

Family Research Council
14th Annual Values Voter Summit
Remarks by President Donald Trump

Speaker:
President Donald Trump

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(Extended cheers and applause.)

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Well, thank you very much. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you very much. It's a great honor to be here.

Tony, Pastor Brunson who I've gotten to know very well, that was not easy. But we got him out and got him back to his family. (Cheers, applause.) And I want to thank you for that beautiful prayer. It means a lot.

This evening I'm deeply honored to be back with so many pastors and leaders and friends and patriots at the 2019 Values Voter Summit. (Cheers, applause.) You are the warriors on the frontiers defending American freedom.

We meet tonight at a crucial moment in our nation's history. Our shared values are under assault like never before. Extreme left-wing radicals both inside and outside government are determined to shred our Constitution and eradicate the beliefs we all cherish. Far-left socialists are trying to tear down the traditions and customs that made America the greatest nation on Earth. They reject the principles of our Founding Fathers – principles enshrined into the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims that our rights come from our Creator. (Cheers, applause.)

But despite the delusions of the radical left, all of here today know that our rights come from God almighty and they can never be taken away. (Cheers, applause.)

Together, we will protect those God-given rights for our children, our children's children, and generations of Americans to come. On every front, the ultra-left is waging war on the values shared by everyone in this room. They are trying to silence and punish the speech of Christians and religious believers of all faiths. You know it better than anyone. They are trying to use the courts to rewrite the laws, undermine democracy, and force through an agenda they can't pass at the ballot box. They just can't seem to do it, can they?

They are trying to hound you from the workplace, expel you from the public square, and weaken the American family, and indoctrinate our children. They resent and disdain faithful Americans who hold fast to our nation's historic values. And if given the chance, they would use every instrument of government power, including the IRS, to try to shut you down. They are using the IRS against me.

Generations of Americans before us did not work; they fight, they sacrifice, they do so much. But we will never, ever, no matter what happens, surrender our liberty. The word "liberty" is so important to the radical left. Together, we will stand up to the socialists and we will win massive victories for family, for faith, and for freedom, just like the victory we had in 2016. (Cheers, applause.)

With every bit of heart and soul, we will defend our country – the most just and virtuous republic in the history of the Earth. And yet, I say that, and those words are beautiful, but it's starting to change. And we're going to stop that start. (Cheers, applause.)

The hateful spirit that consumes the modern left violates every tenet of the American tradition. The radical left tolerates no dissent. It permits no opposition. It accepts no compromise. And look, we have all seen it. We see what's going on. There is no compromise. Frankly, these people are crazy. (Laughter, cheers, applause.) They're crazy. (Cheers, applause.) They are crazy. I shouldn't say it because we're all the same, but they are crazy. (Laughter.)

And as we've seen in the last three years, the extreme left has absolutely no respect for the will of the American people. They are determined to stop our movement and impose their agenda by any means necessary. It makes no difference to them.

First it was the Russia hoax. It was a total hoax, made up.

Then it was the outrageous smearing of Justice Kavanaugh, that goes on. They want him impeached, even when the woman said I don't know that anything happened. Nothing happened. They said let's impeach him anyway. And the whole thing was phony, so phony. He's a good man. What he's gone through – I don't know if anyone has ever gone through anything like that.

You know, when I chose Justice Kavanaugh, I said, Brett, congratulations, I'm choosing you. Many years they were talking that he would be on the Supreme Court. He said, Sir, this is the greatest honor of my life – this was in the White House – the greatest honor of my life. I said, Brett, this will go so fast, this will be so easy. You're perfect. (Laughter.) He got the perfect family, the perfect wife, the perfect education – you're the best student, you went to the best school. They've been talking about you for 10 years. This will go quick and easy. (Laughter.) So much for predictions, folks! (Laughter.)

But we stuck with him, I'll tell you. A lot of people – (cheers, applause) – a lot of people said let's do it. Plenty of people said, cut him loose, President. Cut him loose, President – you know that. You know a lot of the people – a couple of people in this room. I love you; I'm never going to reveal your name, but a couple of people in this room, they said, cut him loose, President. Cut him loose. I said, can't do it. He's done nothing wrong.

They're phony stories about him. They were made up, just like they are made up about me and other people – they were phony stories. Can't do it, I'm sorry. And we got him through, and I give a lot of respect to those people that went up there, and they endured a lot. That was the worst thing that many people have seen in this country for years – Justice Kavanaugh. It's a big moment in our country's history.

And now it is the outrageous impeachment – look, impeachment. I never thought I'd see or hear that word with regard to me – impeachment! (Laughter.) I said the other day, it's an

ugly word. To me it's an ugly word – very ugly word. It means so much. It means horrible, horrible crimes and things. I can't even believe it.

It's a witch hunt. It's based on a single phone call of congratulations to the president of Ukraine which they fraudulently mischaracterized to sound absolutely horrible. This crooked Adam Schiff – (boos) – made a statement – long, beautiful statement and it was a fraud. He repeated my call, but it wasn't me. He made it so bad. And I said, oh, I'm going to go after him. They say, Sir – (cheers, applause) – they say, Sir, he has immunity because he said it in Congress. He has immunity. I said, I don't care about immunity. He made up a phone call.

But then I did something that they didn't expect. I immediately called up Ukraine through my representatives, in this case our great secretary of State who is doing a fantastic job, Mike Pompeo – (cheers, applause) – and got approval because I have to do this because – I don't like the idea of having these because you know how bad that is for us as a nation. I got approval to immediately make that call public, and they thought it was strange. You know, they thought it was a little bit strange – why would you want to do that? You know, other countries are looking at us like what the hell is going on in the United States? (Laughter.) Seriously.

Now does this mean that every leader that I deal with – and we do great things. Look at what we did yesterday with China for our farmers and for our people. (Cheers, applause.) But does that mean every time I speak to the head of a country they're afraid that this is going to be broadcast all over the world? You're never going to be able to speak properly to anybody, to make a deal, to do good things for the people, and even the people of the world.

So we had a perfect call. It was congenial. It was just absolutely nice. Totally different than the phony thing that he revealed with his crazy whistleblower. The whistleblower said quid pro quo eight times – was a little off, no times. (Laughter, applause.)

