

Remarks on the Situation in Israel and Lebanon and an Exchange With Reporters
April 23, 2026

The President. Well, thank you very much. And I'm told this is a rather historic meeting, because these countries have been bordering each other for many, many years, and it doesn't happen much, although they like each other. I found that out today, and I've sort of heard about that. They actually like each other, Lebanon and Israel.

And we had a great meeting with the very high officials of Lebanon and very high officials of Israel, and we think that the President of Lebanon and the Prime Minister of Israel, over the next couple of weeks, will be coming here. They've agreed to an additional 3 weeks of, I guess, no firing—cease-fire. No more firing. Let's see. We hope that happens. It's not going to happen between them, but they do have Hizballah to think about.

And we are going to be working with Lebanon to get things straightened out in that country. I really believe we—it's something we can do pretty easily just with the power of who we are. They're great people—the Lebanese people.

We have our Ambassador here, who has done a fantastic job—Ambassador to Lebanon from the United States. And we had a great conversation, and I think it's the beginning of something very important. It'd be a wonderful thing to get this worked out, simultaneously, with what we're doing in Iran.

And I'd like to start by just asking J.D., our Vice President—our great Vice President—to say a few words, and then Marco will speak, and then the representatives from the countries.

And Mike Huckabee—you'll say a few words, Mike. You've done a great job, by the way. I appreciate it. Everybody does.

And, J.D., please.

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance. Yes, sir. Well, first of all, congratulations. Congratulations to you and our Secretary of State.

But most importantly, congratulations to the people of Israel and Lebanon. I think this is a major, historic moment. We're going to extend the cease-fire for 3 weeks that's already in place between Israel and Lebanon.

Of course, it wouldn't have happened without the President's direct engagement. The fact that you have these leaders of different countries coming together for the first time—they came together in the Oval Office, and they came together because of energetic diplomacy, of course, led by the President of the United States.

So I think this is a big moment for the world. This is a big moment for our country. But just very proud to be a part of it.

So thank you, sir, for making it happen.

The President. Thank you very much, J.D.

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio. Thank you, Mr. President, for hosting this.

Actually, you know, the President wanted to be personally involved, and I'm glad he was, because it made it possible to get this extension, and it gives everybody time to continue to work on what's going to be a permanent peace between two countries that want to be at peace. Both are

victimized by the same terrorist organization, a terrorist organization that no doubt has victimized Israel, but has also victimized the people of Lebanon.

The people of Lebanon deserve to live in a country that's peaceful and prosperous. They have an opportunity to do that. They have a history of that. And what's standing in the way is an organization that operates—a terrorist organization that operates within their national territory that needs to be—that threat needs to be eliminated.

And so thank you, Mr. President, for this gathering today and for convening it and being a key part of it. And this buys us time to continue to work. I'm very optimistic that in a few weeks we'll be even closer to the kind of permanent peace that the people of Israel and Lebanon deserve.

The President. Thank you very much.

Michel, please.

U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa. Well, I would like to thank the President, the Vice President, and Secretary to make this historical meeting today that bring two countries that they never been next to each other more than today, in a way. This is 60, 70 years in the making, and today is really the historical day.

Thank you, Mr. President, Vice President, Secretary.

And we're going to keep going, working for the peace that, hopefully, we will get it as soon as possible.

The President. Thank you.

A very successful man. And when I asked him if he'd like to be Ambassador to Lebanon, I said, "It could be a dangerous job." He said: "Well, I'm Lebanese. I was born in Lebanon, and I"—your parents have a whole big history. He said: "Danger doesn't matter to me, really. It's something I want to do."

And he is very successful; he didn't need this. And I think it's probably more dangerous than you even thought, but you've done a fantastic job, so——

Ambassador Issa. It is an honor for me to serve you, Mr. President, and then I'm going to go until the end.

The President. Well, thank you. Thank you very much.

And likewise, Mike Huckabee. We all know Mike. And he didn't need it either, did he? But he's doing a fantastic job.

Mike, go ahead, please.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Michael D. Huckabee. I just want to say, Mr. President, what an amazing opportunity to be here at a moment of history.

The people of Lebanon, the people of Israel are neighbors, and they want to get along. They can get along. But it's like neighbors who have a rough little kid living in the neighborhood who keeps throwing rocks at everybody's window, and if the kid would quit throwing rocks, the neighbors can get along and start actually working together.

