, they're bad at policy, because all these policies are bad. But they're great at politics. And they do stick together. They stick together, they're good at politics, but they're bad at policy because they can't sell open borders. They can't sell transgender for everyone. They can't

sell men in women's sport. So they can be the greatest politicians in the world, and that's why I'm here instead of them, I guess.

But just as we have in DC, here in Memphis we've achieved one of the largest, fastest declines in violent crime ever recorded. So that's something, right? Ever recorded. In fact, you're half a percentage point away from the record, so we'll catch them in the next month or two. All right? I think that's going to happen.

But that includes a 60-percent drop in robberies, a 74 percent drop in carjacking and motor vehicle thefts. We have always achieved numbers that are good. These numbers are right on line to be among the best that we've done. And wherever we do this, we have very similar results.

We were in New Orleans where the Governor called us, as you know, and we went to New Orleans. They just had Mardi Gras. They said, "It's the first"—it sounds terrible, but "it's the first Mardi Gras we've ever had where there was no murder." Can you imagine? Doesn't sound too good, but you know, we're talking about the facts. And they said, "We had the lowest crime that we've ever had on Mardi Gras," which is almost nothing. We went there about 4 months ago. We did a great job.

So we've achieved a 70-percent reduction in murders from the peak in this place. In total, we've arrested 7,000 criminals, seized more than 1,100 illegal guns, taken more than 1,000 pounds of illicit narcotics, and rescued more than 150 missing children, making their parents beyond happy.

So I'd like you to please join me in thanking, I tell you, every single law enforcement hero here today—we have a number of them—a small number compared to what's doing the job—who helped make Memphis safe again.

Memphis, just so you know, with all of the things we said, you have now developed a reputation as a city that's coming back stronger than any city in the country because of what's happened with crime and because your political leaders had the courage to do what they did.

So I'd like you to also say a special welcome and hello to the Tennessee National Guard, the Memphis Police Department, ICE, CBP, the ATF, DEA, Homeland Security Investigations, the U.S. Marshals, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, and all of law enforcement. Everybody got together and they said, "We're going to make Memphis great again." And they really did. They—it's so good.

But, you know, I talk about how good it is. We're at 75 percent. Some people say 80, 81 percent. That still leaves 20 percent. You're going to be down—in another 2 months, 3 months, I think, Gady, we're going to be down to almost no—you're going to be an almost crime-free city. You're going to be so proud of it. People are going to stay. They're going to actually come back, because you have everything going, but you had that one horrible cloud over your head. And you—essentially, people know it's happening. But essentially, in another 2 months, you're not going to have anything—you're going to have a crime-free—a virtually crime-free city.

So today I'm pleased to announce that the Secretary of War—used to be the Secretary of Defense. We made a minor change. We like the sound of it better—that the Secretary of War just signed a directive to ensure that all National Guard members serving on this Task Force, as well as in DC, New Orleans, and our border security missions, will receive the same benefits as Active Duty troops because you deserve it. That's not bad. That's not bad.

So, before we leave, I want to thank Attorney General Pam Bondi; Secretary of War Pete Hegseth—these are great people; Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Steven Nordhaus; FBI Director Kash Patel—wonderful guy, actually. You got to get to know him. Once you get to know him, he's a wonderful guy. [Laughter] I've known him too long. Right? He's a good guy.

DEA Administrator Terry Cole. What a job he's done.

Acting Director of ICE—where's Terry? Good job, Terry. What a job. In Washington too. Acting Director of ICE, Todd Lyons. Todd, great. Thank you, Todd. Good job.

Head of the ATF, Rob Cekada. Rob. Thank you, Rob.

Head of the Tennessee Highway Patrol, Colonel Matt Perry. Thanks, Matt.

And head of the Tennessee National Guard, Major General Warner Ross. How are you? You look—you guys look central casting. These are central casting people. What did you need us for? You didn't need us.

Anyway, they had to let you do your job, right? They're letting you do your job now.

