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KRISTEN WELKER:

President-elect Donald Trump, welcome back to Meet the Press.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Thank you very much.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Thank you so much for being here. You are the first president since Grover Cleveland to win non-consecutive terms. Republicans now have control of the House and the Senate. What do you plan to accomplish in your first 100 days in office?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, we're going to do something with the border, very strong, very powerful. That'll be our first signal — first signal to America that we're not playing games. We have people coming in by the millions, as you know, and a lot of people shouldn't be here. Most of them shouldn't be here. But we have jails being emptied into our country. We have mental institutions from all over the world being emptied into our country. So we'll be doing that. We're going to be extending within that period or as soon as we can the Trump tax cuts, because you know they're coming due and they're very substantial for people. It would be very — and I think it will anger a lot of people, frankly, if we don't get an extension of that. That's what led us to one of the greatest economies ever. And those two things are going to be very vital, very important. We're going to be focusing on crime in the cities, and we'll work with Democrat governors. Most of them are, as you know, if you look at the 25 worst places, they're just about all Democrat-controlled cities and states. And we're going to be working with Democrat governors and Democrat mayors, and I look forward to doing it. But we have to do something about crime, and mostly in our cities. And we're going to have a lot of other things. We'll be working on nominations. We're going to still be working on some nominations. I think they're going very well. We have — for the most part, I think they're going extremely well. It looks like Pete is doing well now. I mean, people were a little bit concerned. He's a young guy with a tremendous track record, actually. Went to Princeton and went to Harvard. He was a good student at both. But he loves the military, and I think people are starting to see it, so we'll be working on his nomination along with a lot of others.

KRISTEN WELKER:

We are going to delve into your nominations, but since you bring him up, do you still have confidence in Pete Hegseth?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yes, I do. I really do. He's a very smart guy. I've known him through Fox, but I've known him for a long time. And he's basically a military guy. I mean, every time I talk to him, all he wants to talk about is the military. He's a military guy. I used to kid him about it. I didn't think we'd be in this position where he may be, hopefully will be, secretary of defense. But every time I was with him, he was fighting for soldiers, where he said some soldier was unjustly put in prison because they were really doing what they were taught to do, in some cases. So yeah, I think he's going to do fine.

KRISTEN WELKER:

The fact that there are these allegations against him, misconduct, sexual misconduct, heavy drinking, the fact that he said to some senators, reportedly, he'll stop drinking if he gets this job, does that worry you?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No. I think that everybody has something that they can stop. Some people can stop eating. I'm lucky I'm not a drinker, but I could stop eating. And we all want to stop doing something. And if he said that, I mean, that's a nice thing to say. That's a good thing to say. But he's very respected. I can tell you I know a lot of the people at Fox, they think he's fantastic. And the people that work with him, really, they love him. So I think, I think you're going to have somebody that's really terrific. And again, all he talked about with me, I said, "You know you're not really a television guy." Even though he did very well, as you know. "You're really a military guy." He said, "I'm all about the military." And I told him — so he's making a lot of money at Fox. They're doing very well. And I said, "You know, if for some reason you don't get this thing, you're not going to be able to go back. And all that money you're making, you can kiss it goodbye." He said, "This is all about America." You know he — and he didn't say, "Well, let me think about it. Let me discuss it." That was — that's a very big risky thing he's doing. When he goes and he says, "I'm going to give up, you know, millions of dollars in order to possibly become the secretary of defense," a lot of people would say, it's a great position, there's probably almost no greater position, but a lot of people would say, "I have to think about it." He said, "I don't have to think about it."

KRISTEN WELKER:

All right, we're going to delve into your Cabinet just a little bit later. But I want to delve into one of your signature promises on the campaign trail, which was to end inflation, to lower prices. You are now proposing tariffs against the United States' three biggest trading partners. Economists of all stripes say that ultimately consumers pay the price of tariffs.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I don't believe that.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can you guarantee American families won't pay more?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I can't guarantee anything. I can't guarantee tomorrow. But I can say that if you look at my — just pre-Covid, we had the greatest economy in the history of our country. And I had a lot of tariffs on a lot of different countries, but in particular China. We took in **hundreds of billions of dollars** and we had no inflation. In fact, when I handed it over, they didn't have inflation for a year and a half. They went almost two years just based on what I had created. And then they created inflation with energy and with spending too much. So I think we will — I'm a big believer in tariffs. I think tariffs are the most beautiful word. I think they're beautiful. It's going to make us rich. We're subsidizing Canada to the tune over \$100 billion a year. We're subsidizing Mexico for almost \$300 billion. We shouldn't be — why are we subsidizing these countries? If we're going to subsidize them, let them become a state. We're subsidizing Mexico and we're subsidizing Canada and we're subsidizing many countries all over the world. And all I want to do is I want to have a level, fast, but fair playing field.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, your previous tariffs during your first administration cost Americans some \$80 billion, and now you have major companies from Walmart, Black & Decker, AutoZone, saying that any tariffs are going to force them to drive up prices for their consumers. How do you make sure that these CEOs, that these companies don't, in fact, pass on the cost of tariffs to their consumers?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

They cost Americans nothing. They made a great economy for us. They also solve another problem. If we were going to have problems having to do with wars and having to do with other things, tariffs — I have stopped wars with tariffs by saying, "You guys want to fight, it's great. But both of you are going to pay tariffs to the United States at 100%." And — they have many purposes, tariffs, if properly used. I don't say you use them like a madman. I say properly used. But it didn't cost this country anything. It made this country money. And we never really got the chance to go all out because we had to fight Covid in the last part, and we did it very successfully. And when I handed it over to Biden, the stock market was higher than what it was just previous to Covid coming in. It was actually higher. Tariffs are a — properly used, are a very powerful tool, not only economically, but also for getting other things outside of economics.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, again, prices did go up on some goods in your first administration, washing machines, tires. Will you punish CEOs?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Oh, let me just explain to you. No. You mentioned washing machines. So you look at Whirlpool in Ohio. I got a call from Jim Jordan, one of the greats, congressman from Ohio. And he said they're going out of business because South Korea and China are dumping washing machines into our country. And I put a 50% tariff on the washing machines coming in from China and South Korea, and Whirlpool and the companies that made washing machines, which are based in Ohio, largely based in Ohio, went through the roof. We saved thousands of jobs, tens of thousands of jobs. They were all going out of business because they were dumping washing machines. And when I put the tariffs on, they became successful businesses. No, not only didn't it cost people, it made our country stronger and more powerful and it kept jobs.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But how do you make sure that consumers don't wind up paying more? Will you punish CEOs who try to pass the cost of tariffs on to their customers?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, the market's going to take care of it. I mean, actually, the market takes care of it. And if it doesn't, we adjust it somewhat. But in the case of Whirlpool or, let's say, companies that made washing machines, they were all being put out of business by the dumping from, in particular, South Korea and China. And when I put the tariffs on, very substantial tariffs — although peanuts compared to what people do to us, what countries do to us — it became a very, very powerful, successful company. Now, let's say I didn't do the tariffs, it would've gone out of business. You would've lost tens of thousands of jobs. And you don't include that in your equation. No, they make a lot of money. I'll go a step further. Tariffs are going to make our country rich. Tariffs are going to help us pay off \$35 trillion in debt. Tariffs are going to make our country safe because China, as an example, doesn't want to play games with us if we're going to do tariffs on them. They don't want to play games. And we have a lot of games being played on us right now.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, I think — and that takes me to my next question. Are you actually going to impose these tariffs or are they a negotiating tactic?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I'll give you an example. With Canada, and in particular Mexico, we have millions of people pouring into our country. You agree with that. I spoke with the — both — I

spoke with Justin Trudeau. In fact, he flew to Mar-a-Lago, within about 15 seconds after the call ended. It was at Mar-a-Lago, we were having dinner, talking about it. I said, "You have to close up your borders," because they're coming in the northern border too, a lot. Not like the southern border, but they're coming in the Canadian border a lot. And drugs are pouring in. Almost as importantly, drugs are pouring in. Maybe more importantly. Drugs are pouring in at levels never seen before, 10 times what we had. They're just pouring in. We can't have open borders. And I said to the president of Mexico and to Justin Trudeau, "If it doesn't stop, I'm going to put tariffs on your country at about 25%. That's a very substantial tariff. And in the case of — in both cases, but in the case where it was really visible, within ten minutes after that phone call, we noticed that the people coming across the border, the southern border having to do with Mexico, there was at a trickle. Just a trickle. In fact, I called the border. See, unlike my opponent, I do call the border a lot. And I said, "How's the border looking today?" They said, "There's nobody here." They couldn't believe it. The military stopped these vast groups of people. You know, we call them caravans. But they had caravans of people, and they largely stopped them. Now, they're going to have to continue that, but if they don't continue — and the other thing I told them is no more drugs. And I told that to China too. I had a deal with President Xi. Had the election been different — I'm going to be very nice because we don't have to get into an argument over 2020 — but had the election been different, the result been different, we would've had China giving their maximum penalty, which is the penalty of death, to people that send fentanyl into this country. But Biden didn't, unfortunately, finish that discussion up. I had an agreement with President Xi, who I got along with very well. We've had communication as recently as this week. And I had communication with him where they were going to give the death penalty to anybody sending drugs into the United States.