Now when you hear Schiff, we won't give you that money unless you do this – had nothing to do, wasn't even discussed. It was a terrible, terrible, fraudulent thing. And then Nancy Pelosi went on television. She was very angry when she read the actual call because this was an exact, I guess, stenographers – they took it down. And she was very angry because she got led. She was a day early when she started talking about impeachment, but that didn't matter to her; let's do it anyway. And for those of you that think she was reasoned for the last six months – you know, when she said, no, no, no, no; we need more – I said, she's going to do it. She just wants to have it carried on closer to election. She's going to do it – not a good person. I think she hates our country because if she didn't hate our country she wouldn't be doing this to our country. It's a fraud. It's a fraud. (Applause.)

But she said to George Stephanopoulos – I give him credit – no, no, he said the truth. Stephanopoulos said, no, no, but that wasn't what he said. He said an entirely – this was totally different. No, no, he said it. In other words, they're of the opinion, you know, just keep saying it, saying it, and maybe someday they'll believe it.

And frankly, if I weren't there – because I was incredulous. I couldn't believe it. I heard it. I said, that's not what I said. He made up a conversation, and it was vicious what he said.

And then we caught him and I said, he has to pay a big price, and they said, sir, he has total immunity because he was in the great chamber talking to congressmen, talking to the American public, lying and cheating, and there's supposed to be nothing we can do about it. But he also went outside and, as usual, he talked to the press, and he said a lot of what he said to the press. So we're going to take a look at it. We're going after these people. These are bad, bad people. (Cheers, applause.)

I actually told my lawyers, I said, sue him anyway. He's got immunity, but they can't mean immunity for that. I said, sue him anyway. Even if we lose, the American public will understand. (Cheers, applause.) And sue Nancy Pelosi, or maybe we should just impeach them – (cheers) – because they are lying and what they're doing is a terrible thing for our country.

And the president of Ukraine said there was nothing wrong with the call, and you heard the words. There was no pressure. He didn't even know what we were talking about. He said, no, it was a very nice call. He doesn't know. I'll tell you what, I respect him so much because a lot of times, you know, I don't want to comment, I don't want to get involved. He said it was a very nice call. There was nothing there. And people that read it after we gave the transcript said it was great.

I have one friend, a very smart brilliant lawyer from New York – I didn't like your call with Ukraine, Mr. President. He used to call me Donald. Now he calls me Mr. President. For the – 30 years he calls me Donald. Now it's – all of these guys. Nobody calls me Donald anymore. I lost all my friends. They call me Mr. President. (Laughter.) It's true. It's true. He goes, Mr. President – I keep saying, call me Donald. President, I didn't like – I didn't like that call to the Ukrainian president. I said, really? What do you mean? What was wrong with it? It was terrible the way you threatened him and it was horrible. I said, I didn't threaten him. Of course you did. I said, where did you read it? Did you read – no, I didn't read it. I listened to what Adam Schiff was reading. I assumed that it was a correct statement. I said, no.

He then calls me back after reading it. He said, I can't believe it. I've never seen anything like that. A lot of people saw that. A lot of people that thought it was bad thought it was bad because they heard Adam Schiff, and they don't hear us talking. They don't know what we're saying. They think that, you know, it's somebody standing – he's reading it like I said it. It's a terrible thing going on in this country.

But they're using that call to impeach your president, who won in 2016, perhaps the greatest election of our time. (Cheers, applause.) And I won it for you. I didn't win it for me. I won it for you and others, but I won it for you. They're coming after me because I'm fighting for you. That's a big part of it, and I'm fighting for all Americans and our way of life but I'm fighting for you. (Applause.) And they don't like you. They don't like you, and you explain why. You explain why. Your values are so incredible. They don't like you.

Nobody in this room would do what Adam Schiff did. Nobody would ever think of it. By the way, he only did it because he never thought that I was going to release the transcript. Had he thought I was – and I didn't even know. I was going to release it even before he did it. But I said, release. How transparent can you get, right? They're saying we're holding back.

Holding back? I gave the transcript of the call. But he did it and then I released the transcript. They never thought in a million years, even in terms of violation with another country. But we got their approval.

So he's very embarrassed. But he gets up to the microphone. Remember he used to say, well, I have personal proof that the president was very closely aligned with Russia. Russia. (Laughter.) And I'm watching him and even me – I'm starting to say, does he know something that I don't know? (Laughter.) You know, he gets up with his very, very narrow neck. You remember? (Laughter.) Pencil neck. (Cheers, applause.) Dana, you would not be impressed with him physically. (Laughter.) But he gets up, no dummy, but he's a crooked person. Smart guy; crooked as hell. And this is what they're using to – and they're going to be very unsuccessful, but this is what they're using, this call, to try and impeach the president of the United States, who did win one of the great elections of all time – all time. (Cheers, applause.)

And it couldn't have come at a better time, because if we had lost that we would be in a lot of trouble. We'd have a very different country right now. Even with China the other day they were saying it's incredible what you've done. Our economy is up many, many trillions of dollar; their economy is down many, many trillions of dollars. (Cheers, applause.) Big gap. We would have been number two by now if our opponent had won. They would have been way ahead of us, and now they're way behind. And that's OK. We made a great deal yesterday. We have to get it papered, but we will because they want to make that deal. They want to make that deal because they've never had pressure like this.

And I don't blame China, by the way. I blame the people that were leading our country for 25 years allowing that to happen, where \$500 billion is being taken out of our country and given to China so they can rebuild their entire empire. So I never blamed China, and I say that openly. I say it in every speech. I don't blame China. I wish we could have done it to them. I would have loved it. (Laughter.) And now maybe we are. (Laughter, cheers, applause.)

They're trying to destroy anyone opposed to their goal of fundamentally transforming the United States of America. The one thing about the radical Democrats that is something that you have to admire, they stick together. The Republicans don't. And I love the Republicans. They have horrible policies, the Democrats. They're for sanctuary cities, the Democrats. They're against strong, powerful, beautiful – I love our law enforcement. (Cheers, applause.) They believe in open borders where anybody can come into our country, anybody. You have to see. And we've done a great job. No support, only opposition. We have 27,000 Mexican soldiers on our border and the numbers are dropped like off the table, and I want to thank the president of Mexico and Mexico for doing an incredible job. (Applause.)

