

**Remarks in a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters**  
*July 18, 2018*

*The President.* Well, thank you very much for being here at today's Cabinet meeting. I've just returned from a very historic trip to Europe, where we've made incredible progress toward achieving greater peace, security, and prosperity for America, for our allies, and in fact, for the entire world.

The meetings with NATO, the United Kingdom, and with Russia were a tremendous success. And I think you will see that, and it will play out over a period of years, frankly. But they were a tremendous success.

At home, our economy is thriving and booming like, I would say, never before. People are looking, and they're trying to find times. And there's never been a time like this.

We've created more than 3.6 million jobs since the election. We are in the longest positive job growth streak in history—in the history of our country, or at least on record. Unemployment has fallen for every demographic group—every single group. African American unemployment has reached its lowest levels by far, in history. Hispanic unemployment is at its lowest levels in history. Asian unemployment is at its lowest level in history. Women's unemployment is at the lowest level in 65 years. So those are tremendous numbers.

The consumer and business optimism polls have reached the alltime highs—highest number ever recorded. In today's meeting, we will focus on a very important issue: workforce training, as part of our commitment to buy American, hire American, and frankly, to make America great again.

I'm going to, pretty soon, have to take that word—"again"—out, because we are moving at a level that few people would have ever thought possible, including job numbers and growth. And some big numbers have come out already, and I guess numbers will be coming out over the coming weeks. And I would expect they would be very, very good. I always talk about growth; growth solves a lot of difficulties, a lot of problems. And you see that happening.

We will hear from Ivanka, from Secretary Acosta, Secretary Ross, Secretary DeVos, and Administrator McMahon about important actions we're taking in partnership with the private sector and State and local governments to expand vocational education, career and technical training, and on-the-job training.

And the reason we're doing this is that so many companies are moving back to the United States, like nobody ever thought possible. And we need people. We need trained people. We need people that know trades. And we're starting a very intensive program of training people so that when these companies, these great companies, come back into the country—many of them left years ago; they're coming back now because of what we're doing. Whether it be the regulations or the massive tax cuts, they're coming back, and it means jobs. And that's why the unemployment numbers are so good. And you've seen nothing yet.

So we need people to really be able to take these jobs. That will have a positive impact, even on immigration. We need people to come in on a merit basis, because we have to be able to provide jobs. We have to be able to provide the people that are running these massive companies with labor.

So tomorrow I'll be making a big announcement about workforce training initiatives, which aims to give every American citizen an opportunity to achieve their American Dream. I want to have choice, just like we have now with the veterans, all approved, which nobody thought would be possible. The vets now, instead of standing on line for 2 weeks or 1 week or 3 months, they can go out and see a doctor, and we pay for it, and it turns out to be much less expensive. And they are loving it. Nobody thought it was possible to get that.

So I want—also, I want choice for workers, so that if they don't like their job, they can get another job. And they'll find one that they really love, and they'll love getting up in the morning and going to work. So that's what we're working on. Tremendous numbers of companies are coming back into our country. Tremendous dollars are coming back. We have—hundreds of billions of dollars are pouring back into our country because of our tax cuts and reform. We're allowing these big companies that have billions of dollars offshore to bring that money back into our country. Before we had the bill passed on tax cuts and reform, it was virtually impossible to get money brought back into our country.

Now you look at Apple; I believe they're bringing in about \$250 billion, and they're putting that to work in the United States. Other companies are, likewise, bringing in billions and billions of dollars. So we've never seen anything like this before. I think, ultimately, the number could be \$4 trillion. So these are not numbers that anybody has ever even heard of or would ever be familiar with, because it never happened before. But it's happening under the Trump administration.

And with that, I'd like my daughter Ivanka to start. This has been a very important issue—women's issue and this issue—two issue—any woman's issue is very important to Ivanka, and the issue of workplace employment and jobs and training has been, really, at the top of her list.

So, Ivanka, could you say a few words, please?

*Assistant to the President Ivanka M. Trump.* Absolutely. And maybe I'll move over here so you don't have to look behind.

*The President.* I'll ask the press: Would you like to stay, or would you like to leave?  
[Laughter]

Q. Stay.

*The President.* Ah. I'm shocked to hear.

*Assistant to the President Ivanka M. Trump.* Well, thank you. Thank you. Well, thank you, President. And thanks to the Trump administration's progrowth policies, we see that the economy is roaring. Unprecedented deregulation and tax cuts have been a central component to the success of this administration's economic agenda. GDP growth last year surpassed all expectations. The unemployment rate currently sits at just 4 percent. And 3.7 million jobs have been added since the election in November of 2016. America's economic future is bright. Last month alone, 600,000 additional Americans entered or reentered the workforce. And there are millions of prime-aged Americans poised to join the workforce now that there are new and better jobs available.

