

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks at a Swearing-in Ceremony for Markwayne Mullin as Secretary of Homeland Security and an Exchange With Reporters
March 24, 2026

The President. Well, thank you very much. It's a great day for me because I have a lot of confidence in this gentleman. And we're thrilled to swear in our new Secretary of Homeland Security—a great American patriot, to put it mildly—Markwayne Mullin.

And I want to just say, Markwayne, congratulations. Great.

Secretary Mullin. Thank you, sir.

The President. You deserve it. You're a great man.

Let me also thank Secretary Mullin's beautiful family, including his wife Christie—thank you; his sons Jim and Jayce and Andrew; and daughters Larra, Ivy, Lynette; and other members of the Mullin family. It's a beautiful family.

Everyone know this guy. He's our big wrestling—top wrestling guy. [*Laughter*] I won't wrestle him for anything. [*Laughter*] An all-American wrestler, huh? Good. You have good genetics in that family.

Jim Mullin. Thank you, sir.

The President. Proud of you.

Thanks as well to Attorney General Pam Bondi, Chairman Jason Smith, Congressman Josh Gottheimer, former Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, and many of the friends that are gathered with us. It's great—great group of people.

For 13 years, Markwayne has represented the incredible State of Oklahoma, a State that I won 77 out of 77 counties three times in a row. So I—they like me there. Second was Ronald—Ronald Reagan at 56. Did you know that? Fifty-six. That's not bad, but 77—it's 77 out of 77, I think. Right?

Secretary Mullin. That's pretty good.

The President. That's not bad. [*Laughter*]

But he was there in Congress as a Member of the House, and then as an outstanding United States Senator. And he really has been outstanding. He's been a close and vital partner in helping us secure the border, stop migrant crime, end the scourge of illegal drugs, and make America safe again and make America great again.

And he is a tremendous player. He worked with Tom Homan, worked with all of our people on the right and many more. And everything he's done has been good. I say everything he touched, he's turned to gold.

Now—but even in business, he was successful, in all fairness. And he was successful, and he said, "I want to go into politics." I hope you're happy. [*Laughter*]

But as the only Native American—I didn't know that, huh? Let me look at you. Well, I think that's all right. [*Laughter*] He's—got the—he's got great quality, I can tell you. He's the only Native American in the Senate. How many have been there before you, do you know—Native American?

Secretary Mullin. I think three.

The President. Three. Well, you're a fantastic representative.

Markwayne has also been a fantastic advocate for our cherished Tribal communities. He's now the first member of the Cherokee Nation ever to serve as a member of the Cabinet.

I didn't know all these things. I would have picked him faster if I had known. [*Laughter*] I would've made a quicker decision.

Prior to his career in public service, Markwayne had a very successful career in business, leaving school at age 20 after his father got sick, taking over his family business, and turning it into a multimillion-dollar success story. He's a very successful guy.

Markwayne is also—a career as an MMA fighter. That's why I looked at his ears, and I said, "I'm not going to fight with him." You can tell a lot about a person by their ears, right? During which he went totally undefeated. He was undefeated during his career, and he's been inducted into the Oklahoma Wrestling Hall of Fame.

And the family is made of fantastic wrestlers, especially that guy right there. That's my favorite guy, huh? And suffered bad injury and come back stronger than ever, I think. So good to have you, man. Right?

I've no doubt that as he takes the helm of DHS, Markwayne will fight for Homeland Security, the United States, and securing the country and making it really strong and the way it should be.

Our country has come a long way in the last year. We set it up so beautifully. And then we had 4 years of horror. We had four 4 of disgusting horror, open borders, and things that nobody would even think of. You wouldn't even think of.

Twenty-five million people poured into our country. And we've gotten a lot of them out, but we have a lot more to go. We—11,888 murderers came into our country. People came in from all over the world, from prisons and gangs—gang members, drug dealers, people from mental institutions, insane asylums. That's the mental institution times two. And what they allowed to happen to our country can never be allowed to happen again.

And it won't.

With Markwayne, we have somebody that's strong, professional, and fair. As you know, the department that Markwayne takes over today is currently shut down by radical-left Democrat thugs in Congress who have blocked all funding for DHS because they're trying to shield illegal alien criminals, gang members. They want to protect them from being taken out of the country. Drug dealers, murderers—they're protecting them all.

I don't know how people can vote for these people. You know? I see the midterms are close. I don't know what "close" means, but I don't know how people can vote for them. You take a look.

Men—they want men to be able to play in women's sports. They want transgender for everybody. Terrible. But that's the way it is.

They don't want to give voter ID. They don't want voter ID for elections. They don't want proof of citizenship for elections. And then they get the vote. And they do cheat, but, I don't know, it's hard to believe they can cheat that much.

Just in the past few days, we've seen the horrifying consequences of Democrats' deadly open-border extremism. They want open borders, and they want to open the borders again if they have their chance, because they think they're going to get votes by doing that.

On Thursday, a precious 18-year-old college student named—named Sheridan Gorman was shot and killed while she was walking in a park. She was just walking in the park. Didn't do anything. The illegal alien monster charged with Sheridan's brutal murder had come illegally from Venezuela and been released into our country by Sleepy Joe Biden, the worst President in the history of our country. And I don't say that because I—because I think he's fine. He's okay. I don't like him, dislike him.