But the Democrats have one thing, they stick together. They're like glue. And it's been that way for a long time, not just now. For whatever it is, it's been that way for a long time, and it's the one trait that I do respect and even admire. They stick together. They don't have people coming out against the president. And you know, I'm at 94 percent approval rating – (cheers) – but still you have people out there, they don't get it. They don't get it.

So we love the Republicans. We love what we're doing. We love our programs. In many cases, we're better politicians than them. We have much better policies – we want strong borders, we want powerful education, we want freedom of speech, we want a strong military. We want a powerful Second Amendment, which they don't want. (Cheers, applause.) Right, Dana? They don't want – I wouldn't say they are too much into the Second Amendment, the world of the Second Amendment. I will tell you, if certain of these people – I would say almost anyone – your Second Amendment is in serious, serious trouble, serious trouble.

Socialism is obsessed with the pursuit of power because it has replaced religion within government and in their eyes. It has absolutely replaced religion. When you look at some of the things that they're in favor of, it's like – it's like anything – nobody's ever seen anything like it. The New Green – or Green New – you can say it either way, by the way. It doesn't matter, it's the same thing. (Laughter.) Doesn't matter. Somebody said, which comes first? I said, doesn't make any difference. (Laughter.) They're both crazy. (Laughter.) No cows, no planes, no people, no energy. (Cheers.) No oil, no gas, no nothing.

This evening we reaffirmed true foundations of American society. We believe that every American has the right to live by the dictates of their conscience and the teachings of their faith. (Cheers, applause.) We believe in the right to free exercise of religion. (Extended cheers and applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (Chanting.) Four more years! (Cheers, applause.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: All right. Thank you very much.

You know, years ago you could have said that and people would have said yes, and you know, it would have been sort of routine. Today you say, do you get standing ovations? (Laughter.) Because we're under assault. Very simple, we're under assault.

We believe in the right to free speech. We believe in the right to life. (Extended cheers and applause.)

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (Chanting.) Four more years! Four more years! Four more years! (Cheers.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you.

We know that families and churches, not government officials, know best how to create strong and loving communities. It's been that way in our country. (Cheers, applause.) And above all else, we know this: In America, we don't worship a government, we worship God. (Extended cheers and applause.)

PRESIDENT TRUMP: Thank you. (Cheers, applause.)

You were there from the first minute of my presidency. I have taken historic action to defend religious liberty. (Cheers, applause.) Tony knows that very well. Tony wasn't really sure I was at the beginning. He was saying, what do you think? I don't know him very well. But I think you're very happy now, Tony, right? (Cheers, applause.)

Something I'm very proud of, I stopped the Johnson amendment from interfering with pastors' rights to speak their mind. (Cheers, applause.) You can do whatever you want. You're the people we want to hear from. (Applause.) We want to hear from you.

We are protecting the conscience rights. And think of this, those rights of doctors and nurses and teachers and groups like the Little Sisters of the Poor. They're incredible people. And we're preserving our country's vital tradition of faith-based adoption. (Cheers, applause.)

As you know, just a few days ago a Democrat running for president proposed revoking the tax-exempt status of many churches and religious groups. (Boos.) And you know why, and you know who it is. He's a wacko. (Laughter, cheers, applause.) I will never allow the federal government to be used to target, harass, or punish communities of faith, and I will never allow the IRS to be used as a political weapon – as it has been and currently is – it is currently being used. (Cheers, applause.) But has been used so viciously, so violently against many people in this room.

Virtually every top Democrat lawmaker also now supports taxpayer-funded abortion right up to the moment of birth. But it's really now even worse than that. The governor of Virginia, do you remember, he was on a show and he talked. People say, what did he say? What was that? He said the baby is born, and then we have a conversation with the mother as to whether or not – what he meant – as to whether or not we execute the baby, because now it's an execution. And that was a very big moment, and they don't do anything about it. It was an unbelievable moment for the people in this room. For the people on the radical left, they didn't understand what was wrong with what he said. That's where we've come, but we're going now in a different direction.

And don't forget – (applause) – when I go after what I call the fake news – I call it the corrupt news, too, because it's stronger than fake, but fake sort of reads a little better – (laughter) – and there they are. But when I go after the fake news, I had a magazine for one of the many covers – I've been on so many of the covers of this particular magazine, Time magazine. And we were talking. They were in my office. I figured, let me give a shot at having an interview. Maybe I'll get a better story out of these people. So we had a nice talk, and I was talking about how unfairly the press treats me and you. They treat us all very, very badly. No matter what we do, doesn't matter, it'll never be considered good. And if it's just a neutral, it's a horror. And if it's something bad, I hate to say it, it's like the electric chair, OK? (Laughter.) Bring back the electric chair, they say.

But I was talking and I was going to fact after fact after fact about how crooked and corrupt the media is. Then I realized, I'm in the Oval Office and I said, but I'm president and you're not, so what's this all about, right? (Laughter, cheers, applause.) And I'm going on for like 20 minutes ranting and raving. And I said, wait a minute, here I am. Here I am. (Laughter.)

The Resolute Desk, here it is. It's right there. (Laughter.) And I walked away with a big smile on my face. (Laughter, cheers, applause.)

But because of the late-term abortion – this is why I've asked Congress to prohibit the late-term abortion of babies, and it's a big thing, and we have a lot of fighting. You wouldn't think there would be a lot of fighting. Remember the debate with crooked Hillary where I said she wants to rip the babies out of the womb in the ninth month? And everybody said, wow. That's the first time they heard that statement. And you're just lucky that we won. Because we won. I didn't win; we won. (Cheers, applause.) This would be a much different country.

And by the way, it's like a plant. You seed the plant, you put the plant in, but those roots have to gain. That's why we need the next four years. We have to have – those roots, they have to grab on. That's why we're doing it. (Cheers, applause.)

We've done so much. There's been no administration that's done what we've done in the first two-and-a-half years. Now it's almost three years. If you look at everything we've done with taxes and regulations, and right to try, and all of the different things that we've done – the vets, the military. We've rebuilt our military. (Cheers, applause.) We had a general come to my office, respected general, and we were having big trouble with one country, first week in office, very early. He said, sir, we have no ammunition. I said, you know what, we're going to have ammunition, a lot of it. And hopefully we'll never have to use it, but we're going to have a lot of it. But I also said I never want to have another president of the United States hear those words from a general, because does that put us in a bad position, right?