KRISTEN WELKER:

This week you had that conversation?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Not that conversation, but I had other conversations. But in the past I've had that conversation.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about another aspect of the economy, sir, the minimum wage. The federal minimum wage has been \$7.25 since 2009. There are 20 states that still have a federal minimum wage at \$7.25, and I actually have a map. Nineteen of these states actually voted for you, sir.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Right. Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And you can see right here, I don't know if you remember this, but during the debate in 2020, I asked you if you would raise the minimum wage. You said you would consider it. And so my question for you is now that you are going back to the White House, for these 19 states that voted for you, are you going to raise the federal minimum wage?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

It's a very low number. I will agree, it's a very low number. Let me give you the down side, though. In California they raised it up to a very high number. And your restaurants are going out of business all over the place. The population is shrinking. It's had a very negative impact. But there is a level at which you could do it, absolutely.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What is that level, do you think?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I don't know. I mean, I really don't know. I can say this, you have a lot of businesses that are open and thriving because of the lower minimum wage. If you raise it too much — and you understand this, California went crazy. They went crazy. And people — the restaurants are closing all over. Many more people are hurt.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So I hear you saying similarly to what you said in 2020. Will you consider it? Is this something you're going to look at?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I would consider it. I'd want to speak to the governors. And the other thing that is very complicated about minimum wage is places are so different. Mississippi and Alabama and great places are very different than New York or California, I mean in terms of the cost of living and other things. So it would be nice to have just a minimum wage for the whole country, but it wouldn't work because you have places where it's very inexpensive to live, where a minimum wage which is at \$8 or \$9 might be, you know, might have very little effect because the cost of living in certain places is really low.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Before we move on to immigration, which I do want to talk about, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, said he will not leave his post even if you ask him to. Will you try to replace Jerome Powell?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, I don't think so. I don't see it. But, I don't — I think if I told him to, he would. But if I asked him to, he probably wouldn't. But if I told him to, he would.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You don't have plans to do that right now?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, I don't.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay. Let's talk about mass deportation —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Okay.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— one of your big agenda items. You've talked about prioritizing people who have criminal history.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Correct.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But is it your plan to deport everyone who is here illegally over the next four years?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I think you have to do it, and it's a hard — it's a very tough thing to do. It's — but you have to have, you know, you have rules, regulations, laws. They came in illegally. You know the people that have been treated very unfairly are the people that have been on line for ten years to come into the country. And we're going to make it very easy for people to come in in terms of they have to pass the test. They have to be able to tell you what the Statue of Liberty is. They have to tell you a little bit about our country. They have to love our country. They can't come out of prisons. We don't want people that are in for murder. So we had 11,000 and 13,000, different estimates. 13,099 murderers released into our country over the last three years. They're walking down the streets. They're walking next to you and your family. And they're very dangerous people —

KRISTEN WELKER:

The 13,000 figure I think goes back about 40 years.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

It goes — nope. No it doesn't

KRISTEN WELKER:

That 13,000 figure.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

It's within the three-year period. It's during the Biden term. No, that was a fiction that they put that out. This was done by the border patrol. It's 13,099 and it's during the Biden period of time. And these are murderers, many of whom murdered more than one person. You don't want those people in this country.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you're saying something, sir, that's significant. So —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Go ahead.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I just want to make sure I'm clear, which is that you're saying, yes, you're going to focus on the people with criminal histories, but everyone who's here illegally has to go, is what you're saying.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'm saying this. We have to get the criminals out of our country. We have to get people that were taken out of mental institutions and put them back into their mental institution no matter what country it is. Do you know that in Venezuela their prisons are, are at the lowest point in terms of emptiness that they've ever been? They're taking their people out of those prisons by the thousands and they're drop — and just to get back, because I know exactly what you're getting at. Number one, we're doing criminals and we're going to do them really rapidly. We're getting the worst gang probably with MS-13 and the Venezuelan gangs are the worst in the world. They're vicious, violent people. And you've seen what they've done in Colorado and other places. They're taking over, they're literally taking over apartment complexes and doing it with impunity. They don't care. They couldn't — they just are — they're in the real estate business, okay?

KRISTEN WELKER:

You know that local police say that is not the case in Colorado.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Oh, it's totally the case. I mean, they have it on tape.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You don't believe the local police?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I play it, I used to play it at my rallies every single night. No, it was breaking into doors. They're taking over the building.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But sir, you raised the point —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And by the way, the police, the police —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— are afraid to do anything.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You, you raised the point that the logistics are complicated. You said it yourself —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Sure they are. But everything's complicated.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— yeah, you need 24 times more ICE detention capacity just to deport 1 million people per year, not to mention more agents, more judges, more planes. Is it realistic to deport everyone who's here illegally?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

You have no choice. First of all, they're costing us a fortune. But we're starting with the criminals and we've got to do it. And then we're starting with others and we're going to see how it goes.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Who are the others?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Others are other people outside of criminals. We have convicted murderers. And we don't mean people that are even on trial. We have people that have murdered numerous people are on our streets and in our farms and we have to get them out of our country.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What about dreamers, sir? Dreamers, who were brought to this country illegally as children. You said once back in 2017 they, quote, "Shouldn't be very worried about being deported." Should they be worried now?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

The dreamers are going to come later, and we have to do something about the dreamers because these are people that have been brought here at a very young age. And many of these are middle-aged people now. They don't even speak the language of their country. And yes, we're going to do something about the dreamers. And —

KRISTEN WELKER:

What does that mean? What are you going to do?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I will work with the Democrats on a plan. And if we can come up with a plan, but the Democrats have made it very, very difficult to do anything. Republicans are very open to the dreamers. The dreamers, we're talking many years ago they were brought into this country. Many years ago. Some of them are no longer young people. And in many cases, they've become successful. They have great jobs. In some cases they have small businesses. Some cases they might have large businesses. And we're going to have to do something with them. And —

KRISTEN WELKER:

You want them to be able to stay, that's what you're saying?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I do. I want to be able to work something out, and it should've been able to be worked out over the last three or four years and it never got worked out. You know, Biden could've done it because he controlled, you know, Congress to a certain extent, right? He could've done something, but they didn't do it. I never understood why because they always seemed to want to do it, but then when it comes down to it, they don't. I think we can work with the Democrats and work something out.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about another group of people, the estimated 4 million families in America who have mixed immigration status. So I'm talking about parents who might be here illegally —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— but the kids are here legally. Your Border Czar Tom Homan —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

You're talking about separation?

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, I mean there are two aspects to this. Your Border Czar Tom Homan said they can be deported together.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Correct.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Is that the plan?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, that way you keep the — well, I don't want to be breaking up families, so the only way you don't break up the family is you keep them together and you have to send them all back.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Even kids who are here legally?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, what you've got to do if they want to stay with their father — look, we have to have rules and regulations. You can always find something out like, you know, "This doesn't work. That doesn't work." I'll tell you what's going to be horrible, when we take a wonderful young woman who's with a criminal. And they show the woman, and she could stay by the law, but they show the woman being taken out. Or they want her out and your cameras are focused on her as she's crying as she's being taken out of our country. And then the public turns against us. But we have to do our job. And you have to have a series of standards and a series of laws. And in the end, look, our country is a mess. We have the highest crime rate and during the debate a man whose ratings have gone way down, David Muir, said to me, "no, crime is .." — because I had to debate three people, not one. Debating one was easy. Debating three was actually pretty easy too, if you want to know the truth. But David, David Muir said, "The crime rates have gone down." I said, "No, they've gone up." And then the following day they released the crime rates and they were way up.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah, and the FBI statistics — you're talking about those FBI statistics which are —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, well, no, but he gave the wrong answer.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— confusing based on what you're looking at?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, but a lot of that is migrant crime.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about another aspect of this —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And Kristen, you know a lot of it's migrant crime.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, let me ask you about another aspect of this that I think a lot of people are really curious about. And 3% of the people who are here illegally have criminal histories. But in your first administration, you had the zero-tolerance policy, where we did see family separations.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You ended it. The purpose of that, though, to some extent, you talked about this at the time, was deterrence —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And by the way, you also had it with Obama. You do know that.

KRISTEN WELKER:

He didn't have a zero-tolerance policy.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And you also know he built the jails for children.