I talk about job performance. That's all I care about: job performance. He's the worst President in history. And Obama wasn't far behind, by the way.

But he was then arrested and released again by Democrat Governor—a real slob of a Governor—J.B. Pritzker in the sanctuary city of Chicago, which we could make safe in 2 months, I would say—2 months—if we sent in the group—Tom, right? We could—two months, it would be good. Three months, very good. Four or 5 months, it would be great. But they would never call because they don't want to do that. All they have to do is call and ask for a little help.

The Democrats in Congress do not care how much American blood they shed in their demented pursuit of open borders. From Sheridan Gorman to Jocelyn Nungaray and Laken Riley, their quest to flood our country with illegal aliens has left countless American victims in its wake.

They never change, too. They see what's happening. They never change. That's what they want. They want to get the votes.

With sanctuary and—sanctuary cities going at levels that they are—and we've ended a lot. We've done a lot. But, for some reason, they love it. It's a sanctuary. You know, sanctuary cities are sanctuary for—truly a sanctuary for criminals.

With Secretary Mullin at DHS, we will continue our record-setting efforts to deport these illegal alien criminals from our country. And we are doing at record levels, despite a very unfair court system—a radicalized-left court system and others that I'm not too fond of also.

And we'll protect innocent American lives. Every single illegal migrant who has a criminal record must be deported immediately. If they have a criminal record, you've got to deport them.

And there's a lot that came in under Biden and Kamala—the great border czar Kamala, who never went to the border and never called Border Patrol. Never once called Border Patrol. Can you imagine that, Jim? She's the border czar. She never called Border Patrol.

Jim Mullin. It's crazy.

The President. Explain that to me. He's the worst. She was as bad as he was. Going to give them IQ tests next week.

Under the Trump administration, we've achieved unprecedented gains on public safety. Yesterday we were in Memphis, Tennessee, to celebrate the steepest reduction in crime ever recorded. We've been there for about 5 months, and the numbers—nobody's ever seen anything like it.

And thanks to our Memphis State—Safe Task—it's called Safe Task Force—alongside our efforts in Washington, DC—and what we've done in Washington is amazing. We have—Washington is a safe city now. It's been amazing.

It's been—if you go back a year and a half, 2 years ago, Washington was one of the most unsafe cities anywhere in the world, let alone this country, and now we have a very safe city. And what they've done with all of the people working—and many of the people standing right there—has been incredible.

And now we're going to see all of our cities take a big step because of Markwayne.

In one year, my administration—we've created the most secure border in the United States' history and the largest drop in illegal immigration ever recorded, slashed the illegal fentanyl crossings on our border by 64 percent, and accomplished the largest decline in the murder rate in the history of our country, bringing it down to 1900. That's before my father was born. My father was born a little bit after that. He wouldn't be happy mentioning this because he never liked talking about age, but he lived to be a ripe, old age. But that's before my father was born.

Think of it: 1900. We have a record. 1900.

Murders last year were at the lowest level in 125 years. And we're making America safe again. We're doing it at levels that nobody—everything we're doing we're making great. The border is great. The military is great.

We're having, by the way, a tremendous success, as you know, in Iran. We had one in Venezuela, and now we're having one in Iran. They have no navy left. They have no air force left. They have no anti-aircraft equipment left, no radar left, no leaders left. The leaders are all gone. Nobody knows who to talk to.

But we're actually talking to the right people, and they want to make a deal so badly. You have no idea how badly they want to make a deal, and we'll see what happens.

I want to thank Pete Hegseth. The job you're doing over there is really incredible—you and the general and all of the other generals and colonels and captains and majors and everybody else, right?

Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth. They're doing the hard work.

The President. It's a perfect, amazing thing.

We have the—we make the best military equipment in the world. Now we're going to make it faster. We want to get it faster, but we make the best in the world. We're doing a job.

So I'd like to ask Attorney General Bondi to come and do the honors of swearing in a man who's going to do a phenomenal job for our country. And I'll tell you, your family has to be very proud. You have to be very proud.

Jim Mullin. Absolutely.

The President. Everybody wanted this job. I said, "There's one man for this job, and I have no doubt he's going to be fantastic."

Thank you, Pam. Come on over. Thank you.

Attorney General Bondi. Please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

I do solemnly swear.

Secretary Mullin. I do solemnly swear.

Attorney General Bondi. Markwayne Mullin.

Secretary Mullin. Markwayne Mullin.

Attorney General Bondi. That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Secretary Mullin. That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States.

Attorney General Bondi. Against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Secretary Mullin. Against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Attorney General Bondi. And that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

Secretary Mullin. And I will bear true faith to allegiance and do the same.

Attorney General Bondi. And that I take this obligation freely.

Secretary Mullin. I take this obligation freely.

Attorney General Bondi. Without any mental reservation.

Secretary Mullin. Without any mental reservation.

Attorney General Bondi. Or purpose of evasion.

Secretary Mullin. Or purpose of evasion.

Attorney General Bondi. And that I will well and faithfully.

Secretary Mullin. And that I will well and faithfully.

Attorney General Bondi. Discharge the duties of the office.

Secretary Mullin. Discharge the duties of the office.

Attorney General Bondi. On which I am about to enter.

Secretary Mullin. Which I'm about to enter.