[At this point, Assistant to the President Ivanka M. Trump continued her remarks, concluding as follows.]

I look forward to working with each of you in this room, and the private sector to ensure that Americans are all provided with opportunities to thrive in this booming economy.

I'd also like to thank the great team at DPC—Kara, Andrew Bremberg, for their help—Chris Liddell, and of course, the Vice President, who has been such a champion on this issue during his time as Governor of Indiana and has implemented so many great workforce training programs in his State. So thank you for your leadership, and thank you, President Trump, for enabling us to really develop this holistic solution and empower every American worker with the opportunity to thrive. Thank you.

*The President.* Well, thank you very much. Wow. So if that were Ivanka Smith, the press would say, "That was totally brilliant"—[laughter]—"we've never seen anything like that." As Ivanka Trump, they'll say, "Eh, she was okay." [Laughter] That was great.

*Assistant to the President Ivanka M. Trump.* Thank you.

*The President.* That was really great. Unbelievable.

I just wanted to tell you that we have had very good sessions with Mexico and with the new President of Mexico, who won overwhelmingly. And we're doing really well on our trade agreement. So we'll see what happens. We may do a—separately with Mexico, and we'll negotiate with Canada at a later time. But we're having very good discussions with Mexico.

On July 25, the leaders of the European Union will be coming to see us at the White House. And as you know—I've made no bones about it—they have massive trade barriers where our farmers can't sell there, for the most part. They have other barriers on cars and lots of other things, even medical equipment where it's very, very difficult to sell into the European Union. And they're going to be coming on July 25 to negotiate with us.

We said if we don't negotiate something fair, then we have tremendous retribution, which we don't want to use, but we have tremendous powers. We have to. Including cars. Cars is the big one. And you know what we're talking about with respect to cars and tariffs on cars. And they know better than you do. They know better than all of us do what that means.

So they're going to come, and they're going to try and negotiate a deal. We have very good relationships with Jean-Claude and Donald, all of them. But they're going to be coming to the White House on July 25. So that will be very interesting to see what happens.

But Mexico is coming along very well. We've had really, really good discussions with them. And I think we can say that's pretty far advanced. It's getting closer all the time. Okay?

With that, I'd like to ask Secretary Acosta to take over the stage and say a few words. Mr. Secretary. And you're doing a fantastic job, by the way—

*Secretary of Labor R. Alexander Acosta.* Thank you, President.

*The President.* —in case nobody's told you that.

*Secretary Acosta.* Thank you, Mr. President. Well, as you mentioned, we have a tremendous, tremendous economy. Record-low unemployment; the Federal Reserve is estimating it's going to go even lower. And this is the first time in—since we've kept the data, that we have more open jobs than jobs seekers.

And so, we've been implementing the apprenticeships since your election. There have been 300,000 new apprenticeships created, and I think this year we will see commitments for at least 300,000 additional apprenticeships.

*The President.* Great.

*Secretary Acosta.* We are working on prisoner reentry initiatives. When an individual leaves prison, the best that we can do for the individual, the best that we can do for society, is help them find a job. And we're working very diligently on prisoner reentry initiatives.

[*Secretary Acosta continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And so we're working very aggressively to bring more individuals into the workforce. This month saw the first uptick in the unemployment rate. And it's important to highlight the reason why. More people found jobs, but for the first time, we've had a record number of people coming off the sidelines and saying, "We want jobs too." And so 601,000 Americans said, "We are now ready to look for a job." And that is great news, because people are starting to reengage and look for jobs, and that's what this economy needs.

And so I think this initiative is going to build on the work we've all been doing, but bring us all together in a very unified way, so——

*The President.* Well, that's really fantastic. Could you maybe discuss, for just a moment—people coming out of prisons over the years have just been absolutely—they've had such a problem getting jobs. And now, for the first time, maybe, ever—and, to a large extent, it's because of the job we've done in creating all of this enthusiasm and the great economy—people are hiring people out of prison, and they're loving it.

They're—I'm hearing from, in one case, a friend of mine hired 10 people, and of the 10 people—he didn't give me the exact number, but I will tell you—he said, "These are incredible people." And it's all because of the economy that he did it, because he was having a hard time getting somebody.

So would you explain a little bit about what's going on there? Because it's such a big topic, and it affects so many people. And they have that aura that people did not like. And all of the sudden, for the first chance, people—first time, really—people coming out of prison are able to get jobs and really have a very productive time for them and their families. So you might want to explain that.