The President has initiated something that is truly bringing the neighborhood back to a neighborhood, and recognizing that the problem is not Lebanon, that the problem is not Israel. The problem is Hizballah, the bad little kid throwing rocks.

That's what the President is getting launched today to get that little kid out of the neighborhood.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Ambassador, please.

Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Yechiel Leiter. Well, thank you, Mr. President, for your hospitality, for bringing Israel and Lebanon together here in the Oval Office.

Israel wants peace with Lebanon, and Israel wants security for its citizens. And we're united with the Lebanese Government in wanting to rid the country of this malign influence called Hizballah. And now that, Mr. President, under your leadership, Iran has been so degraded, the possibility of degrading Hizballah and liberating Lebanon from their occupation is real.

So we hope that, together, under your leadership, we can formalize peace between Israel and Lebanon in the very near future. And we are just very thankful for the opportunity.

The President. Well, thank you. And I look forward to having the next meeting with your great Prime Minister. He is, he's a wartime Prime Minister. With Bibi and with the President of Lebanon, it will be fantastic. I think a lot of—a lot's going to happen.

Madam Ambassador.

Lebanon's Ambassador to the U.S. Nada Hamadeh Moawad. Of course. Thank you so much.

Thank you so much, President Trump. Thank you for your leadership, for making sure to be presiding over this historic moment. I want to really say thank you to the United States, under your leadership, for all your effort to help and to support Lebanon. And I think with your help, with your support, we can make Lebanon great again.

Thank you so much.

The President. Good. Thank you. I like that phrase. [*Laughter*] That's a good——

Ambassador Moawad. I know. Sounds nice, doesn't it?

The President. That's a good phrase. It's actually——

Ambassador Moawad. M-L-G-A.

The President. Thank you very much.

Ambassador Moawad. Thank you.

The President. I think we will.

Any questions? Yes, please.

Q. President Trump, Anthony Merchak from MTV Lebanon.

The President. Yes.

Q. First, thank you for having us in the White House——

The President. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

Q. ——for the year and a half.

The President. It's an honor.

Q. This is historical for our audience as well.

The President. It is.

Cease-Fire Agreement/U.S. Diplomatic Efforts

Q. We would like to ask you two, three questions. First question: The peace between Lebanon and Israel, do you think it will happen this year?

The President. I think it has a great chance. I mean, you know, they're friends about the same things and they're enemies on the same things. And it has to do with, I guess you could say, a couple of countries. But certainly, it's—you look at Hizballah, that's where everybody seems to be united against them. So they are both very united in that way.

Yes, I think there's a very good chance of having peace. I think it should be an easy one. Relative to some of the things we're working on, it should be an easy one.

But it's been so many years because nobody focused on it. But Lebanon was a great country. It was a beautiful country. Smart people, very brilliant people—doctors, professors, economists—some of the smartest people on the planet. But it got torn apart by different factions and nothing having to do with them—outside factors.

So, no, I think it can be brought back pretty quickly.

Negotiated Cease-Fire Between Israel and Lebanon

Q. And when do you think our President will meet Netanyahu here at the White House?

The President. I think we'll do it over the next—during this period of time—during the 3-week period, ideally.

Q. During the 3—

The President. I mean, I'd like to suggest over the 3-week cease-fire—right?—if you can do that. We'll—we're here.

Q. And regarding—

The President. We'll do it in the Oval Office.

Hizballah Political-Paramilitary Organization/Israel

Q. And regarding Hizballah. It's not—he's not responding to our Government. He's doing whatever he wants. What do you say for Hizballah? And do you—do—

The President. Well, look, Israel has to—

Q. —do you think you will enter military?

The President. I mean, we were just talking about it. Israel is going to have to defend itself if they're shot at, and they will. I would never say that they can't. It'd be nice if they wouldn't have to bother with that, but if they—if something happens, they're going to have to defend themselves, as you know.

But they're going to do it carefully, and they're going to be surgical, as opposed to beyond surgical. And you know, there's a lot they can do, but Israel's going to have to defend itself.

Saudi Arabia

Q. And regarding our Lebanese Speaker, Nabih Berri reportedly told Prince Yazid bin Farhan that Lebanon will not move forward with peace unless Saudi Arabia is involved. What is your reaction to that statement? And do you believe Saudi Arabia must play a central role in a potential Lebanon-Israel peace process?