Attorney General Bondi. So help me God.

Secretary Mullin. So help me God.

Attorney General Bondi. Congratulations, Secretary.

Secretary Mullin. Thank you. Appreciate it.

The President. Yay. Markwayne, want to say a few words?

Secretary Mullin. Thank you. I think that was the most nervous I've ever been. I don't—it just seems surreal being in the Oval Office and having the President of the United States speak so highly of me and then recognize my family and know my family by name. It's humbling, and—I never take it for granted.

But I have made this very clear—that I don't care what color your State is. I don't care if you're red or you're blue. At the end of the day, my job is to be Secretary of Homeland and to protect everybody the same. And we will do that. I'll fight every single day.

Today I got the privilege of meeting so many of the employees at DHS. These employees have been there for 30 days without pay. And if you need anything to know their dedication to show up and still protect the homeland that you and I enjoy and the freedoms that we're experiencing, they're working—for free because of political politics. That's all I need to know.

I told them, "If you're fighting 365 days, understand I'll be fighting 360 days—365 days beside you." No one's going to outwork me, and I'm not going to let any of them outwork me.

The President has entrusted me with this, and failure is not an option.

And so thank you so much, Mr. President, for this opportunity. I won't let you down.

The President. Thank you very much.

I love that expression. "No one's going to outwork me." That's a wrestler's expression, isn't it, huh? [*Laughter*] That's a good wrestler's expression.

Yes, please.

Election Reform

Q. Mr. President, will the Secretary's replacement in the Senate support the SAVE Act and the use of the talking filibuster to get it through?

The President. Well, it's not the SAVE Act. It's not called the—it's called the "SAVE America Act." There's a big difference, because the SAVE Act—nobody knows what that means. "SAVE America" means save America.

And I can't speak for him, but I would imagine that Markwayne—I didn't even ask him the question, because who wouldn't support it? Voter ID with a picture. You want citizenship—proof of citizenship. Ideally, you want to end mail-in ballots because there's tremendous corruption.

Then we added a couple of things, Markwayne, like—I don't think being a great athlete and having a family of great athletes—they have produced great athletes in this family, all-American wrestlers. They especially like wrestling, by the way.

And what about baseball? You ever play baseball? Anything? [*Laughter*] They like wrestling.

But I don't think that you would say that his family—and I don't know this for a fact, and I shouldn't say it because I could get myself—does anybody in your family want men to play in women's sports?

Andrew Mullin. No, sir.

Jayce Mullin. Absolutely not.

Jim Mullin. Absolutely not.

The President. I don't think so, Jim. Right? I don't think so. I don't think—how would they do? Would they do good wrestling you? They would be in trouble.

Jim Mullin. Yes.

The President. He said, "Yes. They'd be in big trouble." [*Laughter*] It's so crazy.

So that would be one. And then we have a few others that we had. We call them the "best of"—best of Trump. But if you look at transgender mutilization of children, we don't want that. It's the mutilization of children. We don't want that.

So, generally speaking, I think I can answer that Markwayne would be very much in favor of what I'm in favor of. Would you say that's right, Mark?

Secretary Mullin. Yes, sir.

The President. I can't think of too many things. He might be worse. He might be worse than me. [*Laughter*] That's my—look at his wife is saying, "That's right."

But—so, yes, he's going to be great.

Yes.

Department of Homeland Security Management

Q. Do you believe the Secretary will run DHS any differently than Kristi Noem did? What do you hope to see as his priorities?

The President. Well, we had a good run.

Look, we created the strongest border with the help of that man right there. Tom is so incredible, and he's going to be a big influence here too. There's nobody more professional.

Nobody better. There's nobody better as a human being. You know, he looks tough, but he's got a good heart. But not too good. Don't make it too good. [*Laughter*]

But you know, we had—Tom, we have the safest border we've ever had. We have a lot of assets, but a lot of things we can—we can do and we're going to do. We have to get criminals out of our country that were allowed in by Biden.

Yes, please.

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations

Q. Mr. President, do you support the—what appears to be emerging agreement coming out of the Senate to reopen DHS?

The President. Well, I'm going to look at it, and we're going to take a good, hard look at it. I want to support Republicans, and, you know, sometimes it's awfully hard to get votes when you have Democrats that don't want to have voter ID. They don't want to have proof of citizenship. They don't want to do anything about men playing in women's sports. That's one of the items we put on, you know? And I did that just because it's so popular.

You know, they say, "That's at least an 80/20 issue." No, it's about a 99/1. I don't think it's—what do you think, Pete? Do you think it's 80/20?

Secretary Hegseth. No, sir.

The President. Who's closer, 80/20 or 99/1?

Secretary Hegseth. Almost a hundred, sir.

The President. Yes. I think—I think a hundred is really the—

So, you know—so I support that, and I support common sense.

Please.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Q. Mr. President, would—would you be comfortable with a deal that involves separating ICE funding from the DHS funding package in order to reopen DHS quicker?

The President. Well, they're working on all of that. You know, that's a detail that they'll explain later.

Please.

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Q. On election integrity and DHS measures. Mr. President, since CISA falls under DHS, and given that many credible voices have raised concerns over its premature and possibly faulty—likely faulty—2020 election assessment, will you and Secretary Mullin implement reforms at CISA and at DHS to ensure full confidence in future elections, like in the upcoming—

The President. We haven't spoken about it. We'll talk about it. You know, pros and cons.