*Secretary Acosta.* That's right, Mr. President. I was—I was out in Las Vegas about 3 weeks ago. I was visiting with Jon Ponder, who spoke in the Rose Garden here, who runs Prisoners for Hope—a reentry program. And he—and his program goes into the prisons and works with individuals, in cooperation with the prison system and the district attorney, to provide skills and education before someone leaves the prison.

[*Secretary Acosta continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And I thought that acceptance of responsibility by those former inmates—that it was not just for them, but for future inmates needing jobs—spoke to the quality of that one program and spoke to the reason that so many employers in this program were successfully hiring. I looked at the metrics of this program. And the metrics—the employment rate for that program—was higher than a lot of colleges. And that really says a lot about how successful many of these programs can be.

*The President.* Yes. Well, there's never been a time like this for people coming out of prison getting jobs. There's never been anything close. And so the economy is turning out to be our best friend. So it's really good.

Now, did you ever have so many cameras shooting you from the back? *[Laughter]*. And I'm watching you, and I'm saying, "Thank goodness he's got a beautiful head of hair." *[Laughter]*

*Secretary Acosta.* And a little spot. *[Laughter]*

*The President.* You did a great job. And you're doing a great job.

*Secretary Acosta.* Thank you.

*The President.* And we appreciate it.

Secretary Ross.

*Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.* Thank you, Mr. President. The President's tax cuts and regulatory reforms are creating a new wave of growth in our advanced manufacturing and technology industries, along with demand for thousands of skilled workers. Our strengthening economy is a godsend for many millions of Americans who want to be part of the workforce and who now have the opportunity to participate productively in our economy.

*[Secretary Ross continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]*

President Trump's new Executive order now creates the National Council for American Workers to look at systematic issues that span our entire education and training system. It also establishes a new American Workforce Policy Advisory Board to be housed at the Department of Commerce. We will raise awareness of the job opportunities that are available for skilled American workers. We will recognize the companies and organizations that are successfully closing the skills gap. I look forward to chairing this new Council with Secretary Acosta, Andrew Bremberg, and Ivanka Trump, and working with all the members of the Council and with the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board.

Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you, Wilbur. That's very good.

I thought I'd ask Secretary of State Pompeo to give us a little talk on some of our most recent activities. And maybe you could also touch on North Korea just for a couple of minutes, Mike, if you don't mind.

*Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo.* I'll do that, Mr. President. Maybe I'll start there, on North Korea?

*The President.* Fine.

*Secretary Pompeo.* So I traveled to Pyongyang for the third time. We made progress on some issues. There's a lot of work to do. It may take some time to get where we need to go, but all of this will be taking place against the backdrop of continued enforcement of the existing sanctions.

The North Koreans reaffirmed their commitment to denuclearize. We're making progress along the border to get the return of remains, a very important issue for those families. We think in the next couple of weeks we'll have the first remains returned. That's the commitment. So progress certainly being made there.

*[Secretary Pompeo continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]*

And then, I traveled to join the President in Helsinki. Had the chance to meet with my counterpart, Foreign Minister Lavrov. And the President's discussion with President Putin set

the conditions where we can find overlapping space: counterterrorism; the Russians on the treaties that they're in violation of—a place, where we can now begin to have important dialogues to put that relationship in a place where we reduce the risk to the United States from threats from Russia.

So I think, overall, a very positive set of meetings we've had over the last 10 days, Mr. President.

*The President.* Good. Yes. Great job, Mike. Thank you very much.

Betsy, go ahead.

*Secretary of Education Elisabeth P. DeVos.* Well, thank you, Mr. President. Back to the issue of workforce development. And thank you for your commitment to leading opportunity for all American workers.

As we know, when we look at our K–12 system and of those young people coming up, our country has fallen behind our international competitors. Today, in our PISA scores, we are 23d in reading, 25th in science, and 40th in math. We have significant opportunity to improve things for young people. And there's a—there's essentially a fundamental disconnect between education today and the preparation of our young people and today's economy and the opportunities there.

[*Secretary DeVos continued her remarks, concluding as follows.*]

We also are working to support the proposed merger between the Departments of Labor and Education, knowing that our future really depends on a nation that is prepared; people that are prepared for the opportunities that are not only here today, but that will be with us tomorrow. And so I look forward to working with my fellow Cabinet members to pursue these opportunities and options.

*The President.* Thank you very much, Betsy.

Secretary Azar, could you maybe just spend a little time on talking about what we're doing about drug pricing?

*Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex M. Azar II.* Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. President. So we, of course, last year approved a record number of generic drugs, saving consumers over \$8 billion to the system so far. We also changed how we pay for drugs, reducing out-of-pocket expenditures for seniors by \$320 million a year for our senior citizens.

[*Secretary Azar continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

This morning we rolled out our biosimilar strategy. So that's to create a generic-like market for these high-cost biologic products. So that—Commissioner Gottlieb rolled out just this morning. And then, over the next several days, we've got a whole suite of actions coming, and so—which I will not give the media the benefit of until it comes out. [*Laughter*].

*The President.* That's great. And Pfizer, as you know, had a major drug price increase. And we spoke to them—and I have great respect for the company and for its leader—and they rolled it back to zero. And we very much appreciate what Pfizer did. We didn't like the increase, but we liked what they did. They responded properly. So we appreciate that very much.

Linda McMahan, please.

*Administrator of the Small Business Administration Linda E. McMahon.* Thank you, Mr. President. Well, clearly—to reiterate part of what's been said this morning, the tax cuts, regulatory rollback have clearly created a boom in our economy. Small businesses are growing.

But when I travel around the country and listen to these small businesses, I hear also about the lack of skilled workers for them. And if you can expect—you know, respect the position of small businesses, as big businesses grow, as they're raising wages, as they're making better benefits, not only to attract perhaps workers from other big businesses to come work for them—the small-business guy gets crushed a little bit, because he can't compete with that increase in wages and the increase in benefits.

[*Administrator McMahon continued her remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And I think that's the kind of program that we're going to see fostering, because it is that calibration that we're looking for so that businesses get the kind of skilled worker they need by the public-private partnership.

So all in all, it's such a good story everywhere. And I keep hearing, you know, many thanks for the tax cuts, regulatory rollback, because it is absolutely energizing what's going on.

*The President.* So Linda McMahon has done an incredible job. And I have to say, because I've known her and her husband Vince for a long time, they built a great business. And Linda was a very big part of it. For those of you that don't know, I know. She was a very, very big part of it. So thank you for what you're doing.

*Administrator McMahon.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Doing a fantastic job.

Ben Carson, say a few words about HUD, please.

*Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Benjamin S. Carson, Sr.* Well, one of the big initiatives that's been going on recently is we've put together a Section 3 Task Force. Section 3 of the Fair Housing Act says that if you're receiving HUD funding, there is an obligation to hire, train, or give contracts to the low-income people in that area.

People have found all kinds of reasons to get around it. But we're—we've almost finished reformulating it so that we remove a lot of the barriers that disincentivize people from utilizing it.

*The President.* Right.

*Secretary Carson.* And I think that's going to make a huge difference. And also, with the EnVision Centers, we're going to be gathering the information about all of the apprenticeship programs and training programs so that when somebody comes in, you know, they're not confused. We'll have people who will help shepherd them, because we have a tremendous workforce out there just waiting to be trained. And if we make it available to them, I think a lot of them will take advantage of it.

*The President.* Great. Thank you, Ben.

*Secretary Carson.* Okay.

*The President.* Really appreciate it.

If I could ask, because it's very much in the news—Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture. I love the farmers, and we're breaking down barriers. One of the things I'm doing

is, you know, with these trade deals that have been so unfair to our farmers and to our workers and to our companies from other countries—we're talking about it all the time, and we're breaking down barriers so that our farmers can sell their goods to other countries like they sell their goods to us.

And one of the examples is Canada; they charge us on dairy products—275-percent tariff. A 275 percent. It's just not appropriate. It's not fair. And there's a big imbalance, even though a lot of people don't think there is. But there is a big imbalance between Canada and the United States in terms of surplus and deficit.

But perhaps you could talk a little bit about the farmer. And I think they understand exactly what we're doing. And we're doing it as rapidly as possible, and we're taking some strong measures. But it's not fair when—I won't mention specific countries, but you know the ones I'm talking about—when certain countries have barriers that make it impossible for our farmers to sell into those countries, and yet they sell all sorts of products into ours unrestricted. Very unfair.

Sonny.

*Secretary of Agriculture George E. "Sonny" Perdue.* Your farmers in America, Mr. President, understand that you're taking this fight on their behalf. I used the metaphor yesterday: It's a little bit like weight loss; it's a little painful in the meantime—[*laughter*]—but they're looking forward to being a—winning later on. [*Laughter*] So I think—I think they understand that.

[*Secretary Perdue continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And our patriot farmers understand that you're the first one to attack this. They're very anxiously awaiting the wins, and we hope that the deal with Mexico, and then Canada, can come along very quickly behind that. But they're with you. They're hurting, actually, economically. They are strong American values, and they believe that you are an American-first President, and they want to be with you. We just need to help their pocketbooks.