The President. Well, Saudi Arabia is great, and they have a great leader. And I think that they'd be very happy with this.

I haven't spoken to them. I will. This happened very quickly.

But Saudi Arabia's going to be—they're great people. A great, great place, incredible place. I know it very well. But I know the leader very well, and he'd want to see something like this happen. He's a tremendous guy.

Okay?

Lebanon

Q. And "Make Lebanon Great Again," this is our slogan on MTV Lebanon. Make—like "Make America Great Again," and—

The President. About what?

Q. —"Make Lebanon Great Again" is our slogan on MTV Lebanon, that all the Lebanese and our audience are putting hope on you, Mr. President.

The President. "Make Lebanon Great Again."

Q. "Make Lebanon Great Again" with—

The President. It's a good slogan. [*Laughter*] It worked for here. I think it's maybe the greatest political slogan in the history of the world: "Make America Great Again."

But you know, we're great now. So I will never say that we won't use that slogan—"MAGA"—but we have another one: "America Is Back."

Where's that hat? Does anybody have it? Look.

[*At this point, Ambassador Issa held up a "Make America Great Again" hat.*]

No, yes, that's the old one. And then show them the new one.

[*Ambassador Issa held up an "American Is Back" hat.*]

And we're never choosing it—we're never changing MAGA. [*Laughter*] I don't have the courage to change MAGA—"Make America Great Again."

But you know, we're really—we're great now. We're the hottest country anywhere in the world. We're the most powerful country in the world by far. And we suffered years of abuse by people that were grossly incompetent, like Biden, like Obama. Obama was incompetent. He was a great divider.

And we are—we're a great country again. We're respected all over the world. That's why this happened so fast. I mean, it can happen fast.

Thank you.

Q. And this is the tenth war—

Hizballah Political-Paramilitary Organization

Q. Sir, the—the funding that Hizballah gets from Iran—is Iran going to have to cut that off to do a deal with you?

The President. Yes, they'll have to cut that off.

Q. That's a must for you?

The President. Yes, sure. That's a must. Yes.

Venezuela/Prediction Markets

Q. Mr. President, apparently there was a special forces soldier who was involved in the capture of Venezuelan President Maduro, who was arrested by Federal authorities today on suspicion of insider trading and betting on Polymarket. Are you concerned that Federal employees are betting on these prediction markets and potentially getting rich?

The President. Well, I don't know about it, but—was he betting that they would get him or they wouldn't get him?

Q. It sounds like he was betting on his removal from office, that Maduro would be removed.

The President. Well, that's interesting.

Q. And it sounds like he was involved in the operations as well.

The President. That's like Pete Rose betting on his own team. [*Laughter*]

Vice President Vance. Exactly.

The President. That's a little like Pete Rose. Pete Rose—they kept him out of the Hall of Fame because he bet on his own team. Now, if he bet against his team, that would be no good. [*Laughter*] But he bet on his own team.

I'll look into it.

Yes.

Prediction Markets/U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. There are also bets, though, that are being placed as well on the Iran conflict too, and there have been some trackings where people suspect that there's insider trading happening on these prediction markets around the war. Are you concerned about that?

The President. Well, you know, the whole world, unfortunately, has become somewhat of a casino. And you look at what's going on all over the world, in Europe and every place, they're doing these betting things. I was never much in favor of it. I don't like it, conceptually, but it is what it is.

No, I think that—I'm not happy with any of that stuff, but they have all these different sites. They have predictive markets. It's a crazy world. It's a much different world than it was.

Please.

Chairman of the Federal Reserve System Board of Governors Jerome H. Powell/Stock Market/Domestic Oil Production/Venezuela

Q. Mr. President, we talked about the Fed's renovation. Can someone other than the Justice Department find out the things you said you wanted to learn?

The President. Well, could. I mean, look, it's pretty easy. When you look—I mean—if—look, with Jerome "Too Late" Powell, I have a real problem because he should have been lowering interest rates a long time ago.

And despite that, we fought through it, and we have the greatest economy we've ever had. You take a look. I mean, we just—I don't know what the market is today, but we've broken every record over the last few days. And this is during a military operation or a war—whatever you want to call it; it makes no difference, as far as I'm concerned.

But we have this unbelievable economy. The S&P has a new record. The Dow is right at a new record. We already broke the record with the Dow. People said it wouldn't happen in 4 years.