Thanks as well to Tennessee Governor Bill Lee for the outstanding job. Thank you very much, Bill. We appreciated your call. Bill called me up. He said: "We need a little help in Memphis, sir. Would you get over here, please?" He said: "I have no pride. We just want this thing straightened out." Right?

So thank you very much. I'm glad it worked out. Or you haven't seen—wait till you see—in 90 days from now, you're going to see numbers that blow these off. You're down 70, 75 percent. You're going to see numbers that you're going to be very proud of.

Senators Bill Hagerty and Marsha Blackburn. Great people. Great people.

You have some real warriors too as your Congress men and women: David Kustoff, Andy Ogles, Diana Harshbarger, John Rose, Matt Van Epps, and Chuck Fleischmann.

Will you all stand up? Warriors, all. Every one. Great, great people. You don't get better. They—it's not the easiest, not the easiest job, is it, huh?

Speaker of the—you know what I like about them? They're not 3 o'clock in the morning—"Sir"—I get a call from Mike Johnson, Speaker of: "Sir, we have a problem." "What time is it, Mike?" "Three o'clock, sir." Morning. "We vote at 9. We need"—it's always the same. You know, it's like 8 or 9. "Sir, could you call them for us and see if you can get their vote?" Ugh, 3 o'clock—call them up.

"Hey, Jim. How you doing?" "Hello, sir. I'm not there. I'm not there." "Well, you got to get there. Nine o'clock, you got to vote." "Sir, could I have little breakfast so we could discuss this bill?" You know, like, a perfect bill, like, you know, voter ID or something. You know? A bill—you don't have to be too great to do it. He said, "Could we have maybe a little breakfast at the White House, sir? So—because I can get there, but I'm just not there." "Come on over for breakfast, Bill." [*Laughter*] You know, I've got a lot of them too. I have about nine of them.

But these are the people we love. These are the people we love. So I want to thank you all.

Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives—and I hear this guy—I hear he's —Cameron Sexton. Where is he? I have heard such good things about you—

Attorney General Bondi. Yes.

The President. —and you're working on a very specific bill right now. I know all about you. That's great. Let me know when it's finished. You know? [*Laughter*] You got to send me a copy. Okay? That's great. Thank you, Cameron. You're doing a great job.

Shelby County Sheriff Floyd Bonner. Thank you, Floyd.

National president of the Fraternal Order of Police—oh, that's a big one; he gave me his endorsement—Patrick Yoes. Where is Patrick? He gave me his endorsement. I said, "Well, what's

your endorsement worth? How many members?" He said, "Sir, we have 490,000 members." I said, "That's a good endorsement." [Laughter]

Patrick, do you think anybody outside of—in—within law enforcement, did anybody vote for Kamala that you know of? [Laughter] Don't say it. You're going to get yourself in trouble. Don't say it. [Laughter] But thank you, Pat. That's great.

We had an unbelievable—well, I do believe we got 98, 99 percent with law enforcement, and why not?

President of the National Sheriffs' Association Chris West. Chris, thank you very much. Thank you, Chris. Stand up, Chris.

Secretary Hegseth. He's in the back.

The President. Thank you. Why are you so far back there, Chris? [Laughter] You deserve to be in the front row.

National president of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, Mat Silverman. Great guy too. All great guys. All guys we know. All guys—thank you, Mat.

They're all guys that supported me, Pam. Every one of them.

For years, our leaders allowed entire cities in America to be destroyed by crime, drugs, and gang violence. Tolerating this violence was always a choice.

Nineteen of the twenty most dangerous cities in America are run by Democrats. I'm surprised. I thought it was 20 of 20. I don't know why it's nineteen—I don't believe it. It's, like—I heard it was 25 out of 25. Well, I'll find out about it, because I don't believe it's right. Whoever wrote that statistic is wrong.