Look, they used it to try and put me in prison, right? So I can't be thrilled with it. They used that very strongly, very illegally.

The Democrats are thugs. And I don't want to say that. It would be nice to—everyone get along, but it's a different country than it was years ago. It was very dangerous, the way they used it. And they weaponized Government. They used that to weaponize Government.

So I'm not thrilled, but I'll also go along with two groups of people: the military—and I think the military likes it, right?

Secretary Hegseth. Mm-hmm.

The President. And I'll go along with the Senators. It's—I'm fine, but I was a big victim of it.

Yes, please.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Are you going to send Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff to do direct negotiations with the Iranians?

The President. Yes, well, we're in negotiations—as it turned out. And now you've seen what I said yesterday was exactly correct. We're in negotiations right now.

They're doing it along with Marco, J.D. We have a number of people doing it. And the other side—I can tell you, they'd like to make a deal.

And who wouldn't, if you were there? Look, their navy is gone. Their air force is gone. Their communications are gone. That's the biggest problem: It's very hard to communicate—them, between themselves. All of the anti-aircraft is gone. Most of their missiles are gone. We shot—either shot them or they shot them and don't have them anymore. They're down to a trickle. They're—pretty much everything they have is gone.

I don't know. Can you name one thing that's not gone? Or can you name one thing that's doing well?

You know, if you read the papers, you think we're tied. You think we're in a tough battle. We are roaming free over Tehran—the city, Tehran, as opposed to Iran. We're roaming free. We can do whatever we want.

And, as you know, today we were going to have the privilege of shooting down a very big electric-generation plant, one of the biggest in the world. And one shot to the right location ends the plant. It collapses. And we held off based on the fact that we're negotiating.

Yes.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. What do you think was the turning point to make you want to pursue a cease-fire? A few days ago, you know, you said you wanted to continue bombing Iran. Now you want to pursue peace talks. Was there something that happened?

The President. The fact that they're talking to us, and they're talking sense.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. What do you think made them do that?

The President. And remember, it all starts with they cannot have a nuclear weapon. Just—you know, I said yesterday, "What are"—they said, "What are the top 10?" I said, "Well, number one, two, and three is they can't have a nuclear weapon." And they're not going to have a nuclear weapon. And we're talking about that.

Q. What do you think made them want to talk to you?

The President. And I don't want to say in advance, but they've agreed they will never have a nuclear weapon. They've agreed to that.

Former U.S. Border Patrol Commander-at-Large Gregory K. Bovino/Immigration Enforcement Actions

Q. How do you ensure they won't have a nuclear weapon?

Q. Greg Bovino—your former Border Patrol chief, Greg Bovino, said his only regret is that he didn't catch more illegal aliens. What's your reaction to that?

The President. Who said that?

Q. That's your former Border Patrol chief. He just retired.

The President. Well, I mean, we captured a lot. You know, they were allowed into the country by Sleepy Joe and that group of incompetent people that were here. Worst President ever. The group of incompetent people.

To me, that's the biggest scar. You know, inflation—they caused the highest inflation we've ever had. We've already gotten rid of it. The biggest scar is—what they did, the people that they allowed from prisons all over the world. They came from the Congo, from all over South America. Rough, rough, rough people. Really tough people.

So, no, I understand what he means. He's—you know, he would have liked to have captured more. I'm not capturing so much as removing. You know, we're removing thousands of people. And many are self-deporting because we're going after them so powerfully that they're self-deporting, Tom—going back. I think that's one of the big unkept secrets. It's—we have thousands and thousands of people and they're self-deporting. They're going back to where they came from.

But what we want really is the criminals. We're really focused on those criminals, getting them out.

Yes.

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations/Tax Code Reform/Democratic Paart/Republican Party

Q. What's your message right now to Democrats and also to Americans that are stuck at airports—it's really devastating watching it online—because Democrats won't fund DHS?

The President. What's devastating?

Q. What's your message to Americans right now stuck at airports as we speak because Democrats won't fund DHS?

The President. Well, they just don't—they won't—look, this is a deal that was done in the "Great Big Beautiful Deal," which gave you the biggest tax cuts ever, including no tax on tips and no tax on Social Security for the seniors. Think of it. No tax on overtime. Tax deductions—when you buy a car, you take money, pay interest on the money, you deduct it. We've never had that for people buying cars—if it's an American car. Only if it's an American car.

But they are just what—they're—they stick together, the Democrats. I'll tell you, I give them great credit for that.

We have some that will—they're not good stickers. We have guys like Tom Massie in Congress, who's terrible. He's just terrible. Terrible person. I call him Rand Paul, Jr. But they don't vote.

Rand Paul, I mean, rarely votes for stuff. He likes me, says I'm a great President. He said the other day I'm a great President—one of the greatest Presidents. But I said, "Do me a favor: Vote for us, and don't call me a great"—I'd rather have the vote than the statement.

But we have people that don't stick together, and those people hopefully will someday be gone.

The thing I most respect about the Democrats: Even on horrible policy, they stick together.

What they do have, though, is horrible policy: transgender for everyone, open borders, men in women's sports. They have the worst policy that you can imagine. And so, whether they stick together or not, I mean, they have just as terrible policy.