They said, "In 4 years, it won't be able to be possible to break 50,000," and we broke it, with the Dow.

And I'm actually a little bit surprised that we're breaking it constantly—even now, during this conflict—because when we broke it, I called a lot of the people here. I called J.D. I called Marco. I called Howard. I called Scott. I said, "I hate to tell you, fellas, but we have to do a little bit of a detour. And we have to go to Iran and make sure they don't have a nuclear weapon."

We had just broken every financial record. And the amazing thing is, we continue to break them even during the war.

Now, fuel went up, but I thought it would have gone up much more. And a lot of ships are coming to the United States, and they're using the United States instead of the Hormuz Strait. Amazing things are happening, and our country is amazing.

You know, we don't have an oil shortage. We have—we're drill, baby drill. We are, right now, producing more oil than Saudi Arabia and Russia combined. Did you know that? More—and in about a year from now, we'll be doing double the level.

And Venezuela's been fantastic. We have a great relationship with that country and with the people that are running the country, and we're taking out—we're taking in millions of barrels of oil—millions and millions—from Venezuela. It's been a great experience, to be honest with you, and they're doing a very good job. And they have our backing.

Okay?

Q. Mr. President, you said that the——

Q. Can you just clarify, again, what exactly——

The President. Here we go. Listen to this.

Q. No, no, no.

The President. Just clarify——

Q. Just because the world is watching.

The President. He goes, "Just clarifying." Here we go. Here's his bomb.

Negotiated Cease-Fire Between Israel and Lebanon

Q. What have the two sides agreed to here, a 3-week cease-fire with the hope that the leaders——

The President. Three weeks.

Q. ——come and meet?

The President. Yes. Three weeks. And the leaders will most likely be coming here during that time. And I think, when they do, that's a very historic meeting. They have never—they haven't met for many, many years, as I understand it.

Ambassador Issa. They never. Never.

The President. They've never met.

Participant. Right.

Ambassador Issa. Never.

The President. Think of that. They're next to each other; they're great people, and they've never met. This should be an easy one. Okay? Good question.

Q. Thank you for clarifying.

The President. Thank you.

Q. Just wanted to clarify.

Lebanon/Israel

Q. President Trump, the Lebanese law—the Lebanese law, we can't communicate with Israel. What we can do about this law? Like, if we talk with the Israeli, it will be a crime for us as Lebanese. And this is a question on behalf of the Lebanese.

The President. How is it a crime? How?

Q. In the Lebanese law, it's a crime. You—they put you in jail.

The President. Well, I think we have to end that.

Participant. Yes.

The President. Okay? That's something we're going to have to end. I'd never heard of that. But that's a good start. It's a crime to talk with Israel. Well, I'm pretty sure that that will be ended very quickly. Okay? I'll make sure of that.

And I know Lebanon doesn't want that. We'll end up—you—will you work on that, please, everybody? That's crazy.

Iran/Oil Supply and Refining/China/Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. The ship that was—the ship that was captured on Monday. You said there was a gift for the Iranians in it. What was that in that ship? The one from China.

The President. Yes. Well, we have—it's very top secret. Yes. There was stuff in there, but it's top secret. [Laughter]

Q. Are you—have you talked to President Xi about it?

The President. I'd like to—I'd like—I'd like to let you—that was a good question.

Q. Have you talked to Xi about it?

The President. That's one of those little questions where, "Ooh, this is not good." No, it's—we have a lot of things that we got.

You know, that—the Strait—the—what we've done with the blockade is amazing, and nobody—nobody gets through. And nobody wants to get through, and nobody's trying. The one tried. They shot out the engine. But nobody's trying.

We have complete control. Now, they can drop their mines in there and do all those stupid things. It's just going to take longer for them to make money, because the mines are going to affect them much more than they're going to affect us. But—and we don't know that they're doing that, but they could be that they're doing that. If they—if they're doing it, it's a very foolish thing to do.

Just like for Iran to shoot at Saudi Arabia, U.A.E., and Qatar, and Kuwait, Bahrain—all the different places they shot. Nobody expected that. They thought they'd shoot at Israel, in all fairness, but you didn't expect they'd be shooting at numerous other countries. I think it was a big mistake. If they're putting mines down, it's a big mistake for them, I will say.

All right.