*The President.* Well, I am. And I will say that if you look at soybeans—I looked at a chart the other day that came out recently just prior to the election. Five years before that, soybeans have been cut in half, price wise.

Now, I've only been here for little more than a year and a half with Mike. But I will tell you, soybean is way down over a 5-year period, prior to the election. So something has to be done.

And you know that over a 15-year period, pricing and farms and everything else has been very much trending down. So we're going to straighten that out. And they have to bear with us. But they are—they're great American patriots, and they really are something. They're very special people.

Mike, would you like to say something? Mike Pence.

*Vice President Michael R. Pence.* Thanks, Mr. President. And as I told you yesterday, good to have you back. After a successful week of international engagement, it should come as no surprise to the American people that you are right back here at the White House focusing on American jobs.

[*Vice President Pence continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

And I especially want to—I want to thank Ivanka Trump for her work in this area, bringing together all these various agencies and all the Cabinet members who are working so much. I truly do believe that this will be a centerpiece and a legacy long after we finish our work here that will pay dividends for prosperity for the American people.

*The President.* I think so, Mike. I do think so.

Thank you all very much. Appreciate it. Thank you.

#### *Russia-U.S. Relations*

Q. Mr. President, is Russia——

*The President.* Thank you.

Q. ——still targeting the U.S.? Is Russia still targeting the U.S., Mr. President?

*The President.* Thank you very much. No.

Q. No, you don't believe that to be the case?

*The President.* No.

Q. Senator Schumer is saying today you are walking back the—[inaudible].

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

#### *Russia-U.S. Relations*

Q. But can you just clarify——

*The President.* We're doing very well.

Q. ——you don't believe that to be the case?

*The President.* Let me tell you, we're doing very well. And we're doing very well, probably as well as anybody has ever done with Russia. And there's been no President ever as tough as I have been on Russia. All you have to do is look at the numbers. Look at what we've done. Look at sanctions. Look at ambassadors not there. Look, unfortunately, at what happened in Syria recently. And I think President Putin knows that better than anybody, certainly a lot better than the media. He understands it. And he's not happy about it, and he shouldn't be happy about it, because there's never been a President as tough on Russia as I have been.

Okay, thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President-elect Andres Manuel López Obrador of Mexico; President Jean-Claude Juncker of the European Commission; President Donald Franciszek Tusk of the European Council Ian C. Read, chairman of the board and chief executive officer, Pfizer Inc.; and Vince K. McMahon, chairman and chief executive officer, World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. Assistant to the President Trump referred to Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Kara McKee; Director of the Domestic Policy Council Andrew P. Bremberg; and White House Director of Strategic Initiatives Christopher P. Liddell. Secretary Pompeo referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia. Secretary Azar referred to Commissioner of Food and Drugs Scott Gottlieb.

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

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Acosta, R. Alexander; Azar, Alex M., II; Carson, Benjamin S., Sr.; DeVos, Elisabeth P.; Juncker, Jean-Claude; López Obrador, Andres Manuel; McMahon, Linda E.; McMahon, Vincent K.; Pence, Michael R.; Perdue, George E. "Sonny"; Pompeo, Michael R.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Read, Ian C.; Ross, Wilbur L., Jr.; Trump, Ivanka M.; Tusk, Donald Franciszek.

*Subjects:* Agriculture : Domestic production, strengthening efforts; Agriculture, Department of : Secretary; Business and industry : Automobile industry :: Strengthening efforts; Business and industry : Domestic investment, promotion efforts; Business and industry : Offshore earnings, repatriation efforts; Cabinet meetings; Canada : Trade with U.S.; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Commerce, Department of : Secretary; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Commerce, international : U.S. exports :: Expansion; Economy, national : Improvement; Education : Government and private sector, coordination efforts; Education, Department of : Secretary; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Employment and unemployment : Job training and assistance programs; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Europe : European Union :: European Commission President; Europe : European Union :: European Council President; Europe : European Union :: Trade with U.S.; Government organization and employees : Federal regulations, review; Health and Human Services, Department of : Secretary; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Housing and Urban Development, Department of : Secretary; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Labor, Department of : Secretary; Law enforcement and crime : Parole and ex-convict reintegration programs, improvement efforts; Mexico : President-elect; Mexico : Trade with U.S.; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; Russia : President; Russia : Relations with U.S.; Small Business Administration; State, Department of : Secretary; Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; United Kingdom : Relations with U.S.; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Assistant to the President; White House Office : Vice President.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD201800490.