We have great policy. Republicans have great policy. We have commonsense policy, but it's great policy. That's our biggest advantage, is our policy is correct.

Yes, please.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran/U.S. Missile Defense

Q. Mr. President, are you encouraging our allies in the Gulf to be more involved in the Iran operation?

The President. Say it.

Q. Are you encouraging our allies in the Gulf to be more involved in the Iran operation?

The President. Yea. I mean, a little bit, but more—more NATO. I think our Gulf allies have been pretty good, to be honest with you.

U.A.E.'s been hit so hard. It got hit by 1,400 rockets. Shot them all out of the air with our great Patriot missiles.

Think of it. They shot a hundred missiles at one of our aircraft carriers, the *Abraham Lincoln*—one of the biggest ships in the world, actually. And out of 101 missiles shot, every single one of them was knocked down in the sea. Think of that. Think of what that means. A hundred and one missiles—highly sophisticated, very fast missiles shot. Out of 101, all 101 were shot down and now, for the most part, lie at the bottom of the sea. Pretty amazing, right? Pretty amazing.

Our military is amazing, Pete. You know the attack I'm talking about recently. Hundred and one shot. I said, "Wow." I saw that. You can see. We have, sort of, pretty good equipment that we see. It's called the red line. Those red lines were thick, right? I said, "That's a lot." And then we saw them one by one just get shot.

And these guys that do the shooting are the coolest cucumbers ever. You know, most people—you don't have a lot of time when a missile's going at 2,500 miles an hour. I don't care how far away it is. You don't have a lot of time.

But I watched them—I watched them sit down and think. Great students. MITs—a lot of MITs, a lot of guys like this—they're not as much into the muscle as they are this one right here.

[At this point, the President pointed to his head.]

And amazing to watch them perform under great pressure, because they have a matter of seconds to do it. If they don't do it properly, it's a big problem, you know? Because these were powerful—these were very powerful missiles coming. And so a lot of people choke.

They don't choke. These guys don't choke. They're the best in the world. We have the best in the world.

Yes.

Transportation Security Administration

Q. Mr. President, what would be your message today to the TSA agents who have been staying home in recent days amid this impasse?

The President. Well, some of them are needing money, you know, because the Democrats cut off their money. I blame the Democrats more than anything else.

But some of them, you know, they didn't get paid because they're not funded by the Democrats. This is a Democrat problem. In fact, I actually said to the Senate, "Why would you solve"—this is a Democrat problem. I think the polls are showing it's a Democrat problem. And they'll do anything, actually, to hurt our country so they can try and win the midterms.

Q. And if they——

The President. And if we ever went back to our old policies, we wouldn't have a country left.

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations

Q. If they get a deal, Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, to fund all but enforcement operations of ICE, to get those TSA agents repaid and to open up the rest of the department, would you sign that?

The President. Well, I don't want to comment until I see the deal, but, as you know, they're negotiating a deal. I guess they're getting fairly close, but I think any deal they make, I'm pretty much not happy with it.

These guys came in, they wouldn't pay people. You know, they had a deal to pay. They had to break their deal. The Democrats broke the deal that we had. It was all done. Everything was fine. And then they just said, "Well, we're not going to pay anymore."

And they hurt our country and—at a very difficult time because, you know, we are at, as they would say, a war. They call it a war. I call it a military operation—a very successful one. Like, successful like nobody's ever seen before.

Hey, Venezuela was equally as successful. That was a great—that was a great thing.

No, the Democrats had a deal. It was a done deal. And then they said, "Well, we're not going to pay." And so they—a lot of people suffered over that and put our country in danger.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. On Iran——

The President. Do you have another question?

Q. Yes, on Iran.

The President. You haven't been here in a while.

Q. Well, on Iran. Can you give us any more sense of who exactly in Iran it is either Witkoff and Kushner and others are speaking with?

The President. Well, you know—look—yes, we had—I hate to say this in front of these young people. They're not children. They're—I spoke to most of them. They sound like adults to me, even though they are sort of children, right? They'll always be your children.

Secretary Mullin. Yes.

The President. But I hate to say it, but we killed all their leadership, and then they met to choose new leaders, and we killed all of them. And now we have a new group, and we can easily do that. But let's see how they turn out.

It's—we have, really, regime change. You know, this is a change in the regime because the leaders are all very different than the ones that we started off with that created all those problems. So this was—I think we can say, Jason, this is regime change. Right?

Q. What makes you trust them?

The President. I don't trust anybody. I don't trust you. [*Laughter*] I mean, that's only because I know you.

Q. You've said that before.

The President. But if I didn't know you, I'd probably have more trust. [*Laughter*] But I don't trust anyone. Why do you——

Q. Why bother talking to them, though?

The President. Why do you say that—why do you say, "What makes you trust"—do you think I trust them? I don't trust them.

Q. Then why bother talking to them?

The President. Because they're going to make a deal. They're going to make a deal. They did something yesterday that was amazing, actually: They gave us a present, and the present arrived today. And it was a very big present worth a tremendous amount of money. And I'm not going to tell you what that present is, but it was a very significant prize. And they gave it to us, and they said they were going to give it. So, that meant one thing to me: We're dealing with the right people.