In this administration we believe that every child born and unborn is made in the holy image of God. (Cheers, applause.) During my first week in office I reinstated the Mexico City policy to protect the lives of the unborn. (Cheers, applause.) We have issued a final rule to prohibit Title X taxpayer funding from subsidizing the abortion industry. (Extended cheers and applause.) We stopped federal funding of fetal tissue research. (Applause.) My administration has also made tremendous progress in fighting back against the Left's effort to use the federal courts to impose their fringe ideology and crush the same religious liberty that we've been speaking of tonight. To defend our Constitution we have confirmed more than 160 highly-qualified judges to interpret the law as written, including two incredible new Supreme Court justices. (Cheers, applause.)

You know, I've always heard that federal judges, judges, and justices – Supreme Court justice is the most important decision a president can make, and I disagreed. I always said, you know, look, defense, to me, has got to always be number one. But I got it. I said, you know, it is. It's really incredible.

And usually when a president comes to office there's no – you have no vacancies. The previous president would have, boom. Should be no vacancy. You know, whatever their ideology is. But I guess they thought that the Crooked One was going to win or something. (Laughter.)

So I came in and in the first couple of days I said, by the way – you know, I had a couple of other things going, too, including the fact that a few minutes after I was sworn in the Washington Post wrote a story that the impeachment starts right now. You saw that, right? Did you see that? Right after I got sworn. I took the oath of office and they did a story, literally, a very few moments after the swearing in that the road to impeachment starts right now.

But I had a lot of other things. But I said during the course of the first very early period, like, a week, I said, by the way, how many federal judgeships do I have. They said, sir, you have 142. I said, what? (Laughter.) You have 142, sir. I said, you got to be kidding. Hundred and forty-two? You mean I have two. One. None. No, you have 142.

And President Obama was not very good at getting it done because, you know, people held him up and everything else. But with time you get them all done. We'd get them done. But he put a big rush on at the end when he saw that we were doing well in the polls and coming up and up. But it wasn't enough time.

So we inherited 142 open federal judgeships, including Court of Appeals. (Applause.) First time in history – first time in history anything like that has ever happened, and then they say, oh, he was a great president. Oh, great. He was great. Great for who? He was great for us. (Laughter.) And in that way, he was. There's never been a better president for the Republicans in what they consider the most important way, Tony. Gave us 142 judgeships on the first day in office. (Laughter.)

And you go back and check it out, you'll find that others left none – usually none, or one or two. But one. None. Hundred and forty-two. And then we have extras that we got through attrition, through retirement, through death, and we will very shortly in less than a couple of months we'll have 182 federal judgeships, including – (cheers, applause) – including appeals judges, Court of Appeals. (Cheers, applause.) Hundred and eighty-two, think of it. (Cheers, applause.) And, you know, we were getting killed with the court decisions. If you look at our first few months, I think I was oh-for-seven, oh-for-eight.

Then we won one and a newspaper – I think it was the failing New York Times. What would they do without me? You know, the paper was dead until I came along. (Laughter.) Two months before I ran I remember holding one up. It was, like, from a grocery store. You know, the things that you hand out? It was like this. (Laughter.) It's all right. When we leave in 10 or 14 years, they'll fail. They'll fail. (Laughter, cheers, applause.) I'm only kidding, by the way. You know, they'll take for, I told you he wants to stay. (Laughter.)

Did you see the crazy comedian? I won't even give him the name but you know who. He said – he was interviewing a guest a couple of weeks ago. He said – you know, fairly liberal guest – he said, you know he's going to win, don't you? You know he's going to win. And the guest said, no, no, we're going to fight very hard. We have a chance – no, no, we're going to fight. No, no, he's going to win – and you know he's not leaving after that, don't you? (Laughter.) He's gonna stay. There's no way we're ever going to get him out of office. (Laughter.)

And I thought that he was, you know, kidding and he was really – believed it. So you know what? Let him believe it. I think it's great. Let him believe. (Cheers, applause.) True, right? He's never leaving.

In recent years the hard left has tried to muzzle Christian voices in their aggressive attack on free speech. Last year, Isabella Chow, a member of student government at the University of California Berkeley – slightly liberal out there – abstained from a campus vote that violated her Christian faith. She was cruelly condemned by the student government and kicked out of nearly every single club of which she was a member at college. On the day that members of student government condemned *her* – they went after her like nobody would believe – she sent out this message: The Christian community is here to love and serve this campus. And Isabella is here somewhere tonight – where is Isabella? (Cheers, applause.) Beautiful!

We salute you. Thank you very much, Isabella.

To safeguard the rights of students like Isabella, my administration has taken historic action to withhold taxpayer dollars – we're talking about billions of dollars, by the way – from schools that infringe on students' First Amendment freedoms and other people's First Amendment freedoms. (Cheers, applause.)

You notice they've been treating us much better lately. They're saying, you know, we'd better let this person speak. We get a lot of – millions of dollars every year, these schools. All of a sudden they're letting them speak, but they still don't speak properly about us, so we don't like that, but it's really had a big impact.

To support American families, we doubled the child tax credit and cut a record number of job-killing regulations. (Applause.) We've created over six million new jobs since the election – nobody would have believed that. If I would have said that, Tony, the media back there – the wonderful people in the media would have said, he's exaggerating. I would have never said six, actually. And you really have to go by the day after the election because, you know, when you looked the day after the election, there was euphoria, and the market went up tremendously before signing. And Obama gets credit. The market was crashing; the market would have gone down the tubes.

So I said, why did he get all of that upside? They only did the upside for two-and-a-half months or whatever it was. Between, let's say, November 9 and January 20th, they only did the upside because we got elected. (Cheers, applause.) And if he would have gotten elected it would have not been a good situation.

Last month unemployment reached the lowest rate in over 51 years. (Cheers, applause.) And you've heard me say this: African-American, Hispanic-American, and Asian-American unemployment rates have all set record lows. And women – 71 years – I'm sorry, you didn't break a record – but we're doing very well with the women. You know why? Women are so smart, and they want safety, they want security, they want a great military, they want strong borders.