KRISTEN WELKER:

He didn't have a zero-tolerance policy.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

But in 2014 he built the jails. You know that.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I want to ask you about the zero-tolerance policy — I mean, he didn't have a systemic, "We're going to separate families." Families were separated when the parents were a threat to the kids. Let me ask you about this —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We don't have to separate a family. Excuse me, Kristen.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We don't have to separate families.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah. Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We'll send the whole family, very humanely, back to the country where they came. That way the family's not separated.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So no more family separations? You're not reviving the zero-tolerance policy?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, it depends on the family. The family may decide to say, "I'd rather have Dad go, and we'll stay here." And in which case they have that option.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you're not going to revive your zero-tolerance policy, which was put in place as a deterrent? Is there any universe where you would bring that back, sir?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We need deterrence. Look, ready? When somebody comes here illegally, they're going out. It's very simple. When they come here illegally, they're going out. Now if they come here illegally but their family is here legally, then the family has a choice. The person that came in illegally can go out, or they can all go out together.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And that was made very clear by Tom Homan.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So you're not, at this point in time, planning to revive that zero-tolerance policy where kids are separated?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, if you call it that — yeah. I'm doing what I just told you I'm going to do. You know, I don't want to send the family out. I don't want to send anybody out. But I'll tell you, we have to because otherwise we have no country. If we don't have borders and if we don't have voting, good voting, fair voting. Do you know they're still counting votes in San Diego, California? Listen, they're still counting the votes. This is almost four weeks. They're still counting the votes. If we don't have fair elections and honest voting and machines that work quickly, if you had paper ballots every election would be over by 10:00 in the evening.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, let me ask you —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

You understand what I'm saying.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, let me, before we get to —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And you'd get a much more accurate count.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Before we get to all of that, let me ask you about some of your other promises on this topic.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Okay. Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You promised to end birthright citizenship on day one.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Correct.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Is that still your plan?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah. Absolutely.

KRISTEN WELKER:

The 14th Amendment, though, says that, quote, "All persons born in the United States are citizens."

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can you get around the 14th Amendment with an executive action?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, we're going to have to get it changed. We'll maybe have to go back to the people. But we have to end it. We're the only country that has it, you know.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Through an executive action? You're going to —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

You know we're the only country that has it. Do you know if somebody sets a foot, just a foot, one foot, you don't need two, on our land, "Congratulations you are now a citizen of the United States of America." Yes, we're going to end that because it's ridiculous.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Through executive action?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Do you know — well, if we can, through executive action. I was going to do it through executive action but then we had to fix COVID first, to be honest with you. We have to end it. It's ridiculous. Do you know we're the only country in the world that has it? Do you know that? There's not one other country.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, what about the legal challenge, the inevitable legal challenges that will come?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, that's the other thing. Do you know we have thousands of judges? Somebody walks onto our land and we have to now say, "Welcome to the United States." They could be a criminal or not a criminal. We release them into our country. It's called catch and release. We release them into our country. Wait, just one second. And now they get them lawyers. And the lawyers are good lawyers. And everybody has a lawyer. And do you know how many judges we have? Thousands. Thousands. Now, here's what other countries do. They come onto the land and they say, "I'm sorry, you have to go." And they take them out. Okay, with us, once they touch our land, we're into litigation that lasts for years. Costs us hundreds of billions of dollars. We have judges, and I'm sure they're all honest but I don't know that for a fact, you can imagine what's going on with the judges. But just so you — because I have a lot of judges, I tell you what, I know more about judges than any human being in history. Look, we have judges. Every time somebody puts two feet or even one foot on a piece of our land, it's welcome to long-term litigation. Other countries, every other country, when somebody walks on and they see that they're here illegally, they walk them off, they take them back to where they came from. We have to get rid of this system. It's killing our country.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let's talk about health care. I've been talking to Republican lawmakers on Capitol Hill. They say it's no longer feasible to repeal and replace Obamacare because it's so entrenched in the system. Do you see it that way? Is that now off the table, repealing and replacing Obamacare?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

So, when John McCain let us down by voting, and Murkowski and Collins, and whoever it was that voted against, but they really let us down. They did us a great disservice, because we would've had great health — Obamacare is lousy health care. It's very expensive health care for the people. It's also expensive for the country, but for the people. It's lousy health care. When John McCain gave his thumbs down after saying for ten years that he wants to repeal and replace, okay, and then he came out, he put his now famous thumbs down and he became a hero to the left, just let me just tell you, if we find something better, I would love to do it. But unless we find — but, one thing I have to say, I inherited Obamacare, or anything else you want — it's got about 20

names. But I inherited it. And I had a decision to make with health and human services. I had a big decision to make. Do I make it as good as we can make it or do I let it rot? And a lot of political people said, "Let it rot and let it be a failure." I said, "That's not the right thing to do." And I had very good people in the medical area that handled that. And I said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "We really have an obligation to make it as good as we can," and we did. We made it as good as we can make it. Instead of, instead of making it bad, where everybody would be calling for its repeal, I made it so that it works. Now, it works —

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you did try to overturn it, sir.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, it's lousy. No, no.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You did try to overturn it. You did have your Justice Department try to direct the Supreme Court to overturn it.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, we had a little bit of a surprising opinion, to be honest with you. If it would've been overturned, we would've had much better health care right now. But right now we have something that I made the best of. I could've made the worst of it and it would've fallen by the wayside. I did the right thing from a human standpoint. But, you know, I'm sort of proud of my decision. At the same time, sometimes I regret it. I told the people and I gave them the money to do it. I said, "Fix it. Make it work." Because people would've suffered. But it's too bad that they voted no. I wish John McCain, I wish — he fought for ten years on repairing, replacing Obamacare. For ten years. And then he voted against. Nobody understands it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, you said during the campaign you had concepts of a plan. Do you have an actual plan at this point for health care?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yes. We have concepts of a plan that would be better. But —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Still just concepts? Do you have a fully developed plan?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Let me explain. We have the biggest health care companies looking at it. We have doctors who are always looking. Because Obamacare stinks. It's lousy. There are better answers. If we come up with a better answer, I would present that answer to Democrats and to everybody else and I'd do something about it. But until we have that or until they can approve it — but we're not going to go through the big deal. I am the one that saved Obamacare, I will say. And I did the right thing. I could've done the more political thing and killed it. And all I had to do is starve it to death.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You did try to have your Justice Department effectively kill it, though, sir.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, no. Kill it from a legal standpoint. But from a physical standpoint, I made it work.

KRISTEN WELKER:

In — in your concepts of a plan, sir, will people with preexisting conditions still have coverage? And can you guarantee their prices will not go up?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

The answer is yes, they'll have coverage. You have to have it --

KRISTEN WELKER:

And what about their prices --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- because you know what, it's --

KRISTEN WELKER:

What about their prices, sir?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I want the prices to go down. I want to have better healthcare for less money, and there are ways of doing it, I believe. And I have the — I have the smartest people in that world. You know that's a separate world unto itself. I have the smartest people in that world looking at it and trying. And if they come up with something, I will present it. Now,

maybe you won't be able to sell it. But if — if we get better healthcare for less money, I believe it's very salable.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Just very quickly, when will we see your fully developed plan? When are you going to --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I don't know --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- show the public that?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- that you'll see it at all. I can only say that we have some of the best healthcare people. I've always tinkered with it. I think — it's a little hard to explain. Obamacare, when I took it over, was a disaster. And I made it workable.

KRISTEN WELKER:

It has insured 20 million people.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, because of me. Because of me. If you look at what I did, I was the one --

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you tried to --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I made it good — yeah legally —

KRISTEN WELKER:

You tried to repeal and replace. You tried to kill it, sir.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Because if I repealed it and replaced it, we would've had a better system because we wouldn't have had healthcare. And the Democrats would've been forced to do

something. If we wouldn't have had it, the Democrats would've been forced to do something that they wouldn't do if we have it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about another aspect of healthcare. You talked about this on the campaign trail. IVF. You promised free IVF for all who want it, either through the government or through mandates with insurance companies. I've been hearing from Republican senators, some of them, who say they're not going to support that plan. How are you going to get that passed?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, we're going to see. We want them to -- ideally the insurance companies to pay for it, the fertilization. I came out very early for a Republican, especially. And I think they were looking for my guidance, my great wisdom, right? They were looking for it. And I got a call from Kate Britt, who is a terrific person, senator from Alabama. And she said, "Sir, we just had a really negative ruling from a judge in Alabama, conservative judge, that all of these clinics had to be closed." And she said — she went into great detail. And she said, "People are devastated over it." And after literally speaking to her for five minutes, I issued a — an order, really an order, in a sense, and it was a statement from the Republican Party that we are all for IVF and fertilization. Ok. The Alabama legislature met the following day and passed it. It was a beautiful thing to see. And I consider myself to be the father of IVF, in a certain way. And the Republicans were very strong on the issue.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But, sir, I want to understand where it falls in your list of priorities. I mean, is this something we can expect to see you try to move on in --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, we're going to be --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- the first 100 days?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- we're going to be talking about it and we're going to be seeing. We have a lot of other things. I have tax cuts. You know, we'll be submitting in either the first or second package to Congress the extension of the tax cuts. So that might very well be in there. Or, or it'll come sometime after that.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let's talk about abortion, sir. You have taken responsibility for overturning Roe v. Wade. You've said that abortion is now a state issue. There are steps that you could take, though, as president to restrict abortion through executive action without Congress. More than half of abortions in this country are medication abortions. Will you restrict the availability of abortion pills when you're in office?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'll probably — I'll probably stay with exactly what I've been saying for the last two years. And the answer is no.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You commit to that?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I commit. I mean, are -- things do -- things change. I think they change. I hate to go on shows like Joe Biden, "I'm not going to give my son a pardon. I will not under any circumstances give him a pardon." I watched this and I always knew he was going to give him a pardon. And so, I don't like putting myself in a position like that. So things do change. But I don't think it's going to change at all.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Ok. Let's talk about some of your picks to fill out your administration. You named Kash Patel to be the next FBI director.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