But under the Trump administration, we believe that no city or neighborhood should be left behind. In Memphis, the crime became so horrible that residents were made prisoners of violence in their own community, in their own home. But with the help of the great people right here at this table and right here, it's a whole different story right now. It's changing fast, and it'll be record-setting in a very short period of time, and I'll be here to celebrate it with you.

You know, it's a very special State to me. I won this State, Bill, by numbers that nobody's ever won it before. We have the alltime record for votes. So I happen to like the State. I love Tennessee. Maybe someday I'll move to Tennessee. [Laughter.] I might have to move here.

Participant. Absolutely—[inaudible].

The President. No, I love it.

You never know what that is. You know, you just have a relationship with a State. It's a lot safer than relationships with other things, I can tell you as a politician.

But I especially want to thank Speaker Sexton who's working with the Task Force to pass model bills that will be tough on crime to deliver permanent safety to the people of Memphis. And really, I don't know if you know, but they're looking at this all over the country, what you're doing. They're studying it. That's why I know your name so well. And all over the country, they're studying it.

And so I hope you do a great job. As simple as you can and as complex in the sense of—we want to be tough. We want to be strong on crime because that's the thing.

We want to have heart, we want to have fairness, but we have to be tough because some of these people are bad people that should have never been allowed to be here.

Since I took office, we have successfully arrested or removed from the country over 500,000 hard-line criminals. And under our leadership, last year, the murder rate nationwide saw the single largest decline ever recorded to the lowest level in 125 years. That's something. That's something.

And this is despite the fact that they allowed 25 million people into our country. Many of those people should never have been allowed into our country.

So now I'd like to ask Director Gady Serralta to—who's really a special guy. And I've lived with him because of Washington, DC. I saw what he did. But to say a few words. And congratulations for what you've done everywhere. But today we're only interested in one place: Memphis, Tennessee. Thank you very much.

Gady. Thank you.

U.S. Marshals Service Director Gadyaces S. Serralta. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much.

So good morning to you, and thank you, Mr. President. Today we celebrate the successes of this incredible mission and all our Federal, State, local, and National Guard teammates who have contributed mightily to the Memphis Safe Task Force.

Mr. President, it is an honor to be entrusted by you to lead this amazing task force as director of the United States Marshal Service. Your decisiveness in responding to State and local leaders' requests for Federal assistance is inspiring.

[Director Serralta continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

Mr. President, the Memphis Safe Task Force underscores one simple truth: When Federal, State, and local agencies work together as genuine partners, we can reclaim even the most troubled cities.

I am extremely grateful to you for the opportunity. To all our partner agencies, it has been an honor to work alongside you, and I look forward to sustaining and building on these partnerships as we continue to make Memphis safe again. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, Gady, very much.

And, Pam, I think—thank you. What a great job. And, I think—you know, I see them sitting out there, your U.S. attorney and your assistant U.S. attorney. You do a great job. Would you please stand up? Please?

Attorney General Bondi. Michael Dunavant.

The President. Michael Dunavant, you know. Thank you, Michael. Thank you both. Great job. Thank you.

Pam Bondi, please.

Attorney General Bondi. Thank you, President Trump.

You know, some people choose to tolerate crime, but you chose law and order, and that's why this task force worked. It was all of us, as Gady said, working hand in hand with my FBI, DEA, U.S. Marshals, ATF—with Kash, with Terry, with Rob, with Gady. Not only that, with Pete, with Department of War; with Homeland Security; with all of my agencies, working hand in hand with the National Guard.

When you went out there, when we came to Memphis, you could not tell who was with what agency because everyone was working so well together. Our U.S. attorney, Mike Dunavant, was out there.

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

We can give you countless examples of that. Seven hundred and seventy—over 770 gang members off the streets.

And we know there's no normal day for a law enforcement officer. We know it's so dangerous what our law enforcement officers do. But know this: Donald Trump and this administration—we have your backs.

Thank you all. And thank you, President Trump. Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Pam.

And Pete Hegseth, who has been unbelievable at what he's doing. There's nobody better. That was a wise choice.

Pete, go ahead.