Remember last time – he will not get the women’s vote! There is no way to get to 270 – you needed 270 electoral votes – he will not get the women’s vote! Then after the election said, man, he did good with the women! (Applause.) He did good with the women!

This is like a tape recording of the same thing now – he will not get the women’s vote! I said, really? They don’t want to have a strong military? They don’t want to have security? They don’t want to have safety?

We’re working harder than any administration has ever worked on opioid and drugs, and our numbers are coming way down – (applause) – nobody has seen numbers like this. Nobody has seen numbers like what we’ve done.

We’ve lifted 1.3 million American children out of poverty. Our agenda is lifting up Americans of every background, race, religion, color, and creed.

Last year, with the help of many faith leaders – many of you are in the room right now – I signed groundbreaking criminal justice reform into law. Everybody wanted that. (Applause.) The African-American community wanted it so badly – they couldn’t get it. President Obama couldn’t get it done. Previous presidents couldn’t get it done. We got it done.

To protect the well-being of our citizens, we are fighting violent crime, securing our border, building the wall – and it is going up rapidly, by the way – rapidly. (Cheers, applause.) You think that was an easy one? That was a tough one, and it’s the – I said, the Rolls Royce – they criticized me on that. They said, that car is not made in the United States. I said, we’re building the Rolls Royce of walls.

We brought in Border Security, we brought in the Border Patrols. We went over that, said give me your A list, I want every single thing so when I build it I build it right – what do I know about building walls? And they gave me every single thing, and I got every single thing from the height, to the vision through, to the type of steel that can’t be cut easily, to the type of concrete – 5,000 pound, very strong concrete – to the type of rebar, to the anti-climb provision that we have on top. Anti-climb – who knows about anti-climb provision?

And we built – and we’re building a wall, and it’s going up rapidly. And that’s tough because I built it against every single Democrat who, four years ago, wanted it. And the only reason they don’t want it now is because I want it. (Laughter, applause.) It’s the only reason – only one reason.

And I said – you know, I said this the other day, first time. I said, I can’t believe it took me so long to figure this one out. If I would have said I do not want the wall; I will not build a wall, they would have insisted on a wall! It would have been so much easier. (Laughter.) It would have been so much easier! Oh, Dana, it would have gone up so fast.

But I took money from here, and there, and here, and military – because it is national security, OK? You know, how about these people who say it’s not national – when drugs are pouring in, human trafficking – women, mostly women – human trafficking – and children, but

mostly women – and that’s going up really fast. And, you know, by the way, it’s all pretty much financed – it’s really financed, and we may get some more – if we get some additional financing we’re going to extend it a little bit.

But we should have – by the end of next year, we should have anywhere from 400 to 500 miles of wall built in the most important areas. That’s exactly what we need. (Cheers, applause.)

To protect national security, we are fully rebuilding, and for the most part, have fully rebuilt our military – (cheers, applause) – because, as I say and I’ve said tonight, my first duty as president is the defense of our nation. As a candidate I promised to make fundamental changes to our foreign policy after years of deadly debacles and blunders under previous administrations. It’s been pretty bad out there. We have the greatest soldiers in the world, but they had equipment that was depleted, it was old. We had jets that didn’t fly. Fifty percent of our jets didn’t fly. They’d go to the plane graveyards out in the deserts, and they’d take parts because they didn’t make the parts anymore.

And we’ve now spent – think of this – eight trillion dollars in the Middle East. Thousands of American soldiers have lost their lives, and tens of thousands more have been severely wounded. And the hardest thing I have to do as president – the single hardest thing by far – is sending letters to the families of our fallen heroes. It’s the worst – they come in with letters – three, four, five – and sometimes I’ll call the parents. It’s the hardest thing I have to do.

And sometimes I’ll go to Dover, and I’ll see the big, big, incredible machines come in – the cargo planes – and I’ll see them take those coffins off those planes, and I’ll see parents and sisters and wives and brothers, families. I’ll see families that – I’ll meet them inside and they’ll seem fine sometimes. And I’ll say to the people that do it – they greet the dead, that’s what they say. They greet the dead. They greet our heroes. But I’ll say to the people that do that, they’re so professional – that’s what they do. That’s what they do every day. That’s what they do, so professional. Sir, you will stand here. You will then hear the drums. You will then hear the horns. You will this, you will that.

It’s like – but I’ll go, Dover Air Force Base, and I’ll see the parents and the wives and the husbands and whoever it may be. And oftentimes I’ll say to the colonel who’s in charge, Colonel, they’re doing great. “No, sir, they’re not.” I said, no, I think they’re really doing great. I had a great talk with them. They really are strong. “Sir, they won’t do quick.” And I say, what do you mean? You’ll see in 20 minutes when the plane pulls up and the door opens up, that big, huge cargo door that’s as big as this – much bigger than the back wall here. When you see that, sir, it’s rare that bad things don’t happen for those families. It’s rare. I said, all right. This is my first time, when I first came into office.

And that big plane pulled up, and I had just spoken with the families. But that big plane pulled up. It’s beautiful in its strength, its power. And it pulled up, just arrived and pulled, and it’s – we’re all standing there, everybody, the military. I’m with generals and some Cabinet members, and the families are over here. And that tremendous door in the back where they roll up the tanks and they roll up, like, unlimited amounts of equipment and – you wouldn’t believe

it's possible to fly with all of the things – you know, the power of those planes. And that door came down, and there's five soldiers on each side – beautiful soldiers, beautiful – and a coffin with a flag on it. And the same people – the same exact people that 20 minutes ago I was saying to the colonel, oh, they're doing great, but he was right. And that door opened, and you would hear screams and cries like you've never heard before, actually, like we've never heard. Like I've never heard before.

And the colonel explained to me sometimes you'll see a mother or a wife – sometimes, he said, you'll see a sister – break the line, break through the military, and run to the coffin, and jump on top as these incredible, strong, beautiful soldiers are carrying this coffin. Jump – and jump on top of the coffin just, like, devastated. And they move as though nothing has happened. They just keep moving, and they take the body to where it's going. They place it in the hearse and it goes away. But I tell you, I've never seen. You think this is easy.

And we've been in these wars now, one of them 19 years. And they didn't fight to win; they fight to just stay there. And in Syria we were supposed to be there for 30 days and we've been there for 10 years. And these wars, they never end. And we have to bring our great soldiers back from the never-ending wars.