He has a list in his book of 60 people that he calls members of the so-called "deep state." It includes Democrats like Joe Biden and Hillary Clinton. It includes former members of your cabinet, from Bill Barr to Christopher Wray. You campaigned on destroying the deep state. Do you want Kash Patel to launch investigations into people on that list?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No. I mean, he's going to do what he thinks is right. And I will --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, do you think that's right?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- and I will --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Do you think that's right, sir?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

If they think that somebody was dishonest or crooked or a corrupt politician, I think he probably has an obligation to do it, but --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Are you going to direct him to do it?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No. Not at all. Not at all. We have two great people that — we have him, and we have Pam. And Pam Bondi has been like a rocket ship. She's very popular and very good and very fair. And Kash Patel is very fair. I'll tell you. I thought Kash may be difficult because he's, you know, a strong conservative voice, and I don't know of anybody that's not singing his praises. The other day, I was watching, and Trey Gowdy, who's a moderate person and very smart and very respected in the party, he's Kash's biggest fan. He said, "This is the most misunderstood man in politics. He's great." I guess they worked together on the Russia hoax or something, and Trey Gowdy became a fan. Trey, you know, Trey Gowdy. Everybody respects him, and, you know, just like him, others also, I don't know of one negative vote — I don't think he's going to have any negative votes.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Is it your expectation, though, that Kash Patel will pursue investigations against your political enemies?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, I don't think so.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Do you want to see that happen?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

If they were crooked, if they did something wrong, if they have broken the law, probably. They went after me. You know, they went after me and I did nothing wrong.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, let me ask you this. You said, President Biden, quote, that you're going to appoint a real special prosecutor to go after Joe Biden. You said that during --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Where did I say that?

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- the campaign

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Where?

KRISTEN WELKER:

You said that on Truth Social, June 12, 2023: "I will appoint a real special prosecutor to go after the most corrupt president in the history of the United States, Joe Biden —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, that part is true.

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- and the entire Biden crime family." Are you going to do that? Are you going to go after Joe Biden?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'm really looking to make our country successful. I'm not looking to go back into the past. I'm looking to make our country successful. Retribution will be through success. If we can make our success — this country successful, that would be my greatest, that would be such a great achievement. Bring it back. We have a country now that's overridden with crime, that has millions of people that shouldn't be here, that should be in prisons in other countries, that should be in mental institutions. We have drug lords

being dropped into our country and told never go back to their country. I'm looking to make our country great. I'm looking to get — bring prices down. Because, you know, I won on two things, the border and more than immigration. You know, they like to say immigration, I break it down more to the border, but I won on the border, and I won on groceries. Very simple word, groceries. Like almost — you know, who uses the word? I started using the word — the groceries. When you buy apples, when you buy bacon, when you buy eggs, they would double and triple the price over a short period of time, and I won an election based on that. We're going to bring those prices way down.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I want to pause here, because what you're saying is significant. Because you wrote on Truth

Social in 2023 that you're going to appoint a real special prosecutor to go after Joe Biden. Now you're saying you're not going to do that.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I will say this, no, I'm not doing that unless I find something that I think is reasonable, but that's not going to be my decision. That's going to be Pam Bondi's decision, and, to a different extent, Kash Patel, assuming they're both there, and I think they're both going to get approved. But I — I — you know, while you ask me that, what they've done to me with weaponization is a disgrace.

KRISTEN WELKER:

We'll get to some of that, sir --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, no, wait, wait, wait, you can't do one without the other. In the history of our country, nothing like this has ever happened. And I've won these cases. I've won every one and the rest are in the process of being won. Deranged Jack Smith is on his way back to The Hague where he can execute people. This is where he should have stayed. I don't — I think he's dangerous even being there. But I'll tell you what, what they've done to me in terms of weaponization, indictments, impeachments and everything else. And in the end, it probably helped, because I got the biggest vote, the most votes any Republican's ever gotten in history.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Do — Pam Bondi talks about investigating the investigators. Do you want her to investigate Jack Smith based --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I want her to do what she wants to do.

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- do you want to see Jack Smith investigated?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I think he's very corrupt, but I want her to do whatever she —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Are you going to direct her --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, I'm not, I'm not

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- to prosecute Jack Smith?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

She's a very smart person. She's — She was a great attorney general in Florida. She's very experienced. I want her to do what she wants to do. I'm not going to instruct her to do it, no.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, are you going to fire the current FBI director, Christopher Wray, who you appointed?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I can't say I'm thrilled with him. He invaded my home. I'm suing the country over it. He invaded Mar-a-Lago. I'm very unhappy with the things he — he's done, and crime is at an all time high. Migrants are pouring into the country that are from prisons and from mental institutions, as we've discussed. I can't say I'm thrilled. I don't want to say -- I don't want to, again, I don't want to be Joe Biden and give you an answer and then do the exact opposite —

KRISTEN WELKER:

We're going to talk about that --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- so I'm not going to do that. What I'm going to say is I certainly cannot be happy with him. You take a look at what's happened. And then when I was shot in the ear, he said, "Oh, maybe it was shrapnel." Where's the shrapnel coming from? Is it coming from — is it coming from heaven? I don't think so. So we need somebody to straighten — you know, I have a lot of respect for the FBI, but the FBI's respect has gone way down over the last number of years.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Don't you have to fire him in order to make room for Kash Patel --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, but --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- if he is, in fact, confirmed?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I mean, it would sort of seem pretty obvious that if Kash gets in, he's going to be taking somebody's place, right? Somebody is the man that you're talking about.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay. Let's talk about Project 2025. This is the conservative policy blueprint. You disavowed it during the campaign. You called it a product of the radical right. You've said some of their ideas --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, not all. No --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- were abysmal --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- I said some of it is.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Some of it is very good.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Some of it's very mainstream actually. Frankly, the Democrats should've used some of it because they went, you know, with all the transgender that they were doing, or with the men playing in women's sports, if they wouldn't have done that, maybe they would've done better.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, so you take me to my question. You're now giving people involved in Project 2025 prominent roles in your administration. Are you changing your mind about Project 2025 -

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Is this now the policy--

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- blueprint --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- for the second Trump administration?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No. Some people -- you take a look at the group, it was hundreds of people who were involved. And I was actually — I reprimanded the whole group. I said, “You shouldn’t have placed this document in front of the voters because I have nothing to do with it, and I’m the one that’s running. You had no right to do this where you put a 1,000-page document in front — and many of those things I disagree with.” Now, many of those things, I happen to agree with. Many of those things, Democrats should’ve agreed to. And I think they would’ve done much better in the election ‘cause they got slaughtered.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, I guess people — people see the list, Russ Vought, Brendan Carr, Peter Navarro, John Ratcliffe, Pete Hoekstra, Monica Crowley, and they think, “These — These are all of the people --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Sure, sure

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- who were involved in or writing Project 2025 --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

But, but they have --

KRISTEN WELKER:

“This must be a blueprint for work requirements. Eliminating the Head Start Program, criminalizing pornography.” Is that what we can expect to see?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I don’t know how they voted. I don’t know -- I didn’t — I never spoke to them actually about it. And I purposefully, and I told you, normally it would be just the opposite. I’d review every page. I purposely didn’t even want to see it because when somebody like you asks me a question about Project 2025, I can honestly say I’ve never seen it, I have nothing to do with it, I didn’t read it. But I did hear some things in there that I would totally disagree with. And I said to the people that were really the people behind it, you know who those people are, I said, “You really had no right doing this to me because they used it as a sound bite,” the Democrats. And I don’t know, it couldn’t have been too effective because they got slaughtered, but they did use it as a sound bite.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But to people who see, "Oh, he's bringing in all of these people from Project 2025, he must know what it is --"

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, you know --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- you say what?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- I don't know what it is, no. I don't know what it is.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You still don't know what it is --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

But I heard certain things --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- all these people are coming in --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- that I didn't like.