China/Iran

Q. Are you angry at China for what they sent Iran?

The President. No. No.

Q. Sir, there was some reporting today that——

The President. No. I guess we do the same thing, don't we, with other countries? You know, it's like one of those things. But nothing that are—it wasn't earthshaking.

Yes.

Russia/Group of Seven (G-7) Nations

Q. There was some reporting today, sir, that you intend to invite Vladimir Putin to the G-20 in Miami. Is that the case?

The President. No, but if he came, it would be probably very helpful. You know, I've said a long time ago, when they made the G-8 the G-7—they threw Russia out before my time. That was Obama and a certain Prime Minister from a place called Canada. That's Trudeau. And I said, "That's a stupid thing to do," and I was right.

You know, they spent—I'd go to these meetings at the G-7, and about 90 percent of the meeting was talking about Russia and what's going on with Russia. And I said, "Why'd you throw them out?" You know, if they didn't throw them out, they would have been much better off, in my opinion. You know, it should have been the G-8.

But when they threw out President Putin, he was very offended by that. He was, you know, rightfully—but he was very offended by that. I venture to say you probably wouldn't be having these problems if you didn't throw him out. Okay?

Group of Twenty (G-20) Nations/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. So he's not coming to the G-20, as far as you're concerned?

The President. Not that I know of, but I don't——

Q. Because there are senior administration officials being quoted in news reports this afternoon that says they're being—the Russians are being invited to at least ministerial meetings of the G-20.

The President. Well, you're saying being invited, as opposed to coming. I don't know of the invitation, but if he were invited, I don't know. You know. Hey, I'm——

Q. Would you like him to come? You're the head of the——

The President. ——I'm of the opinion that you talk to everybody. I'm not one of these guys, say: "Oh, let's not talk to him. You know, there's a war going on. Let's not talk to him." I like talking to everybody.

If you're a smart person, if you have control over your emotions and all the other things you need control of, I mean—I'm somebody that believes in talking. I don't know of that. I don't know that he's coming. I doubt he'd come, to be honest with you. I sort of doubt he'd come.

But we're working on trying to get that one solved. That would be number nine that I've ended eight wars, and that one is—but it's—they continue to fight. The hatred between him and President Zelenskyy is extraordinary. I can tell you.

Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup/Iran

Q. Can I ask a FIFA question, sir? What do you think of this idea of replacing Iran with Italy in the World Cup?

The President. I don't think about it too much. [*Laughter*]

Q. Okay.

The President. That's an interesting question. Let me give it—you know what? Let me give that a little thought. That's a very—is that what they're doing? They're thinking about replacing them?

Q. Apparently, it's a proposal.

Vice President Vance. Let Marco make his Poly bet first. [*Laughter*]

The President. Marco, could you make a statement on that, please? What do you think of—

—
Secretary Rubio. Yes, there—there's nothing from the U.S. that has told them they can't come.

I mean, the problem with the Iran would be not their athletes; it would be some of the other people that they would want to bring with them, some of whom have ties to the IRGC. We may not be able to let them in, but not the athletes themselves.

But no one's—I don't know where that's coming from, other than speculation that Iran may decide not to come——

The President. Yes.

Secretary Rubio. ——then Italy would fill their spot. But that's—if they decide not to come on their own, it's because they decided not to come. What they can't bring is a bunch of IRGC terrorists into our country and pretend that they're, you know, journalists and athletic trainers.

Q. Sir, is the Government going to buy——

The President. We would not want to affect the athletes.

Yes.

Spirit Airlines Bankruptcy

Q. Is the Government going to buy a stake in Spirit Airlines?

The President. So Spirit is an airline that's had some trouble. They were going to merge with People Express or one of them a number of years ago, and Barack Hussein Obama decided it was a bad idea. How did that work out? It was bad for both of them. That would have been a natural merger—not United and American, but Spirit and the other.

We're looking at helping them. We have 18,000 people that live in this country that are great people and great employees, and we're thinking about doing it—helping them out, meaning bailing them out or buying it. I think we just buy it. We'd be getting it virtually debt free.

They have some good aircraft, some good assets. And when the price of the oil goes down, we'll sell it for a profit. I'd love to be able to save those jobs. I'd love to be able to save an airline. I—you know, we—I like having a lot of airlines so it's competitive.