Iran/Nuclear Weapons Development

Q. Is that nuclear related?

The President. No, it wasn't nuclear related. It was oil and gas related. And it was a very nice thing they did.

But what it showed me is that we're dealing with the right people. Because, you know, you don't know, because the leadership was killed, all gone. Khamenei, all gone, as the expression goes—the past Supreme Leader. And then the new Supreme Leader was racked up—at a minimum, racked up pretty good, and everyone else was gone. And then many of the people in the third tier are gone.

But we're dealing with a group of people that I think turned out, and—the present, the gift they made to us was very significant. And they said they were going to do it, and it happened. And they're the only ones that could have done it.

Jennifer [Jennifer Jacobs, CBS News].

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Was it related to the Strait of Hormuz and the flow of——

The President. Yes, it was related to the flow and to the Strait. Yes, it was.

Q. Are you negotiating on who's going to control the Strait from now on? Are you——

The President. No, we're going to—we can—we'll have control of anything we want.

Look, if we can end this without more lives being down, without knocking out \$10 billion electric plants that are brand-new and the apple of their eye, I'd like to be able to do that. You know? But we—they can't have certain things.

I mean, you know the things. I don't have to go over the list, but, again, it starts with no nuclear weapons, and they've agreed to that. There won't be any nuclear weapons. They're not going to have them. They're not going to have enrichment—any of those things.

But look, I hate to say that we're in a very good bargaining position, but—and I hate to say that they're defenseless because, you know, until that—last missile is fired, they have a little power. But we are in about the best bargaining position. We're way ahead of schedule.

And, again, they have no navy, and they have no air force, and they have no missile protection, and most of their missiles are gone. Most of their launchers we've killed. You know, we've killed about 82 percent of their launchers. So, even if they had a missile, they can't launch it.

We've been very—we have the greatest military in the world. Nobody even comes close. We have the best military equipment in the world.

Go ahead.

Saudi Arabia/United Arab Emirates/Qatar/Kuwait

Q. On Saudi Arabia. There's been some reporting that you've been talking to the Crown Prince. Have you been focused on normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel at this point?

The President. Well, no, we have a great relationship with Saudi Arabia. What do you hear with Saudi Arabia?

Q. Just hearing that you've been talking and that he has been encouraging you to do certain things related to Iran. Can you share a little bit?

The President. Well, he's a warrior. He does. Yes, he's a warrior. He's fighting with us, by the way. Saudi Arabia has been excellent. And U.A.E., excellent. And I will tell you: Qatar, incredible.

Qatar took a hit, a pretty bad hit. Qatar's very close. You know, they're essentially—you can walk right over the border. Qatar took a hit. They've been great. They've been very strong.

Kuwait, they had a little mishap. They shot down three planes with our missiles. They happened to be our planes, but the pilots made it. Can you imagine the pilots making it? The pilots saw what was coming, and they said, "Those are Patriots. We're not going to escape Patriots," and they got out of there pretty quick, Pete. Right? Pretty amazing that—

Secretary Hegseth. It is.

The President. —they got out. The three pilots lived. They're fine. In fact, they're flying today.

Q. It was the Kuwaitis that accidentally fired the missiles?

The President. Yes, it was. The Kuwaitis—made a mistake. They fired. They thought they were firing at the enemy. It was, as the expression goes, friendly fire. But the pilots are great. They're flying today. Pretty amazing—right?—when you think of it.

Yes. Yes.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement/News Media

Q. President Trump, on a human level, how hopeful are you that this peace deal will work out? Like, as a human? As—

The President. On what?

Q. On a human level, and not as the President of the United States, how hopeful are you that this peace deal will work out with Iran?

The President. You're talking about to end it?

Q. To end it.

The President. Well, I think we're going to end it. I can't tell you for sure.

You know, I don't like to say this. I—we've won this. This war has been won. The only one that likes to keep it going is the fake news.

I mean, the New York Times—you read the New York Times, it's like we're not winning a war where they have no navy and they have no air force and they have no nothing. And we literally have planes flying over Tehran and other parts of their country. They can't do a thing about it.

For instance, if I want to take down that power plant, that very big, powerful power plant, they can't do a thing about it. It's like, "Take me." That's all they can do.

And yet, if you read the New York Times or if you watch ABC fake news or NBC fake news, you'd say it's a close battle.

It's not a close battle. They're totally defeated.

You know, we killed their navy in would you say 3 days, Pete?

Secretary Hegseth. Pretty quick, sir.

The President. Gone. In fact, I was a little upset with Pete. I said: "Why didn't you save the ships? We could have used them." Right? He said, "It's more fun shooting them down."

Q. Have you spoken——

The President. But the navy was—the navy was wiped out in a very rapid order. Pretty impressive, for you guys, you champion wrestlers—right?—when you hear this stuff.

Andrew Mullin. Yes, sir.

The President. But you don't—if you read the news, you don't hear this. You know, you read, like, "Oh, they're doing wonderfully." They're doing terribly. They're wiped out. Militarily, they are dead.

Yes.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. On Ukraine. Is there a new sense of a timeline? Do you want to get something done before the midterms so the Republicans will be in power?

The President. Well, we'd like to see President Putin and President Zelenskyy sit down and make a deal. I think they're getting close, but I've been saying that for a while.