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- to your --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And by the way, I heard certain things that are phenomenal, okay?

KRISTEN WELKER:

Like what?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Like law and order. We want law and order.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Okay little things, like let's put prisoners in jail. Let's not let people come out and raid every drug store in Manhattan so that we have to put glass up and every store is going out of business.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about something you've referenced a couple of times in this interview. I asked you last time we sat down for an interview if you were going to pardon yourself. You said no. But now that President Biden has pardoned his son Hunter, are you reconsidering? Might you pardon yourself?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I didn't do anything wrong. I — I was given the option, and the lawyers told me -- a very specific lawyer. I don't have to go into who, but very high up in the — in the administration, said, "Sir, if you pardon yourself, you're going to look guilty, and you did nothing wrong." Oh, I had that option. I could've saved myself a lot of legal fees. But it turned out that I was right. Look at what's gone on. Everything's being dropped. I still have a — Fani Willis, Fani, a total hoax. That's a total hoax. Every — it's all being dropped. It's all been discredited. It's been dropped. There are those people that say, and this would be the first time in history, that all of those fake indictments, they were — they were going after a political opponent. There are those that say that I actually did better in the election because of it. Now, that would be a first. I think you would agree because normally, that's like, you go back to the microphones, you say, "I'm leaving right now. I will leave office. I'm going back to my family and I will fight for my name." Well, I had to fight for my name in public because I didn't leave office. But no, I didn't want a pardon. And I didn't want to pardon myself. I had the option to pardon myself.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And you don't want one now? You're not going to pardon yourself now?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

What do I need one for? First of all, I've won almost all of the cases.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What if President Biden —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And the ones that I didn't win are on resuscitation.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What if President Biden offered you a pardon, would you accept it?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I've never even thought about it. I don't think he'll do it. Look, if he did, he's the one that started this whole thing. He got the Justice Department to go after me. And the state cases are all being run by the Justice Department, which is illegal. They had their people from the Justice Department work for Alvin Bragg in order to get something going. They worked for Letitia James in the state. He had his people go from the federal government and take lesser jobs in the state in order to get Donald Trump —

KRISTEN WELKER:

And you know he denies he had anything to do with it.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, no —

KRISTEN WELKER:

And there's no —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

He can't deny it. You know why? Because they were there. Wait a minute. Wait. You know, you have a tendency to sort of, like, slough over things. You just made a statement. His person, the top, maybe the third, or second or third person left the federal government, the DOJ and went to work for Letitia James. And then after they got that one started, went to work for the DA.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about some of this new reporting. NBC News is reporting that President Biden is considering giving preemptive pardons to the likes of Liz Cheney, Adam Schiff, and Anthony Fauci. If President Biden doesn't issue those pardons, do you think they are going to wish that he had? Are they going to be —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I don't know.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— pursued?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I can tell you this about Cheney. And she's a so-called Republican. I think she hurt the Democrats terribly. When I saw that Kamala put Cheney out on the campaign trail, I said, "That's the end of Kamala." I really did. I thought it was a terrible move, especially if you're a Democrat. But Cheney did something that's inexcusable, along with Thompson and the people on the un-select committee of political thugs and, you know, creeps. So the unselect committee went through a year and a half of testimony. Wait. They deleted and destroyed all evidence of -- that they found. You know why? Because Nancy Pelosi was guilty. Nancy Pelosi turned down 10,000 troops. You wouldn't have had a J6 because other people were guilty. The people that said that I attacked two Secret Service agents in a car, I grabbed one around the neck. I was then rebuffed and I grabbed the other one. These are two of the toughest men anywhere on the planet. And they happen to slightly younger than me. You know, just a little bit. Let me just tell you. They testified. They said it was total bullshit. And all of this stuff came out. People lied so badly. Now, listen, this was a committee, a big deal. They lied. And what did they do? They deleted and destroyed a whole year and a half worth of testimony. Do you know that I can't get -- I think those people committed a major crime.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And Cheney was behind it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And so was Bennie Thompson and everybody on that committee.

KRISTEN WELKER:

We're going to —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

For what they did —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— honestly, they should go to jail.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So you think Liz Cheney should go to jail?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

For what they did —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Everyone on the committee you think —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I think everybody —

KRISTEN WELKER:

— should go to jail?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— on the -- anybody that voted in favor —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Are you going to direct your FBI director —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— and your attorney general to send them to jail?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, not at all. I think that they'll have to look at that, but I'm not going to -- I'm going to focus on drill, baby, drill.

KRISTEN WELKER:

When you say that, it carries weight though. You know, you've tapped these people to lead the Justice Department and FBI —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

They can do whatever they want.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Biden can give them a pardon if he wants to. And maybe he should. Just remember, unselect committee. A year and a half of sworn testimony, and after getting all of the testimony, they deleted it, wait, and they destroyed almost everything. There's nothing left. It's unprecedented.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And they deny doing that —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

If you do that in a civil case —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— you go to jail.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You know they deny doing that. And officials say that the order never came in for the National Guard —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

They put out a statement —

KRISTEN WELKER:

But — On January 6th. Let me ask you this about January 6th —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Wait. Bennie Thompson —

KRISTEN WELKER:

I think you're going to want to answer this.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— wrote in his statement that he has destroyed all evidence.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you this about January 6th —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

It's amazing. I wish you could be a -- you know, you have such potential. If you could be just—just non-biased. You hurt yourself so badly. I'm telling you, they deleted and destroyed all the evidence. Everyone knows it. And you slough it off like it doesn't mean anything.

KRISTEN WELKER:

No. I'm just saying they deny it. That's all I'm saying.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Kristen, if I did it, you would be standing up on that chair shouting at me. And you know what I'd do? I'd say, "You got me."

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

They have done something so illegal. They have a committee sworn to, and because it was so bad -- the only reason they did it is because the testimony turned out to be in favor of me, like Secret Service testified and disputed everything. It made them into a bunch of liars. Not Secret Service, it made the people. They got rid of it because it made Nancy Pelosi, the mayor of D.C., so many people look like criminals. And I will tell you, it's illegal for them to delete and to destroy that evidence.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about January 6th in a different capacity, okay? I think you're going to want to answer this question. You promised to pardon those who attacked the Capitol on January 6th. Are you still vowing to follow through with that promise?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We're looking at it right now. Most likely, yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, you know —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Those people have suffered long and hard. And there may be some exceptions to it. I have to look. But, you know, if somebody was radical, crazy. There might be some people from Antifa there. I don't know. You know, because those people seem to be in good shape. What ever happened to scaffold man? You know who scaffold man was? He stood on a scaffold telling everybody to go, and nothing happened to him. What ever happened to Ray Epps? Now, I don't know anything about Ray Epps, but it was sort of strange the way he was talking. Where is he? What happened to him? Because the people that did very little-- they arrested an old woman because she-- I don't think she did anything. They don't even know what she did. These people have suffered. Their lives have been destroyed. And yet in Portland, where they burned down half the city, they burn it down all the time, it's like a, you know, routine occurrence, they don't do anything. They attacked the courthouse, federal courthouse. You know, they always say federal building. Okay. They destroyed the beautiful limestone exterior of the courthouse in Portland. They killed people in Portland. Seattle, people got killed in Seattle. Seattle, they took over a big chunk of the city. They took it over. They took the city away. Minneapolis, it looked like when they said, "This is a friendly protest," and yet over the poor slob from CNN, his shoulder, the entire city was burning down. It looked like World War II. Nothing happened.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Wait. Nothing happened. They took over the police statement — they took over the police station in Minneapolis. They burned it down. Nothing happened to anybody.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I just want to —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And yet, these people —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— have been in jail. And I hear the jail is a hell hole. They've done reports. And you would say that's true. They've done reports. This is the most disgusting, filthy place. These people are living in hell.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me just —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And I think it's very unfair.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But let me —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

So yeah, most likely, I'll do it very quickly.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Very quickly. Okay. But some of them, 169 of them, have pleaded guilty to assaulting police officers.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Because they had no choice.

KRISTEN WELKER:

900 pleaded guilty to other crimes. They're also going to be eligible for a pardon from you?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Listen, it's a very tough system. Do you know, almost nobody-- I saw people that didn't even go into the building and they were convicted. And you had the police saying, "Come on in. Come on in." I mean, you know, the police are saying, "Come on in, everybody. Come on in." They had people -- you know, you have a lot of cameras. They don't want to release the tapes. They don't want to release the tapes.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you're going to consider pardoning even those who pleaded guilty to crimes, including assaulting police officers?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, sometimes they say, "Here's your choice."