I see – the other day I went to – Friday I went to Walter Reed Medical Center, the hospital. First of all, those doctors are incredible, what they can do. But I gave out Purple Hearts. And I see in this case young men, all men, and they have been just decimated. They step on a bomb. I mean, what's done to them is just incredible. So I see this and I – you know, it's a very hard thing to do. It doesn't mean we won't fight. We'll fight. We'll fight harder than anybody. But sometimes we have to know what we're fighting for, and we can't stay there forever. We have to bring our great heroes, our great soldiers, we have to bring them home. It's time. It's time. (Applause.)

And you know, in the case of Turkey and the Kurds, I mean, I could go into a whole story because I understand it I think better than most. But the Kurds were going to fight the Iraqis about a year and a half ago, remember, and everybody said we have to fight with the Kurds, we have to – I said, well, wait a minute, we just spent \$4 trillion on Iraq. Now we're going to fight with the Kurds against Iraq? I'm not going to do it. This was in a different part of Syria, totally different. They said, well, the Kurds are going to fight and they're going to fight, it's going to be a horrible war. Well, I said, so we just spent \$4 trillion fighting with Iraq – which, by the way, was the single worst mistake this country has ever made, going into the Middle East, OK? (Applause.) We're in there now for \$8 trillion, thousands of our lives, and millions of lives on the other side by the way. Millions. You know, talking about millions and millions of lives.

But I said we're going to stand by. We're not going to choose sides. They'll have to go at it. Let's see what happens. The Kurds left. They left. And there was very little combat, and it was a great decision. We could have stayed and fought, fight the people that we'd been fighting for, whether right or wrong. And we left, and we watched, and nothing happened. And people forget. Most people don't even know what I'm talking about because it was a year and a half ago. And even at the time – and nobody got credit for that correct decision, and now I'm

sort of an island of one again. But now it's maybe happening again, that 30 kilometers, about 22 miles, strip along Turkey.

And the Kurds are intending to leave, and that's good. Let them have their borders. But I don't think our soldiers should be there for the next 50 years guarding a border between Turkey and Syria when we can't guard our own borders at home. I don't think so. (Cheers, applause.) So let's see what happens. And that's a long ways away.

We killed ISIS. We defeated. We did our job. We have to go home. We did our job. (Applause.) You know the story. I went over to Iraq and they said, we can do it, sir. They told me it was going to take a year to two years, my Washington generals. Highly overrated. (Laughter.) He said, going to take one year to two years. I said, man, that's a long time. Remember, I wanted to pull out. Dana, it was 97 percent I wanted to go. I said, that's enough. Let's get out. I got – you wouldn't believe, the military-industrial complex came down on me. So I went to get 100 percent. But it was going to take a year to two years. And then I went over and I met with the generals and I said, so, generals – and these guys are like, I'm telling you, central casting, like better than anybody in Hollywood. There's nobody that looks like this in Hollywood. I said a couple of them looked better than Tom Cruise. (Laughter.) They're just tougher – (laughter) – and taller. (Laughter.) Better than Tom Cruise.

But I said, so, General, let me ask you the big question, let me ask you. They say it's going to take a year, maybe two. How long will it take you? "Two weeks, sir." What do you mean, two weeks? We can do it in two weeks, maybe a month. But two weeks, sir. How do you do that? And why are they saying you can do it in so much longer? They say, sir, two weeks we're going to hit them on the left, we're going to hit them on the right, we're going to hit them underground, over ground, this way, that way. They would never let us fight. And I said, but I will. And they went in – (cheers, applause) – and they did. They hit them on the left. They hit them on the right. They hit them down the middle. And within three weeks after I gave the go ahead ISIS – we had a hundred percent of ISIS.

And we captured a lot and a lot were killed, their fighters. They don't do big white-flag things, you know. A lot of people said maybe they'll give up. The general said, no they won't, sir. They don't give up. It's an ideology and it's, you know, a tough ideology. But we did it very quickly. And so we did what we should have done.

Most of these fighters came from Europe. They came from Germany. They came from France. They came from many countries in Europe. And I called them and I said, you got to take back your fighters. They said, nope, we don't want them. I said, you don't understand, we're not going to take the fighters. We don't want them. We're not bringing them to Guantanamo. We're not bringing them to our prisons in the United States. They come from France, they come from Germany. In many cases they're citizens. They left the fight. We don't want them back. I called them again and I said, got to take them back or I'm going to let them go right on your damn border. (Laughter, cheers.) But they wouldn't do it. They wouldn't do it. They didn't want them back. And we have thousands of them.

We had some really bad ones. The Beatles, you know The Beatles? They're the ones with the chopped-off heads. And you know what we did? The night that the war, that the shooting started, we had some incredible military people go into that prison and grab them and take them and bring them out, and we have them totally under wraps. They were the worst of everybody, and we've got them now. They're ours. (Cheers, applause.)

But people don't treat us right. We did them a big favor. We captured these people. And I just want you to know that because there's a big story to this. It's not just what these people say.

And by the way, if I did the opposite – if I stayed and fought – we could have stayed and we could have fought and we would have knocked Turkey around and we would – they would have hated it. If I get out, they hate it. No matter what we do, they're going to hate it, OK? No matter what decision we made.

And if I'm right, and if the Kurds do back up – and we hope they do. I hope they do, because it's very hard to beat a force where they have planes and they don't, or they have weapons that the Kurds don't have. We've paid a lot of money to the Kurds over the years. And don't forget, they're fighting for their land. They haven't helped us fighting for our land. They're fighting for their land, and that's good, but we've helped them.

But no matter what we did, the media will say it's the wrong decision. And I say it makes no difference. If I said we're going to stay and fight, we're going to fight them like you never saw, they'll say it's terrible, I told you he loves war. Don't forget, when I got elected everybody thought that I'd be in, Dana, World War III the first day, right? (Laughter.) Now they say, huh, not only aren't we, but we have the strongest economy in the history of our country. You know, it's pretty good. (Cheers, applause.) And just so you know, wars and economies don't go well together, OK? You can check that out.