So we are looking at Spirit. It's in a bankruptcy. It's in bankruptcy court, and we're looking. If we could get it for the right price, I'd do it to save the jobs. And we have somebody that wants to run it—do a good job, smart person. And if they run it properly and if prices come down, all of a sudden, it's a valuable asset.

Q. Where do we get the money from to do that?

The President. And they have some—and they have some very good slots too, which are pretty valuable.

Lebanon

Q. You will visit Lebanon and visit Ambassador Issa to the Embassy, because we're building a huge U.S. Embassy in Lebanon. Are you going to plan to launch it or open—or attending for the opening?

The President. You want to answer that?

Ambassador Issa. Well, we're working on it. It's not done yet, but once it's done, I will ask the President to come and cut the ribbon.

Ambassador Hamadeh. We'd love to have you, Mr. President.

Q. And regarding Iran——

The President. I have no objection to that.

Go ahead, please.

United Kingdom/Digital Services Taxes

Q. In the U.K. today, they've just announced a total of \$1.3 billion in returns from digital service tax, which you, in the past, have called it an unfair tax on American companies. You know it very well. You have—you previously called for investigations, but so far as we can tell there has been none. Would you call for that today?

The President. Well, see—so what tax is this?

Q. The digital service tax. It's—they kind of nicknamed it the "tech tax" or "big tech tax" that kind of—it——

The President. You mean they're going to put a tax on basically American companies?

Q. It's already there, sir.

The President. Did you say the U.K.?

Q. Yes, sir. And they made \$1.3 billion last year. So is that something you would kind of investigate——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——call for it to be scrapped, have a look at?

The President. We don't like it when they target American companies. Because, basically, you're talking about our great American companies, and whether we like those companies or don't like them, they're American companies, and they—they're the top companies in the world. And we are looking at it. We've been looking at it.

U.K. did it. A couple of other people did it. They think they're going to make an easy buck. That's why they've all taken advantage of our country. They don't take advantage of it.

No, we've been looking at it, and we can meet that very easily by just putting a big tariff on the U.K. So they'd better be careful. If they don't drop the tax, we'll probably put a big tariff on the U.K. All right?

Q. What can they expect? Five percent? Ten percent? Something similar to what you've done before?

The President. Whatever. I mean, more than what they're getting. They shouldn't be doing that. That's—all that's doing is really targeting—it's targeting great companies, but they're our companies. That's like us targeting their companies, which we could do very easily. But you don't have big companies like that. You don't have those great companies. It's not fair.

I have an obligation to protect our companies. That's how they became great. And they become great during my administration. My first 4 years, we had this—we had the best economy in history in my first 4 years, and this will blow it away.

Look at it: During a war, we have the highest stock market. During a—you know, a war. It's not a big war for us, but it's a war. And during a war, we have the highest stock market.

I have to protect this country. So, if they want to do the service tax—France did it also and some others. And we—I mean, literally, I have a meeting after this having to do with that exact question. And what we'll do is, we'll reciprocate by putting something on that's equal or greater than what they're doing. And they won't be happy about that.

Q. Regarding Iran. Iran——

The President. No, that's enough. You've asked so many questions. [*Laughter*]

Yes. Yes, please.

Virginia Election

Q. Mr. President, I e-mailed the Virginia Department of Elections earlier today and asked them if they had seen any evidence of election tampering, of fraudulent mail ballots being cast in the Tuesday election, or if there was any evidence of noncitizens voting in that election. Why did you say that that election was rigged?

The President. Well, you have mail-in ballots, and they found a lot of them at the end of the day all of a sudden.

Q. They said that they have received no credible information related to those questions.

The President. Well, I know you'd say that no matter what. You know, you've been saying that for years, and now they're finding out that the 2020 election was totally rigged. And when you're looking what just——

Q. Where's the evidence of that?

The President. Excuse me.

How do you defend what just happened, where your Southern Law—whatever it is—has given money to KKK? They're supposed to protect people, and they're paying all these people, crooked as can be, millions of dollars. Millions of dollars going all—to all of these people that they're supposed to be protecting from, but they're actually supporting them, because they want to have companies that they can protect and because they want to rig elections. That was all a rigged election.

Q. But this election was Virginia.

The President. All of the things with Charlottesville, all of the stuff that they did, and you won't bring that up. But you'll bring up some nonsense. Let me tell you, the election—we were winning all day long. It's a totally horrible situation. Hopefully, the courts will overturn it—what they did in Virginia.

