

**Remarks at a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters**

*December 6, 2017*

*The President.* Good morning. Thank you very much for being here. America is prospering again at home and being respected once again all over the world. However, we face many serious threats. Lots of things are happening in our country—lots of very positive things—but we have some things that we have to talk about.

We're going to be discussing today the situation in North Korea. It will be handled, and it will be handled properly. Many of our brave troops will be spending Christmas overseas. We're thinking about them. We're funding them like they haven't been funded in a long time—best equipment you can get. Our military is getting stronger, and I expect that very soon, I'll be able to say stronger than ever before. It was very depleted when I got here. It's not going to be depleted any longer.

So I just want to thank everybody. I want to congratulate Kirstjen Nielsen, who was just confirmed yesterday. Been a long wait, and we're waiting for a lot of others. All of you are waiting for people, or most of you are waiting for people to come in and help. I know from the standpoint of trade, we're waiting for a lot of our trade representatives to be approved. They just don't want to do it. The Democrats just don't want to give us those people. They delay them as long as possible. They take every single minute they can take. It's not right. But I would like to congratulate our new Secretary of Homeland Security. Kirstjen, good luck.

*Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen.* Thank you. Thank you.

*The President.* I'm especially thrilled to report that the Senate passed massive tax cuts and reform. You know about that very well. You've covered it—for the most part—accurately, which is surprising for you folks, but that's okay. [Laughter] We're on the verge of a historic victory that cuts taxes for the middle class, for businesses; brings back, probably, in excess of \$4 trillion. As you know, we've been saying \$2½ trillion for years. Well, that number has greatly expanded. And we'll be bringing back in excess of \$4 trillion. It will be put to work in our country. There will be a lot of jobs being brought back with that money. Right now that money is being spent overseas. It's not going to be spent overseas anymore.

The House and Senate are now negotiating the final bill, and I cannot wait to sign these giant tax cuts and reforms. I mentioned tax cuts, but it's also reforms. But I'm looking forward to signing it. It will be the largest tax cuts, by far, in the history of our country.

We'll be bringing the business tax from 35 all the way down to 20. At 35, it's the highest in the industrialized world. At 20, we're on the very low side, so we'll be very competitive. You look at China, it's 15 percent. Other countries are 18 percent. Some are 23, 24 percent. The average is actually, of the primary competitors, is actually 23 percent. So we'll be pretty much below the average, and we'll be able to compete.

And despite all of that, and despite—before we even get the—this massive injection, we have a stock market that has hit record highs 81 times since our election victory—81 times. It's at a new high right now.

Unemployment is at a 17-year low. Very shortly, it's going to be at a 19-year low. We think the numbers are going to continue to go down. And we're also getting into the pool of the hundred million people that are not working. That pool is now coming back. As you know, that's not

considered in the low employment numbers, which means we have a lot of people that want to get to work and that will be working.

Consumer confidence is at a 17-year high. We've created nearly 2 million jobs—think of that—2 million jobs since election day. That's based on consumer confidence. That's based on enthusiasm. Every enthusiasm poll, especially for business enthusiasm and job enthusiasm, is at an alltime high.

That's why companies are coming back into our country. They're opening up new plants. You've—most of you have written about—Toyota came back in. We have many car companies coming back in. They're going to Michigan, they're going to Ohio, they're going to the States where they want to be. They can go anywhere they want: South Carolina, North Carolina. But they're going all over our country. They're coming back in. We had many years where we had no new plants; we only had closures. Now we have openings, and that means a lot of jobs.

But to get it going the way I really want, where we have GDP getting up to 4, 5, and even 6 percent—because I think that's possible. If you look back in your notes, you'll say when I said 4 percent, people said that would be years. Well, it's turned out that I'm right, because, without the hurricanes, this last quarter, we would have hit 4 percent. At 3.3 percent, which was adjusted previously, this is far beyond what anybody thought it would be at. So we're at 3.3 percent GDP. I see no reason why we don't go to 4, 5, and even 6 percent. And I don't want to go beyond that, because then I'll be criticized if we don't hit it. *[Laughter]*

But every time we go up one point, just so you understand, one point means \$2.5 trillion, means 10 million jobs. So one point in GDP is an incredible statement—\$2.5 trillion for each point, 10 million jobs for each point. And I think we're going to be going up a lot of points.

So in order to really keep it going the way I want and the way we all want around this table, we have to get—pass our taxes. I call it "the mixer". It's in conference right now, but I call it "the mixer". I think when it comes out, it's going to be a beautiful mix.