So despite all of the blood that was spilled, the lives lost, and the money that was spent, the Middle East is right now – remember, and I say it – I'll say it – going in was the worst decision. They went in for weapons of mass destruction and there were none. There were none. (Applause.) And it was the intelligence agencies. They're real – some real beauties. It's less safe now. It's less secure, less stable. And they fight. That's what they do. They fight.

The generals came to me on Afghanistan. Sir, it's going to be a rough spring. Why? This is my first year. Why? Well, sir, the Taliban's going to come out of the mountains and they're going to start fighting. I said, but why do you say rough? Well, that's what they do. They've done this for a thousand years. They come out in the spring, they fight. That's what they do. They're very good, very good fighters. That's what they do. You know, Tony wants to go watch a football game. I want to go do things. They want to come out and fight. That's what they do. (Laughter.) Right, Tony? They're probably a little tougher than Tony, but that's OK. (Laughter.) Just ask Russia if they're tough. But we can beat anybody. We can beat them easy. We're not – we're policing in Afghanistan. But we've been there 19 years.

So I just want you to understand these things. We got to bring people back home. We're rebuilding our country. We're rebuilding our military. We don't want it depleted as fast as we build it.

And we have other problems. You have Russia. You have China. You have other big problems. I think we'll get along great with China. I think we'll get along great with Russia. But when they create a phony Russia hoax, it makes it tougher to get along with Russia. When they create lots of different scenarios with China, it makes it tougher to get along with China. I think we'll do great. But they got to let us run our country the way it's supposed to be run. (Cheers, applause.) So these never-ending wars have increased, not decreased, and the grave danger posed to historic Christian communities has been incredible.

Since the United States went to war in Iraq – now, listen to this. I was against going to the war. Nobody cared. I was a civilian. But I got a lot of publicity, for whatever reason. They always liked me or hated me. No, I used to get the greatest publicity on Earth. That's how I'm here. Once I announced I was going to run, they killed me. And then when I won I said, you know – great thing I told my wife, the first lady. She's doing a great job. Doing a great job. (Cheers, applause.) She really is. Man, does she – they hate her. If she were married to a liberal Democrat they'd say she may be the greatest in the history of our world. But she's married to me. (Laughter.)

But, you know, the first day I won it was historic. People didn't think, although a lot of – there were three polls that said we're going to win. I thought we were going to win because of the crowds we were getting, just like we got last night in Louisiana. Let's see what happens with that governor's race. (Applause.) Just like we got in a blue area of Minnesota. I think we're going to win Minnesota. (Cheers, applause.) Group from Minnesota. Twenty-two thousand seats. It was like Madison Square Garden plus a thousand seats – the Timberwolves' arena and where they play the NBA games – and it was packed and we could have sold it out four times. So some things happen.

But I said when we won, you know, the great thing is – because the press was so dishonest during the campaign, so, like, unbelievably. I said, you know the great thing? I told it to my wife. I said, now they're going to respect what we did. I'm going to get great publicity for a while like I used to get my whole life, and it got worse. It's worse. It's not even close. It's worse now than ever, but that's OK, because, as I said to Time Magazine, we're here and you're not, right. (Cheers, applause.)

So since the United States went to war in Iraq in 2003, the Christian community in the country has decreased by 80 percent from, roughly, 1.5 million people to right now just 250,000 Christians in Iraq. You don't hear that. My administration is absolutely committed to protecting religious minorities in the Middle East and all around the world.

You know, if you were – (applause) – if you were a Christian in Syria, which was a rough place to be, you had almost no chance during the last administration of coming into the United States. It was, they say, the hardest thing to do to come into the United States. Number one most difficult place in the world to come in was if you were a Christian in Syria. If you were a

Muslim in Syria, it was extremely easy to come into the United States, and the Christians were persecuted in Syria, and that's the way it is. But it's not that way anymore. (Applause.)

This week I directed \$50 million to support Christians and other religious minorities in Syria. I did it on Friday. Fifty million dollars. I'll make it in honor of Pastor Brunson, Tony, Dana – some people that have done a great job for us. Fifty million dollars, and that's going to help Christians in Syria. Not an easy situation for them.

In total, my administration has provided more than a half a billion dollars in support of religious minorities and others suffering from atrocities in Syria and Iraq alone. Other presidents would not be doing that. They'd be spending a lot more money but they'd be spending it on things that would not make you very happy.

With one clear voice, the United States of America condemns the persecution of Christians – (applause) – and we pledge our support to Christian communities everywhere suffering under the brutal heel of oppression and violence. Our hearts and our souls are joined with these brave believers in their religious struggle, and Pastor, it's great to have you back here. (Cheers, applause.)

I've made clear to Turkey that if they do not meet their commitments, including the protection of religious minorities and also watching over the ISIS prisoners that we captured, we will impose a very swift, strong, and severe economic sanctions like I did with respect to my negotiations to get Pastor Brunson out. Otherwise – I hate to say this, Pastor – you'd still be there. And I hate to say this also, and this isn't done for me go, any other president of the United States you would still be there. You know what we had to do. And I have to say you were very brave the way you put up with it, but it wasn't an easy situation.

Any military engagement where we send young men and women to fight and die must have clear objectives, vital national interests, and a realistic plan for how the conflict will end. We don't want to be in 19-year wars where we serve as a policing agent for the whole country. We will continue our fight against the vile menace of radical Islamic terrorism. (Cheers, applause.) A lot of people don't want me to use that term. President, don't use that term. I said, but it's the truth. I don't want to use that term, but it's the truth. (Applause.)

And we will never tire or waver in our defense of religious liberty. A few weeks ago I was honored to be the first president to host a meeting at the United Nations to call upon all nations to end religious persecution. Can you imagine, the first president? (Cheers, applause.) The first president that did that, and can you imagine that? You would have thought that would be done every year for 40 years, wouldn't you? First president. And I read that and it became a big story, and I said, can you believe that's the first president that said we want to put an end to religious persecution? How can that be the first president? It's been there a long time. But that's the way it is.

Earlier this year I appointed a special envoy to monitor and combat the poison of anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, the Democrat Party has invited anti-Semitism into its own ranks. Look at Omar. Look at her. Have you seen what she says, not only about our country but look

at what she says about Israel. And they're always making excuses – well, she didn't mean it. (Laughs.) Mean it. Oh, she meant it. She meant it much more so than ever her words.