KRISTEN WELKER:

You're not ruling it out?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Look. I know the system. The system's a very corrupt system. They say to a guy, "You're going to go to jail for two years or for 30 years." And these guys are looking, their whole lives have been destroyed. For two years, they've been destroyed. But the system is a very nasty system.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay. Let's move on —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, I'm going to look at everything. We're going to look at individual cases —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Everyone?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

But I'm going to be acting very quickly.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Within your first 100 days, first day?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

First day.

KRISTEN WELKER:

First day?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah. I'm looking first day.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You're going to issue these pardons?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

These people have been there, how long is it? Three, four years.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

You know, by the way, they've been in there for years, and they're in a filthy, disgusting place that shouldn't even be allowed to be open.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let's talk about your Cabinet picks. I know we started off talking about Pete Hegseth, but I just want to return to that very quickly. Have you gotten assurances from Senators that he's going to be confirmed?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Do you think —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— he can make it?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No. I think he will, yeah. I've had a lot of Senators call me up saying he's fantastic.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You don't drink yourself.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You've talked about how devastating drinking can be.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

How concerned are you that the person who you picked for this top job at the Defense Department, at least according to those who've worked with him, has struggled with drinking?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

But I've spoken to people that know him very well and they say he does not have a drinking problem. And, you know, he has a lot of knives out for him. A lot of people don't want to see the military made better.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about former Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard. You picked her to be the director of National Intelligence. In 2017, she had two secret meetings with Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. Do you have questions or concerns about those meetings?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No. And he's got bigger problems right now —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, do you think it makes it —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— because his country —

KRISTEN WELKER:

— hard for her?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— his county is collapsing.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah. I mean, do you think it compromises her —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

You know, look —

KRISTEN WELKER:

— ability to handle that —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— I met with Putin. I met with President Xi of China. I met with Kim Jong-un twice. Does that mean —

KRISTEN WELKER:

When you were president.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— that I can't be president?

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, when you were president. They weren't secret meetings.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, but look, people meet. All these people meet. I mean, I see some of the most dishonest people. I'll tell you, the 51 agents that said that the laptop wasn't from Hunter, it was from Russia, what about them? Tell me about them. Do you think they did something wrong? Do you think they were all so stupid that they thought that the laptop from hell —

KRISTEN WELKER:

So you have confidence in Tulsi Gabbard?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I do. I mean, she's a very respected person.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you about RFK Jr. He has obviously talked about his skepticism of vaccines. He's expressed opposition to childhood vaccines. Do you want to see childhood vaccines eliminated?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

If they're dangerous for the children. Look —

KRISTEN WELKER:

So possibly?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

– when you look at some of the problems, when you look at what’s going on with disease and sickness in our country, something’s wrong.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Are you talking about autism?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, if you take a look at autism. Go back 25 years. Autism was almost non-existent. It was, you know, one out of 100,000. And now it’s close to one out of 100.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I mean, what’s happening? If they can find it. Now, I did something the other night that was a little unusual. At Mar-a-Lago, I called the drug companies, the top drug companies, and I called RFK Jr., and Dr. Oz, and some of his people, and I said, “Let’s all get together and let’s figure out where we’re going because we’re going to do a lot of things.” Number one, we’re going to reduce prices because the middleman makes more money than the drug companies, in all fairness to the drug companies. There’s a middleman that nobody even knows who they are. And you look at our drug prices, they’re much higher than the prices for the same medicine, for the same stuff. So we met. And we were — we met for a long time. And we talked about pricing. And we talked about vaccines, you know, in terms of what happens. We talked about pesticides. We talked about everything. And I think a lot of good things are going to come from him. And he’s, he’s not going to upset any system. He’s not going to upset the system. He’s not looking to reinvent the wheel totally. But when you look at the numbers, we really don’t have a very healthy country.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, going back 25 years, studies show that there is no link between vaccines and autism. And yet, it sounds like you are open to the possibility of him looking at —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I’m open to anything —

KRISTEN WELKER:

– getting rid of them?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I think somebody has to find out. If you go back 25 years ago, you had very little autism. Now you have it, I mean —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, they say because they're better at identifying it.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

One in 100,000 and now it's one in 100. That's a pretty bad number.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Childhood vaccines have prevent —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I mean, something is going on. I don't know if it's vaccines. Maybe it's chlorine in the water, right? You know, people are looking at a lot of different things.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You know, childhood vaccines have —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I want them to look at everything.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Everything. So childhood vaccines have prevented about 4 million deaths around the world every year, sir, isn't that —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I think that's great. I'm all for it. I think it's great. Hey, look, I'm not against vaccines. The polio vaccine is the greatest thing. If somebody told me to get rid of the polio vaccine, they're going to have to work real hard to convince me. I think vaccines are — certain vaccines — are incredible. But maybe some aren't. And if they aren't, we have to find out. But when you talk about autism, because it was brought up, and you look at the amount we have today versus 20 or 25 years ago, it's pretty scary.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, again, scientists say that's because they've gotten better at identifying it --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I think we're going to --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- and there's no link --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

But the drug --

KRISTEN WELKER:

--in studies, sir.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

The drug companies are going to be working with RFK Jr. and, you know, he's been an interesting guy to me. I've watched him for 25 years. And he's been an interesting guy.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let's talk about Elon Musk, another interesting person.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

He's very interesting.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Last month, one of your allies said, quote, "He's behaving as if he's a co-president." Will you favor Elon Musk over other leaders of --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- competitor companies, like Jeff Bezos, Mary Barra?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, Jeff Bezos called me. We're having dinner. As you know, Mark Zuckerberg came in. We had a really nice dinner. He asked to have dinner. I had dinner with him. I'm having dinner with everybody. People like me now, you know? It's something going on that people -- I said, "Would you have come to dinner with me if I lost?" I think the answer is no. You know, I said, kidding, of course, because I don't want to sound foolish. But I say jokingly, "Would you have been here at dinner if I lost?" And the answer was, "Probably not." Look, I'm getting called by everybody. It's very interesting. It's different than the first -- you know, when I won the first time, I wasn't nearly as popular as this. And one thing that's very important, in terms of the election, I love that I won the popular vote, and by a lot.

KRISTEN WELKER:

1.6 percent.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Because they would go with the other one. They say, "Well, he didn't win the popular vote. He won a lot of --" you know, I won a lot of the Electoral College. But they would always preface it by saying -- now they say, "He won the popular vote and he won the Electoral College, and he won all seven swing states." That was a great election.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Very quickly, because we're going to talk about the election coming up, but you've tapped Elon Musk, Vivek Ramaswamy to head up this Department of Government Efficiency --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Correct.

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- which proposes cuts to the federal government. Think a lot of people hear that and they get concerned about Medicare and Social Security and Medicaid --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

You're not going to have anything to do --

KRISTEN WELKER:

And defense spending.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We're talking about --

KRISTEN WELKER:

You won't touch Medicare --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- theft --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- Social Security?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

-- abuse, fraud. No. I said to people we're not touching Social Security, other than we make it more efficient. But the people are going to get what they're getting.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay. Entitlements off the table?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And we're not raising ages or any of that stuff.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Ok. Off the table?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I won't do it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay. Let's turn to foreign policy. Should Ukraine prepare for less aid from the United States after you're sworn in --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Possibly.

KRISTEN WELKER:

– to office?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah. Probably. Sure.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You've said you can end the war in 24 --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We're in for \$350 billion. And Europe is in for \$100 billion. Why isn't Europe in for the same as us? The one thing that should happen is that Europe should come in for -- they should equalize. And, you know, Biden, all he had to do, like I did with NATO, I said, "You've got to pay your bills." They weren't paying their bills. And as you know, the secretary general said President Trump got \$600 billion -- no, 640 to be exact. And I used to use the \$400 billion number. He corrected me. He said, "No, you actually got \$641 billion put in" because I said, "You have to pay your bills." We were paying for NATO. And you know why I got the money? Because I asked for it. It wasn't that complicated. Europe is in for a fraction. And war with Russia is more important for Europe than it is for us. It's important for everybody, but it's more important for Europe than it is for us. We have a little thing called an ocean in between us.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You said you can end the war in 24 hours. You've even said you want to try to end it before you're sworn into office --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I'm trying to. I'm trying to end it if I can --

KRISTEN WELKER:

You're actively trying to?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I am.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Have you talked to President Putin?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, I have not.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You haven't talked to President Putin --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, I have not.