There are things that I like better in the Senate bill; there are things that I like better in the House bill. I think when they come out, we'll have some new additions, and we'll have the best of each. I think we're going to have a fantastic tax bill.

There are very, very few people that aren't benefiting by it. But there's that tiny little sliver and we're going to try to take care of even that very small group of people that just through circumstances, maybe don't get the full benefit of what we're doing. But the middle class gets a tremendous benefit. And business, which is jobs, gets a tremendous benefit.

We'll be giving the Cabinet, today, an update on national security and strategy. We'll also receive briefings on the latest developments in the tax cut negotiations. And Administrator McMahon, who's done a fantastic job at Small Business Administration—where's Linda? Linda did a really fantastic job—is helping small businesses in record numbers. And they've needed help, really, because of the hurricanes. The hurricanes were devastating.

As I said, GDP—if we didn't have the hurricanes we would have hit just about 4 [percent]<sup>\*</sup> this last—but we had—as you probably know, and probably everybody remembers, we had five really bad ones. And we have a lot of businesses that have been severely hurt, and Linda McMahon has done an incredible job in helping those businesses out through the Small Business. So thank you very much, Linda.

So we're in a great period in this country because jobs are coming back, unemployment is low, business has never been stronger. But we have a military that we have to build. I want to

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\* White House correction.

thank General Mattis for doing such a great job with respect to ISIS. He's knocked the hell out of them. Of course, I've made it possible with what I've let you do, I think. [Laughter]

*Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis.* Yes, sir.

*The President.* Wouldn't you say?

*Secretary Mattis.* Absolutely.

*The President.* But he has done a fantastic job. He and the military have done a fantastic job with ISIS. They're essentially knocked out of Syria, knocked out of Iraq. That's the good news. The bad news: They go all over the place. And I'll tell you where we don't want them: We don't want them here. We don't want them in our country. Tell them to stay wherever the hell they are. We don't want them coming back into our country. They do go back into some countries. We don't want them going into our country. So we're watching that closely.

So I'd like to wish everyone a really great season. I'd like to wish everyone a merry Christmas, happy New Year.

And I will tell you that we have a big announcement coming up at 1 o'clock. Perhaps a couple of you will be there; maybe not. But it's a big announcement. It's an announcement concerning Israel and the Palestinians and the Middle East. And I think it's long overdue. Many Presidents have said they want to do something, and they didn't do it. Whether it's through courage or they changed their mind, I can't tell you. But a lot of people have said we have to do something, and they didn't do it. So we'll be talking about that something at 1 o'clock, and I look forward to seeing you then.

Thank you all very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

#### *Middle East Peace Process*

*Q.* Mr. President, what will this decision do? How will it help the peace process, sir?

*The President.* We'll talk about it in a little while.

*Q.* Do you still have confidence in Robert Mueller, sir? Mr. President? Do you still have confidence in Robert Mueller, sir?

#### *Potential Federal Government Shutdown/Immigration*

*Q.* Are we going to have a shutdown, Mr. President?

*The President.* It could happen. The Democrats are really looking at something that is very dangerous for our country. They are looking at shutting down. They want to have illegal immigrants; in many cases, people that we don't want in our country. They want to have illegal immigrants pouring into our country, bringing with them crime, tremendous amounts of crime. We don't want to have that. We want to have a great, beautiful crime-free country. And we want people coming into our country, but we want them to come on our basis. And that's why we're being so careful with our process and our screening.

And as you know, we had a tremendous victory the other day in the Supreme Court with the ban. It got quite a bit of attention, probably not as much of attention as it deserved. But we had tremendous—that was a tremendous victory for this country. That—not a victory for me, it was a victory for our country.

So the Democrats maybe will want to shut down the country because they want people flowing into our country. And I want people coming into our country, but I want to vet those people, and I want to vet them very carefully. Because we don't want to have radical Islamic terrorism in this country, and we don't want to have crime in this country.

If you look at what just happened in San Francisco, that was a disgrace. And as you know, the Federal Government just got involved and did a great thing, because they're going to take that at least to the next step. They did a great thing by getting involved.

So thank you very much. I'll see you all at 1 o'clock.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to H.R. 1; and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. A reporter referred to Department of Justice Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Cabinet, meetings with President; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

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*Names:* Mattis, James N.; McMahon, Linda E.; Nielsen, Kirstjen M.

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