You have a grossly incompetent Governor. You had a very good Governor. He did a good job. You know, all those companies that want to move into Virginia, now they want to move out and go to a different location.

So that's my opinion. I believe it was a rigged election. Virginia's known for it. That was a rigged election. They had a lot of ballots—mail-in ballots. Anytime you have mail-in ballots—

Q. The Department of State says——

The President. Anytime you have mail-in ballots——

Q. ——that didn't happen though.

The President. ——you have cheating.

Did you have something?

Lebanon/Hizballah Political-Paramilitary Organization

Q. Yes. You've said that the U.S. will work with Lebanon to protect itself from Hizballah. What does that look like, exactly?

The President. What is that?

Q. You said that the U.S. will work with Lebanon to protect itself from——

The President. Well, we're just going to work with them. I mean, we have a good relationship with Lebanon. It's amazing that——

Q. But is it military? How——

The President. You know, it's—the amazing thing is, they actually have sort of a good relationship with Israel, and they don't deal with each other, but now they're going to deal with each other. We're putting them together.

Q. What's the material support that you intend to provide?

The President. We're going to help—we're just going to help them. We're going to help them. They're great people. It can be a really good country again, maybe a great country again. And I think you have all the ingredients.

So we're going to work together, and I think Israel's going to—I think Israel's going to be terrific. But they do have a common problem: It's Hizballah.

Okay. A couple of more.

Election Reform

Q. Sir, some House Republicans are saying that they don't want to vote for a bill that just has the Homeland Security funding. Would you support them expanding that to include other tax and defense measures?

The President. Well, I'd love to see one thing. You know what that is?

Q. What's that?

The President. SAVE America. [*Laughter*] I'd love to see the SAVE America Act, which is voter ID; which is proof of citizenship; which is, by the way, no mail-in voting, which is a fraud. Anytime you have mail-in voting, you're going to have a fraudulent election.

But I'd leave it for military—you know, mail-in voting for military; for people that are sick; for people that are traveling, like business or whatever different things, but—disability, where they have a problem—but no mail-in ballots.

We added a couple of things: no men playing in women's sports—it's unrelated, but it's a popular thing—and no transgender mutilization of our children.

So that's it.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:24 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Joseph Aoun of Lebanon; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; former Presidents Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Barack Obama; MSG Gannon K. Van Dyke, USA, who was indicted on charges of unlawful use of confidential government information for personal gain, theft of nonpublic government information, commodities fraud, wire fraud, and making an unlawful monetary transaction; U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick; U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent; former Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada; President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; and Gov. Abigail D. Spanberger and former Gov. Glenn A. Youngkin of Virginia. He also referred to S. 1383. Reporters referred to Adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Lebanese Affairs Prince Yazid bin Mohammed bin Fahd Al Farhan of Saudi Arabia; former President Nicolás Maduro Moros of Venezuela, who was captured, along with his wife Cilia Flores, in a U.S. military operation in Caracas, Venezuela, on January 3 and exfiltrated to the U.S. for criminal processing in New York City; and President Xi Jinping of China. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on April 24.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Israel and Lebanon situation; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Aoun, Joseph; Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Huckabee, Michael D.; Issa, Michel; Leiter, Yechiel; Lutnick, Howard W.; Moawad, Nada Hamadeh; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; Powell, Jerome H.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Spanberger, Abigail D.; Trudeau, Justin P.J.; Van Dyke, Gannon K.; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Youngkin, Glenn A.; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: 2020 Presidential election; Digital services taxes; Economic improvement; Election security and integrity, strengthening efforts; Federal Reserve System; Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup; Gasoline costs; Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Group of Twenty (G-20) nations; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, regional involvement; Israel, Ambassador to U.S.; Israel, military operations in Lebanon; Israel, Prime Minister; Israel, U.S. Ambassador; Lebanon, Ambassador to U.S.; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary organization; Lebanon, Israeli military operations; Lebanon, President; Lebanon, U.S. Ambassador; Oil and natural gas, domestic production; Prediction markets; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act; Saudi Arabia, King; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Treasury; Spirit Airlines; Stock market; □; Israel, military operations in Lebanon" □; Tariffs; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Venezuela, oil supply and refining; Venezuela, U.S. military capture and exfiltration of President Maduro; Vice President; Virginia, Governor.

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