KRISTEN WELKER:

– since you've been elected?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I mean, no. Well, I don't want to say that. But I haven't spoken to him recently.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So you've spoken to President Putin since you've been elected?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I don't want to say that. I don't want to say anything about that because I don't want to do anything that could impede the negotiation.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I want to stop--

KRISTEN WELKER:

– have talked about --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Let me tell you what --

KRISTEN WELKER:

– the other world leaders.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

– I have talked about. Let me tell. There are people being killed in that war at levels that nobody's ever seen before. You have to go back to the Second World War, and even that, if you take a look -- and you know what it is? It's the soldiers largely. The cities have been emptied out and demolished. The country has been demolished. If I won that election, which you know how I feel about it. I won't get into it because we don't need to start that argument. I think it's an easy argument. It was really proven even more conclusively by the win that I had on this one. But--

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you did go to --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

– had I --

KRISTEN WELKER:

– court, sir. And you didn't —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, well, that's your opinion. But I disagree with it. Had I assumed, kept control. Number one, Israel wouldn't have happened. Number two, Ukraine would've never happened. It would've never happened, Ukraine, Russia. But the number of people that are being killed, soldiers, young, beautiful soldiers, hundreds of thousands of people are being killed. And, you know, it's very interesting. It's level. Totally level, the battlefields. Totally level. You know what's happening? The only thing that stops a bullet, you know what it is? Is a body, a human body. And the people that are being killed, hundreds of thousands on both sides. Russia's lost probably 500,000 —

KRISTEN WELKER:

It's devastating.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Ukraine's lost higher than they say, probably 400,000. You're talking about hundreds of thousands of bodies laying all over the fields. It's the stupidest thing I've ever seen, and it should've never been allowed to happen. Biden should've been able to stop it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, will the United States stay in NATO while you're in office?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

In where?

KRISTEN WELKER:

NATO. Do you commit that the United States will remain a member of NATO while you're in office?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Again, they have to pay their bills. If they pay their bills, absolutely.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But not if they don't pay their bills?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

But NATO's taking advantage of us. Because we were — look, two things. Number one, they take advantage of us on trade, meaning the European nations, okay, like terrible. They don't take our cars, they don't take our food product, they don't take anything. It's a disgrace. And on top of that, we defend them. So it's a double-whammy. So let me just tell you, I was able to get hundreds of billions of dollars put into NATO just by a tough attitude. I said to the countries, "I'm not going to protect you unless you pay," and they started paying. And that amounted to more than \$600 billion. That's a big thing. Otherwise they wouldn't even be fighting. They wouldn't have any money to fight. If they're paying their bills, and if I think they're doing a fair — they're treating us fairly, the answer is absolutely I'd stay with NATO.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But if not, you would consider the possibility of getting out?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let's turn to the Middle East now, sir. There are still American hostages being held in Gaza. You said this week that if the hostages aren't released before Inauguration Day, quote, "There will be all hell to pay."

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Correct.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What exactly did you mean, and do you still think that the hostages are alive?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'm not a big believer in the fact that there are too many of them living, sadly. Because I've seen the way they've been treated. I talk about the young girl that was pulled by her hair violently and thrown into the back of a car like she was a sack of potatoes. And I said, "You know, that's hatred." And then I said, "How did that young girl do?" Beautiful young girl, just dragged by her hair. You remember. Blood pouring all over her body. You can imagine the parents. Thrown into the back of a car by some horrible guy. And I said, "How is she?" "She's dead. She died, sir." I don't think you have as many. I mean, I hate to say it, I think you have far fewer hostages than people think.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Really? Have you spoke --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

That's what I think. It's only my opinion, but I've been right on just about everything.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Are you going to pressure Prime Minister Netanyahu, with whom you have a very good relationship, to end the war in Gaza?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah. Sure.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And have you already started that process?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I want him to end it, but you have to have a victory. People forget about October 7th. That was as violent -- and you know what's happening? I noticed that a lot of people are saying, "Oh, it never really happened." That's like the Holocaust. You know, you have Holocaust deniers. Now you have October 7th deniers, and it just happened. No, October 7th happened. And I've seen the pictures. It is — what happened is horrible.

KRISTEN WELKER:

If China invades Taiwan on your watch, are you committed to defending Taiwan?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I never say.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Still won't say?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I never say, because I have to negotiate things, right?

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can you just say if you'll defend it --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'd prefer that they don't --

KRISTEN WELKER:

I'm not saying if the U.S. military --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'd prefer that they don't do it. I have a very good relationship with President Xi. We have been communicating with each other.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Since you were elected?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yes.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And you sent that message?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Since, like, three days ago. Yes, we communicate.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And you sent that message to him, “Don’t invade Taiwan --“

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

We didn’t talk about that. We talked about other things. But I have a very good relationship, and I hope he doesn’t do it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

This week a federal court upheld a law that could result in TikTok being banned. You said you’re going to rescue TikTok when you get into office. Are you going to take steps to protect it?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, the problem with that is. Yeah, as you know --

KRISTEN WELKER:

You are?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

– I used TikTok very successfully in my campaign. I have a man named TikTok Jack, he was very effective, obviously, because I won youth by 30 percent. All Republicans lose youth. I don’t know why. Maybe it’s changing. And last time we were down 30% with youth. This time we were up 35% with youth. And I used TikTok, so I can’t really, you know, I can’t totally hate it. It was very effective. But I will say this, if you do do that, something else is going to come along and take its place. And maybe that’s not fair. And really, what the judge actually said was that you can’t have Chinese companies. In other words, they have the right to ban it if you can prove that Chinese companies own it. That’s what the judge actually said.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So are you going to try to protect TikTok, just very quick — once you’re in office?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I’m going to try and make it so that other companies don’t become an even bigger monopoly.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Okay.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Because that's what happens.

KRISTEN WELKER:

We're winding down, and I know you have a plane to catch.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I do.

KRISTEN WELKER:

This is your first interview since you won the election.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Congratulations.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yes, congratulations to you.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I hope you do well.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yes. And sir, I don't have to tell you this, because you've talked about it. It comes at a time when the country is deeply divided, and now you're going to be leading this country for the next four years. For the sake of unifying this country, will you concede the 2020 election and turn the page on that chapter?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No. No, why would I do that? But let me just tell you --

KRISTEN WELKER:

You won't ever concede --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

– when you say the country is deeply divided, I’m not the president. Joe Biden is the president.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But you’re going to be the president.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, no. I’m not the president. So when you say it’s deeply divided, I agree. But Biden’s the president, I’m not. And he has been a divider. And you know where he divided it more than anything else, and it probably backfired on him. I think definitely is weaponization. When he weaponized the Justice Department and he went after his political opponent, me. He went after his political opponent violently because he knew he couldn’t beat him. And I think it really was a bad thing, and it really divided our country.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, Democrats have control of the White House now. They didn’t in 2020. If they are going around stealing elections, why didn’t they do it this time --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

When you say Democrats have control now --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Of the White House. So why didn’t they steal this election? Since they have more power now?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Because I think it was too big to rig.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So you won’t --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

It was too big to rig.

KRISTEN WELKER:

To the people who say that you're now directing your Justice Department to investigate 2020 and they want to move on --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No, I think Pam is going to be great --

KRISTEN WELKER:

Is that a good use of precious resources? Is that what you want them to do --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

By the way, just so you know, I have the right to do that but I'm not interested in that.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Oh, you're not? You're not going to do that?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'm not interested. I have the absolute right. I'm the chief law enforcement officer, you do know that. I'm the president. But I'm not interested in that. You know what I'm interested in? Drilling, and getting prices down, and stopping people from pouring into our border that come from prisons and mental institutions.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Last two questions here. One of the things that made this campaign unprecedented and extraordinary were the horrific attempts against your life. Two assassination attempts. Do you feel safe going into the White House --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I do --

KRISTEN WELKER:

-- for the next four years? Why?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I have confidence in Secret Service. I know the people. I got to know a lot of them, and I have confidence. It was a bad moment. Something shouldn't have happened. But I have a lot of confidence, and they really stepped it up. They were restricted from giving the -- look, I do a rally, and you were at many of them. And I'd have 50,000 people. Joe would

have a rally and he'd have 30 people. And he had more Secret Service than me. My Secret Service was always asking for more manpower slash woman power. They were asking for more and more, and more, and they couldn't get it. I'm not blaming them really, because they were always fighting for more people. And they wouldn't get — now, boy, do we have it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I know it was hard on your entire family. What can people expect from the First Lady in this second administration? What role will she play? She obviously had her Be Best campaign.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

She's very liked, loved, and she's very respected, and she's a very solid person. And she devotes a lot of time to helping children. You know what she does. And she's got her Be Best deal that is incredible what she has done. The one thing I say, whether it's the first lady or my children, my children did such a good job and they were treated very badly by the press and others. Ivanka was unbelievable, what she did. All she wanted to do was one thing, get people jobs. She could've been the UN secretary. I said to her she would've been unbelievable. She's got the whole package for that, including right up there. She's as smart as they — she didn't want it. She said, "Daddy, I want to work on getting people jobs." You know, she'd go to Walmart, she'd go to Exxon. She produced millions of jobs for people. Not glamorous. Most people didn't know she did it. And she was always being excoriated. And I said to my kids, "Don't come in. Don't come in. It's just --

KRISTEN WELKER:

You said to them, "don't come in?"