Secretary Hegseth. Well, thank you, Mr. President.

Thank you for your historic leadership on Operation Epic Fury. The success you've laid out was only possible because of the military you rebuilt.

As well as the historic success here in Memphis. And I want to thank—by—start by thanking every patriot in this room in law enforcement and the nearly 1,500 National Guard members for your heroic efforts in this operation.

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

So thank you for work tirelessly to protect this State and restore law and order, and the results, they speak for themselves. Your presence has led to a massive reduction in crime, a reduction the good citizens of Memphis deserve.

So thank you, Mr. President for your leadership in restoring—street by street, neighborhood by neighborhood, you are saving Memphis, Tennessee, and the country. And we are grateful for it.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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

Mr. Governor, please.

Governor William B. Lee of Tennessee. Yes, sir. Welcome back to Tennessee, Mr. President, especially to the iconic, great American city that is Memphis.

We oftentimes say Nashville's the heart of Tennessee, but Memphis is the soul. And—[applause]. Great businesses here, remarkable people, a true, rich cultural history—but a serious problem.

[Gov. Lee continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

And we're not done, but the statistics speak for themselves. What Gady just read out a while ago is hard to imagine when we first started this just 6 months ago, that these were going be the results. There's more to go, but we're grateful for the work.

And, Stephen, your—your commitment to us—Tennesseans truly are grateful for it. And your commitment to President Trump's strategy not just to make Memphis safe, not just to make Tennessee safe, but to make all of America safe again. So thank you, sir.

The President. Thank You. Thank you, Bill.

Stephen.

White House Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Stephen Miller. Thank you.

Well, first and most importantly, thank you to President Trump, whose vision and courage and determination has achieved something that if you had predicted it 15 months ago, people would've said it was impossible. If you had said 15 months ago that we would achieve the lowest national murder rate not in 5 years or 10 years or 15 or 20 or 30 or 40, but in the 125 years, nobody would have believed it possible. And President Trump did exactly that, and it is a miracle.

[Deputy Chief of Staff Miller continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

So I just want to again thank President Trump and, of course, thank the Governor as well, who picked up that phone, called President Trump and said, "I want you to help make Memphis safe." Although I bet the Governor would agree, you could never have imagined this safe, this quickly, this many people behind bars.

And let's just remember that because of the President—because of the work that President Trump is doing not only in Memphis, not only in Washington, DC, but all over the country, ultimately it will save—and is saving—tens of thousands of American lives. It is—and I'll use that word again—what President Trump has done on border of security and public safety is a national miracle that will be studied not only for generations but for centuries to come.

Thank you, President Trump.

The President. Thank You, Steve.

So, Kash, see if you can top that. I don't—*[Laughter]*. I don't know. That's a tough one, Kash.

Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kashyap P. "Kash" Patel. That is tough.

You know, Mr. President, as I look around this venue, I see and I'm reminded again why we have the greatest warriors on God's green Earth. The men and women serving in uniform, the men and women serving and wearing the badge in law enforcement, our police, our sheriffs around the State of Tennessee—I'm reminded that Americans exist to protect this country day in and day out. And they've done it like we've done it here.

But what we didn't have was you. We didn't have a Commander in Chief who backed the blue, who resourced the blue, who funded the military, who did whatever it takes to safeguard every single life.

[Director Patel continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

So, while we're out there fighting for the dreams of our children, just know, Mr. President, how many millions of dreams like mine are going to be lived thanks to your brilliant leadership.

Mr. President, thanks for delivering America the safest, safest, safest country on God's green Earth.

The President. Thank you very much, Kash. Pretty good. *[Laughter]* He did—he did pretty good.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, please.

Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives Cameron Sexton. Thank you, Mr.—thank you, Mr. President. It's great to be here with you today. And you're in the—obviously we're

in the hottest country, in the hottest State, and now, the hottest city, thanks to you. So, we appreciate your leadership in that endeavor

Also, it takes strong leadership, Mr. President, to do what you do. We thank you for that. And have a strong team as well.