Q. Do you think anything will change?

The President. I've settled eight wars. All of them should have been more difficult than this one. This should have been the easiest one. But these are two people that truly hate each other.

You'll find out that hatred is not good for making deals. These are people that—they don't like each other very much.

Yes.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. I know you said there's a bunch of people from the administration who are negotiating with Iran. There's been reports that the Vice President is leading those negotiations. Is that true?

The President. Well, he's involved in them. J.D. is involved; and Marco's involved; and— and Jared Kushner's involved, very smart guy; and—Steve Witkoff, smart guy, is involved; and I'm involved. I'm involved.

Why—I'm not—I'm going to be so big. "Oh, I don't want to talk about it." I'm the President of the United States, Tom. And I'm not going to talk about—it's beneath me to talk about saving millions of lives, because that's what you're talking about. You're talking about saving millions of lives.

If Iran had a nuclear weapon, they would've used it. And if I didn't end the horrible Barack Hussein Obama Iran nuclear deal in my first administration, they would've had a nuclear weapon 3 or 4 years ago. They would've used it.

I would've never gotten the chance, probably, to be President. Who knows if—what—it would've been so devastating.

And if we didn't send those beautiful B-2 bombers—they took them off my desk. They were right there. I don't know why.

But if we didn't have those beautiful—the B-2 hit, which was so—we obliterated—despite CNN. CNN said, "Well, maybe the word 'obliteration'"—I said: "No, no. We obliterated it." Just obliterated their nuclear potential.

You would've had them having—2 weeks after that attack, had we not made the attack, they would've had a nuclear weapon. They would've absolutely used it, and they would've used it on the entire Middle East, including Israel.

And you know why you see that? Because, unexpectedly—when this war broke out, unexpectedly, they started sending missiles to U.A.E., Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, and elsewhere. And nobody thought they were going to—

Were you equally surprised by that, Pete?

Secretary Hegseth. Way more than we thought, Mr. President, yes.

The President. Pete, do you want to give about a 3-minute statement on how we're doing in this, as I call it, military operation? People don't like me using the word "war," but—so I won't. But the Democrats call it a war.

How about a little statement? I think he's done a very good job. Do we agree he's done a good job, Markwayne?

Secretary Mullin. Yes.

The President. Can we take some of your time to make some of our points?

Thanks.

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

You're spot on. Never in history has a modern military—Iran had a modern military: a modern navy, a modern air force, modern air defenses, leadership, massive bunker.

Never has a modern military been so rapidly and historically obliterated—defeated from day one with overwhelming firepower.

The air campaign that we've conducted, that Israel's conducted alongside us, was one for the history books, truly.

And it's because we have a President of the United States that, when he sends his warfighters out to fight, he unties their hands to actually go out and close with and destroy the enemy as viciously as possible from moment one.

And that's why we see ourselves as part of this negotiation as well. We're—we negotiate with bombs. You have a choice as we loiter over the top of Tehran, as the President talked about, about your future.

The President has made it clear that you will not have a nuclear weapon. The War Department agrees. Our job is to ensure that. And so we're keeping our hand on that throttle as long and as hard as is necessary to ensure the interests of the United States of America are achieved on that battlefield.

This is not Iraq and Afghanistan. This is not a President who's interested in—vague end-states. He's been very clear with us about what we need to accomplish—creating the conditions for them never to have a nuclear capability—and that's exactly what we're doing in historic fashion.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Pete.

Secretary Hegseth. Appreciate it.

The President. Thank you. Great job.

Q. Mr. President, on—

The President. You know, the only two people that were quite disappointed—I don't want to say this, but I have to. I said, "Pete and General 'Razin' Caine, I think this thing is going to be settled very soon." They go, "Oh, that's too bad." Right? [*Laughter*] Pete didn't want it to be settled.

It's—these guys are doing a great job. That's a good attitude though, Tom, right?

White House Border Czar Thomas D. Homan. Absolutely.

The President. They were not interested in settlement. They were interested in just winning this thing.

Yes, please.

Second Avenue Subway in New York City/High-Speed Rail Project in California

Q. Mr. President, can you—just taking things locally—hopefully, not doing international affairs for a second. Do you support the construction of the Second Avenue Subway in New York City? And will your administration work to fund that?

The President. Wow, that's really a far-out question—

Q. I'm with Spectrum News, New York, so—[*laughter*].

The President. You know, the Second Avenue Subway's been under construction for—you're a young guy as—longer than you are old, okay?

Q. Not as young as—young as I look, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

The President. Huh? That's been under construction. I haven't heard about the Second Avenue Subway in 20 years. What the hell kind of a question is that? [*Laughter*] I guess they've got to get it finished. But they spent trillions of dollars, practically.

No, they spent more money on that than on anything, I think, in the history of our city—in New York City. And it's been under construction for a long time. It's very sad, actually.

The only thing maybe worse was Gavin Newsom, the Governor of California—his train. I call it his "train wreck" because it's a wreck. That's been years. It's literally 30 times over budget. Nobody's ever seen anything like it. And it doesn't go to San Francisco and Los Angeles like it was supposed to. They decided to cut it way short, because there was no way they could finish it. But it's one of the worst—I've never seen anything like it other than—

The worst? The Federal Reserve building for almost \$4 billion. Little building that's going to cost—a renovation for \$4 billion, headed by our highly incompetent head of the Federal Reserve.