My administration is confronting this scourge. And we're standing with our close friends and partner, the state of Israel. (Cheers, applause.) And as you know very well, I recognized the internal capital of Israel and opened the American embassy in Jerusalem. (Cheers, applause.) Thank you. And we did it for the right price, right, Tony? We got the building up. Yeah, it's an interesting story. Some of you have heard it.

We have a great ambassador, David Friedman, but – a great lawyer. He's one of the top lawyers in New York, made a lot of money, and he wanted to be the ambassador. But he wanted it, everybody wanted it.

And every president's promised that for years and years. They promise it, I'm going to recognize the capital of Israel and we're going to move the embassy to Jerusalem. But they didn't do it. I understand why, because once I got into office you have no idea the pressure that was put on. Now, that was called a quid pro quo. (Laughter.) That was a quid pro quo, the pressure that was put on me by so many other countries calling – please don't do it, please don't do it. The last two weeks I didn't take anybody's phone call. I got calls from kings, you can imagine. I got calls from everybody not to do it. Please, don't do it.

So what I did is I said, you know what I'll do? I won't take their call. I'll call them back in a couple of weeks. I said, do me a favor: tell the prime minister that I'll call him back in two weeks. I'm busy. (Laughter.) They said, two weeks? That's a long time. Tell the king I'll call him back in a few days. (Laughter.)

So anyway, so I did it, and then I made all those phone calls. Had a lot of publicity. We did it. It was a big story. Nothing happened. Remember, the world was going to come to an end, right? Nothing happened. I kept saying, are we OK? Yeah. Is there a protest? No. (Laughter.) Three or four days go by, I say, what's going on? This is strange.

But then I started making the calls. I said, King, what do you want? What's up, King? (Laughter.) And he goes, oh, I wanted to call you to tell you we would be very much opposed to – I said, oh, I wish I spoke to you sooner. Sorry. (Laughter, cheers, applause.) And everybody's happy. Everybody's happy. (Applause.)

But we had to decide on a building, and they came in – one of the generals – Sir, would you please sign this order? I said, what's it for? We're going to build, start the process – would take 30 years, by the way – of building the embassy, the actual embassy. How much is it? One billion dollars, Sir. I said, wait a minute. This is a one-story building – that's what I do. (Laughter.) How do you spend a billion? Sir, we've got to purchase land, and then we've got to get approvals, and we've got to – I said, how old are we going to be by the time this thing finishes, General? I don't know, Sir, but it's one billion.

I had the name Donald signed – Donald – then I said, what is this? And they – I said, cross it out. I called David Friedman and I said, David, go check Jerusalem. Do we own any

land? He says, let me check it out. He calls me back. He goes, Sir, we do. We own a much better piece than the piece they want to buy – much better. It's bigger, it's safer, it's a much better location, better views. And you know what? We have a building on it. And he says, Sir, I think we can renovate that building for \$200,000. (Laughter, applause.) True story. And it's the only time in my whole life that – you know, usually I'd say make it a hundred. (Laughter.) I said, David, it's too cheap. It doesn't sound like enough. I said, make it 500,000 (dollars) or less. And we did. And we took this building, which was a very good building – set back, had all the things that you need there like setback for safety, big site, beautiful site.

And I said, do me another favor. Use Jerusalem stone – because a friend of mine in New York has – he's so proud he uses Jerusalem stone in his office, a very rich guy – Ron Baron. He's got a wall of Jerusalem stone. Every time I come in he goes, oh, this is Jerusalem stone. I said, Ron, you've told me that a hundred times. (Laughter.) He said, you have no idea how expensive it is. I said, listen, you're in Jerusalem; can you get Jerusalem stone? He says, yeah, I can buy it real cheap – (laughter) – comes from Jerusalem!

I said, use Jerusalem stone, so they used Jerusalem stone, and we built it for less than \$500,000. We opened it in four months. That's better than the Wollman Rink store, you want to really know the truth. That's better. (Cheers, applause.)

So instead of a billion and a half – don't forget, the billion was going to be two billion (dollars) and three billion (dollars). I could tell you stories – but anyway, so we – not only did we get and do what we said I was going to do, but I got the building built, and it has been open for a year and a half. (Applause.) And it's a beautiful, beautiful embassy. And maybe someday they'll build whatever they want to build, and they'll have a good time, and they'll waste a lot of money. But we've got a beautiful building now that works beautifully, and it opened up a few months – so it's not just a designation.

And we did another thing. We recognized – after 52 years of negotiation, I recognized the Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. That was a big deal. (Cheers, applause.) They'd have meetings and meetings, and people would fly in.

I withdrew the United States from the disastrous Iran nuclear deal. (Cheers, applause.) And Iran is a much different country. They are misbehaving, but they got to be very careful when they misbehave.

And here in the Western Hemisphere we're standing against the horrors of communism and socialism – that's what we're fighting right here – and supporting the people of Cuba and Nicaragua and Venezuela in their noble quest for freedom. (Applause.) It'll all happen.

And tonight I declare once again America will never be a socialist country. (Cheers, applause.) Never. Never, never. (Cheers, applause.) Never be. Our nation was not built by bureaucrats and regulators. (Applause.) America was built by families and pilgrims and pioneers. Our destiny is not written by people that come from areas of the world that know nothing about what we want to do.

It's all written in our hearts. It's really written in our hearts. Our future will not be decided by the media, the bureaucrats, and the politicians. It will be decided by all of you. (Cheers, applause.) That's why we have elections. That's why we have elections.

In every generation, the faith of our people has spurred our nation to overcome every challenge to our values and to our way of life. It has inspired us to face down the worst evils, unlock the greatest mysteries, and achieve what no one thought was ever possible.

Now, powered by those same historic values that have always defined our nation, we will reach new heights, make new breakthroughs, and we will strengthen the bonds of love and loyalty that unite us all as citizens, as neighbors, as patriots, as Christians, as people of faith. As one people, one nation, and one United States of America, we will stand as a light of liberty, a land of courage, and a home for proud people of faith. (Cheers, applause.)

Forever and always, Americans will believe in the cause of freedom, the power of prayer, and the eternal glory of God. Thank you. God bless you. And God bless America. Thank you very much. (Cheers, applause.)

(END)