[Speaker Sexton continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

And the last thing I'll say, Mr. President, is I appreciate your resolve to not allow people's words to distract you from your destiny.

Stephen Miller just laid out what that destiny looked like, which is untouched in our history. Thank you for being resolute and not allowing those who want to take you down or to cause you harm to allow you to continue fighting forward to make the America what we know it can be, as well as the city of Memphis.

The President. Thank you, Speaker.

Speaker Sexton. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much. Great.

And now we have the ICE Director. Very important. He's done a fantastic job.

Todd, please.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Acting Director Todd M. Lyons. First off, sir, I just want to say that as a law enforcement officer, thank you for letting us do our job again. That's the key thing.

The men and women in this room that wear a badge every day, we know that we have a President that has our back. So, because of you, we can go out, and we can make America safe again.

[Acting Director Lyons continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

Because of your leadership, we were able to get these violent criminals out of our neighborhoods and, sir, Memphis going forward is going to be the example, as Mr. Miller said, for decades to come.

So, on behalf of the men and women of ICE, the special agents of Homeland Security, we thank you for your leadership.

The President. Thank you very much, Todd. And just, if I might, So you're at the front of a storm. The Democrats have caused lots of problems at the airports and all other places too. We shouldn't be in this position, especially when we're in conflict elsewhere. But how are you doing, and how is ICE doing at the airports and helping out?

Director Lyons. Oh. You know, sir, to just have the opportunity to help our other fellow officers at Department of Homeland Security, we're doing great. We're going to make sure that your promise is kept, that we're going to help those lines move, and we're going to make people safe. And no one should be nervous to go to the airport because we're going to make sure that every traveler on spring break has a safe journey.

The President. I appreciate. Great job. You're doing a great job. Thank you very much.

Rob Cekada, please. Rob.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Deputy Director Robert Cekada. Yes, sir. Mr. President, thank you for your assembling of the Memphis Safe Task Force. The

leadership empowered ATF and all of our State local and partners to focus on the most dangerous criminals operating in Memphis.

Violent, repeat felons, many walking the streets despite having three, four, and five felony convictions, are no longer doing so. They're no longer walking these streets without the fear of Federal and State, local and State law enforcement getting together and taking them off the streets.

[Deputy Director Cekada continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

Those people are now approaching our agents and our partners thanking us every day for being out there and taking the fear away from them so they and their family members could walk their communities and sit in their front yards and talk to their neighbors without fear of being killed or shot.

So thank you for your support of law enforcement and for creating the Memphis Safe Task Force. Thank you, sir.

The President. Oh, thank you, Rob. And you do a fantastic job. Thank you very much.

One of the best crime fighters I know for—really from personal experience, because I've watched them more in DC than here. But I get the reports on what's happening in Memphis. And, Terry Cole, please say a few words. Great job.

Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration Terrance C. Cole. Mr. President. Thank you for your leadership. It has given law enforcement the tools and the support to take this fight directly to the local street gangs but also the cartels, the designated terrorists that are killing Americans.

Your leadership is attacking not only the local street gangs here, but it's attacking the cartels in Mexico. It's attacking the cartels in Venezuela. It's attacking the cartels in Colombia and Ecuador. And it's setting the example for the world to see that they are designated terrorists. They are fueling the violence in our streets.

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

So thank you for giving us at the DEA the power to do our job again. Thank you for giving us these amazing relationships with these Task Forces and the Homeland Security Task Force and the Memphis Task Force and the Washington, DC, Task Force. There's no command we won't go out and complete, Mr. President. We're here to execute your orders.

Thank you for your leadership——

The President. Thank you.

Administrator Cole. ——and thank you for this amazing opportunity to make America safe again, sir. Thank you.

The President. Thank you, Terry. Great job. Great.

So, just in finishing up, we have two great people that happen to live here. One's a businessowner—and a good one. And one's a good one also—a resident. And we're going to ask you both to say a few words.