Yes, please.

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations/Election Reform

Q. Mr. President, would you be open—would—are you hoping to see the Senate pursue reconciliation 2.0 to fund ICE and pass the SAVE America Act?

The President. Well, we'll see about reconciliation. We're certainly talking about reconciliation, I think. Markwayne, right?

Secretary Mullin. Yes, sir.

The President. Do you want to talk about that for a second? Now that he is working, we can get him to do this. [*Laughter*]

Secretary Mullin. Thank you. Lindsey Graham, the chairman where the reconciliation will—funnel through—he is committed to making sure we get reconciliation through. If that is in some form with funding ICE, possibly backfilling from the "One Big Beautiful Bill." But also more importantly, the SAVE America Act. There's a framework that we can do through reconciliation. Paying for it, put some of the policies that cost money in.

Because there's nothing more important than the SAVE America Act. I mean, that's what—that's what the American people want. There's—80 percent of the population say they want only Americans voting—citizens that are registered to vote, citizens that are—have done it the right way. And—I believe that everybody wants an—election integrity.

So, fortunately, Lindsey Graham has said through reconciliation, he's willing to put the framework out for that.

The President. And I think that was said so beautifully, so concisely, so well—your father—that we should let him have the last word. And that was it. That was the last word. [*Laughter*]

Did he do a good job? Are you impressed with your father?

Andrew Mullin. Never been more impressed with anybody in my life.

The President. How about me? [*Laughter*]

Don't answer. Don't—answer. Don't answer. No, you like your father better. Okay. [*Laughter*]

Come here. Come here. Look at this guy. Come here. This guy—don't wrestle him. It's all steel over here. [*Laughter*]

Andrew Mullin. Yes, sir. Thank you.

The President. All right.

I want to thank the family, because without the family, he's not here. You know, it's—he's a different person. And that goes especially for mom, who looks like she's about 22 years old. I don't think she's—I see these kids, but she looks very young. But it's a great couple. Congratulations to you both.

Thank you. Thank you, Markwayne.

Secretary Mullin. Thank you, sir.

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

White House Renovation Projects

Q. What can you tell us about the granite, Mr. President?

The President. [Inaudible]

Q. Granite outside.

The President. [Inaudible]

Q. The walkway.

Q. In the walkway. Yes, sorry. Walkway.

The President. The walkway is black. We've got the white walls and black granite, which stays nice and clean.

Q. Why do you want in black?

The President. It's a great contrast. The white and the black go well. The black, you know, because it's a walkway, stays clean.

The thing I do best is this. It's going to be beautiful. It's a beautiful black granite. Polished granite in the areas you don't walk on, because when you walk on it it's slippery.

Q. Who's paying for it?

The President. Paid for by me.

Governor Ronald DeSantis of Florida

Q. Mr. President, do you see a role for Ron DeSantis after——

The President. Say it?

Q. Do you see a role for Ron DeSantis after his term is—for the Governor ends?

The President. I don't know, but I would certainly consider it. I think he's great. Doing a good job. Right? Doing a good job.

Thank you. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Mullin, father of Secretary Mullin; Jose Medina, suspect in the shooting of Sheridan Gorman, a Loyola University Chicago student who was killed in Chicago, IL, on March 19; former Vice President Kamala D. Harris; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. J. Daniel Caine, USAF; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff; Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio; Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance; Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei of Iran, son of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei of Iran, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Tehran, Iran, on February 28; Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin

Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California; and Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell. He also referred to S. 1383; and his son-in-law, U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Jared C. Kushner. Reporters referred to energy executive Alan Armstrong, who was appointed by Gov. Kevin J. Stitt of Oklahoma to fill the Senate seat vacated by Secretary Mullin; and former Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi L. Noem.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Markwayne Mullin, swearing-in as Secretary of Homeland Security; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Bondi, Pamela J.; DeSantis, Ronald D.; Gottheimer, Joshua S.; Harris, Kamala D.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Homan, Thomas D.; Khamenei, Mojtaba; Kushner, Jared C.; Massie, Thomas H.; McCarthy, Kevin O.; Medina, Jose; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince; Mullin, Christie; Mullin, Ivy; Mullin, Jayce; Mullin, Jim; Mullin, Larra; Mullin, Lynette; Mullin, Markwayne; Newsom, Gavin C.; Obama, Barack; Paul, Randal H.; Powell, Jerome H.; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Smith, Jason T.; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Witkoff, Steven C.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Attorney General; Border security; California, Governor; California, high-speed rail project between Los Angeles and San Francisco; Crime rates; Department of Homeland Security, appropriations legislation; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; Election security and integrity, strengthening efforts; Federal Reserve System; Florida, Governor; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Illegal immigration; Illinois, Governor; Inflation; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, Supreme Leader; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Iran, U.S. military operations; New York, Second Avenue Subway project in New York City; News media, fairness and accuracy; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act; Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince; Secretary of Homeland Security; Secretary of State; Secretary of War; Tax Code reform; Tennessee, law enforcement improvement efforts in Memphis; Transgender athletes, efforts to restrict participation; Transportation Security Administration; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Undocumented immigrants, deportation of criminals; Venezuela, U.S. military capture and exfiltration of President Maduro; Vice President; White House Border Czar; White House renovation projects.

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