Please.

Pugh's Earthworks and Pugh's Flowers Cofounder and President Tim Pugh. Mr. President, thank you for saving Memphis, and thank you for asking me to share my story.

My name is Tim Pugh. I'm a cofounder and president of Pugh's Earthworks and Pugh's Flowers. My brothers and I have two family-owned businesses in Memphis, and this makes—this year marks our 50th year in business since we started our American dream.

My entire family, including our new grandbaby, is living and working in Memphis. We want our family to feel and be safe. We have many friends that have moved away and encouraged their children to move away because of the escalating crime.

[Mr. Pugh continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

We want Memphis to grow and prosper. And to do that, you must have a low crime rate. People have to feel safe. That wasn't the case before, but now it is.

Thank you to the Task Force and our city leaders for working together to make this happen. And thank you, Mr. President. Memphis owes you a lot of gratitude. Thank you.

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

Great. And your business is doing well?

[Mr. Pugh nodded.]

The President. That's great. It's going to get better and better. You watch. Thank you very much.

Dalisia.

Memphis, TN, resident Dalisia Ballinger. Thank you so much, Mr. President. It is a complete honor to be here with you today. Thank you for saving Memphis.

My name is Dalisia Ballinger, and I'm a lifelong Memphian, and I'm a mother. And I wanted to speak with you today not just as a citizen, but as a mom who's lived through what Memphis has become.

[Ms. Ballinger continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

In fact, President Trump, my son, my beautiful son, is here today, and he would like to wave and say thank you, because now he's free to live a normal childhood.

Braylon, stand up for me, baby. And because of that change, we finally have a sense of normal again.

Again, from the bottom of my heart, I truly don't have the words to share how much I appreciate you. Thank you so much, sir. Memphis loves you, President Trump. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much. Wow. I don't know, Dalisia. I think we're going to have to give her MVP, right? MVP, Dalisia. That's a great job. Thank you very much, honey. Great job. I think she has to run for office. Would you like to become a Republican? *[Laughter]*

Ms. Ballinger. I am.

The President. She said, "I am a Republican." I love this.

Anyway, great job. Thank you very much. Appreciate it. Really beautiful.

So you're going to see some fantastic results. You already have, but you're going to see some numbers that are going to bring you into a level that few cities attain.

I want to thank the Governor. I want to thank the State. The State is just a fantastic State. The first day I stepped in it, we were leading by 30 points, and it never went down. It just—only went up. So it's something special. We have a bond. We have a special bond.

You know, you could be a politician, but when you win something in landslide, landslide, landslide, you have a very, very great feeling. And I want to tell you, this is a very, very successful, beautiful State, and I love Tennessee.

Thank you very much. And congratulations to Memphis.

[*The President addressed Ms. Ballinger.*]

And fantastic job.

Thank you. Thank you, everybody, very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. at the Memphis Air National Guard Base. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. J. Daniel Caine, USAF; Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer; King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Mayor Paul Young of Memphis; former Vice President Kamala D. Harris; and Gov. Jeffrey M. Landry of Louisiana. He also referred to S. 1383. Mr. Pugh referred to his brothers Michael and Mark.

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Locations: Memphis, TN.

Names: Ballinger, Dalisia; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blackburn, Marsha W.; Bondi, Pamela J.; Bonner, Floyd, Jr.; Caine, J. Daniel; Cekada, Robert; Cole, Terrance C.; Dunavant, Michael; Hagerty, William F., IV; Harris, Kamala D.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Johnson, J. Michael; Landry, Jeffrey M.; Lee, William B.; Lyons, Todd M.; Miller, Stephen; Nordhaus, Steven S.; Patel, Kashyap P. "Kash"; Perry, Matt; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Pugh, Tim; Ross, Warner A., II; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Schumer, Charles E.; Serralta, Gadyaces S.; Sexton, Cameron; Silverman, Mat; West, Chris; Yoes, Patrick; Young, Paul.

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