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I said to them, yeah. I said --

KRISTEN WELKER:

But will you miss having them there? Will it feel different --

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'll miss them.

KRISTEN WELKER:

They were your top advisors.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'll tell you what, I'll miss them, and they are really competent. But I say, "Just go have fun, do your business, do whatever you want to do. But don't come in." Because no matter what they did, they did such a great job. Although I have to say, Lara did a phenomenal job as the head of the Republican National Committee, along with Michael.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What will the First Lady's role be, do you think? Will she continue her Be Best campaign?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

She's a very elegant First Lady, she was a very successful woman before that in the modeling and other things, but in the modeling very successful. The press I can't say treated her unfairly. You know why? Because she's very popular. You would think if the press was unfair, like to me the press was obviously unfair to me, the press -- no president has ever gotten treated by the press like I was. And yet I got more votes than any Republican candidate in history by far. It's not even close. So you say what's that all about? The press has to straighten itself out, because honestly it's lost all credibility. When that can happen — based on the press I should've gotten no votes, none. And yet I got the highest number ever. And the reason is, because I'm able to go on a show even like yours, even though you're very hostile, I'm able to go on a show like yours -- no, you are.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, hopefully you thought it was a fair interview. We covered a lot of policy ground here.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

It's fair only in that you allowed me to say what I say. But you know the answers, the questions are, you know, pretty nasty. But look, because I've seen you interview other people like Biden.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I've never interviewed President Biden, actually.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

When I say you, I'm talking metaphorically. I've seen George Stephanopoulos interview Biden, and he's a tough interviewer. It's the softest interview. I've seen CNN interview him. They give these soft, you know, "What's your favorite ice cream?" It's a whole different deal. I don't understand why. You know, you would think the press would like to

see strong borders, great education, a powerful military so we have a country left, and all these different things. And somehow they don't want to see that.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask — hopefully you think this interview was fair. We spent a lot of time talking about your policy and your second administration. I want to ask you, sir, one final question. What do you want to say to Americans who didn't support you in this campaign?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'm going to treat you every bit as well as I have treated the greatest MAGA supporters. There's never been anything like MAGA in the history of this country. These people are so dedicated to making America great again. It's very simple. And I'm going to treat them just the same as I treat MAGA. We're going to treat everybody good. We want success for our country, we want safety for our country. You know our country's under threat, as you know. We have tremendous threat militarily because of the power of weapons and weaponry. There's tremendous threat, nobody talks about it. But it's tremendous threat. I want to treat everybody the same. I want to treat them well. And at the end of this four years — and I have a big head start, because I was there for four years fairly recently. A lot of bad things were done during the four years that I wasn't there. And mostly — and what they've done in terms of our reputation overseas -- our reputation is so bad, so shot. I got to bring it back, and I also have to, have to bring back civilization to our country. Our country is a crime pod and we have to get rid of crime. We have so many things to do. We have to do the prices, we have to do all of that. But we have to get the criminals out of our country. We have to bring down crime. People have to be able to walk across the street and buy a loaf of bread without being shot. And that's going to happen. But what I say to them is I love you, and we're going to all work together. And we're going to bring it together. And you know what's going to bring it together? Success. I saw that just prior to COVID coming in, I had polls that were the highest anyone -- McLaughlin and Fabrizio said, "George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, if they came back from the dead and they ran as president and vice president, couldn't beat you, sir." We were doing so well. And I was getting along with the left. Let's call it the left. We'll be nice, okay? We're just going to call it — but I was getting along with people that you would consider liberal or progressive, as they like to say, at levels that I never thought was possible. And you know what it was? Success. Success was bringing the country together, and that's what I want to do.

KRISTEN WELKER:

We'll leave it there unless you'd like to say anything more.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I thank you very much.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Thank you very much for the honor of the first interview.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Very much, great honor. Thank you.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Thank you. Thank you so much.

WALK AND TALK INTERVIEW

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, there is incredible unrest in Syria.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Do you think that Bashar al-Assad could fall?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, you know, it's amazing because he stayed for years under you would think much more adverse conditions, and all of the sudden, just rebels are going and they're taking over large pieces of territory. It's — it's — I don't think it's looking very good for him. Who would have thought that was going to happen? Because for 10 years, I mean, the guy was fighting all odds, and all of the sudden, it's like people are just taking over his country. So I don't know, people have bet against him for a long time, and so far that hasn't worked. But this seems to be different.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Let me ask you, sir, as you think about your inauguration. I remember your first inaugural address, you talked about American carnage. Have you thought about your message for your second inaugural address?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I have. It's —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can you give us a preview?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— unity. We're going to have a message. It will make you happy: unity. It's going to be a message of unity. And again, I think success brings unity, and I've experienced that. I've experienced it in my first term. As I said, we're going to be talking about unity, and we're going to be talking about success, making our country safe, keeping people that shouldn't be in our country — we have to do that. I know it doesn't sound nice, but we have to do that. But basically it's going to be about bringing our country together,

KRISTEN WELKER:

And no American carnage?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No American carnage, no — what is — what do you mean by American —

KRISTEN WELKER:

That — that was one of the big quotes of your first inaugural address. It sounds like the tone —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

No.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— based on what I'm hearing is going to be different from this inaugural address.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, we had a very successful four years, actually, and the first admin — we had a very, very successful — if you look at what we've done with the biggest tax cuts in history. We had safety and military that was incredible. We defeated ISIS, which nobody thought could be done in a short period. I did it in a matter of weeks, and people thought it was going to take five years to do. No, we did a lot of things. Rebuilding of our military was a big thing. Think of all the things that wouldn't have happened. Russia wouldn't have attacked Ukraine if I were president. Israel wouldn't have had October 7th. We wouldn't have had inflation because inflation was caused largely by energy prices.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Yeah.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

So many other things wouldn't have happened. You look at Afghanistan, that disaster. So we're going to bring our country back, and we're going to bring it — we're going to try and unify our country.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, when you think about your time in office, you are making history for a range of reasons, including the fact you will be the oldest person to be sworn into office. Do you commit to releasing your medical records?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Sure, I do it all the time. I think I've released four of them.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Not just a letter though. Your — your full medical report.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, I would, and I think anybody should. But I — I mean, according to all the reports, I don't want to — where's wood? Is this a wood where I can knock on wood? But my reports are very good, very strong.

KRISTEN WELKER:

So you plan to release them?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Sure, no problem with it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

What about your business dealings, sir? You obviously have your online company, DJT. Are you going to divest?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well, I have online — I mean, I don't know what's to divest. All I do is I put out messages. I needed it for messages because, as you know, I was taken off Twitter, at

the time it was called, and I was taking off all of the different — so I actually created my own company, became Truth, and it was very successful.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Will you divest from that?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Well I don't know how I can divest? What does that mean? I'm not allowed to open it and use it? I mean, all I do is — I — I don't openly look at the — the company. I'm not even on the board of the company. I didn't want to be on the board. I have other people, and they run it, and they run it very well because Truth has become a very, very successful platform.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Are you planning to accept a salary as President?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I'm not going to accept a salary, no. And I'm giving up a lot of money, you know. Do you know — it amaze me, and I — maybe this isn't right, but other than George Washington, and they're not sure about that, every President has accepted their salary, except me.

KRISTEN WELKER:

And you will — you did accept the pension, correct?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I don't think so.

KRISTEN WELKER:

You didn't accept your pension?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I don't think I accepted anything. I didn't — I get a salary — the president gets about \$450,000 a year, and I didn't take it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I want to ask you again about —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

By the way, I got no credit for that. That's okay.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well, I — I am asking you about it for that reason.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, wait so —

KRISTEN WELKER:

— and — and I think it's notable —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— you — you do know —

KRISTEN WELKER:

— you're not going to accept a salary.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, I don't accept — I'm not — I didn't, and I'm not going to. And I don't believe I got any credit for not, but I just feel it's, for me, it's — it's nice thing to do. I think — I think this, and I was surprised, not one president has done that. I would have assumed Roosevelt would have not accepted salary or Kennedy. You know, Kennedy family is rich. I would have assumed that some of — I'm the only president that — they say they think that George Washington, but those records aren't too good.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Sir, we talked about your family, and they were such a big part —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— of your first administration.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

And they did a great job.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Think of it, the Abraham Accords they did.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Well that's what I'm thinking of.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

The biggest — like oh — oh —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Will — will Jared still be an advisor?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

— tremendous —

KRISTEN WELKER:

Will he be someone who you turn to —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

I —

KRISTEN WELKER:

— particularly as you deal with what's happening in the Middle East?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Jared's a very smart guy, did a great job. He did the Abraham — if he did nothing else, and that was a big thing. And you know, they should have built on it, but we'll build on it now. We had four very powerful countries with Israel, and when you think of what that — it really represented peace in the Middle East. That should have been filled out. It wasn't, but we'll get it filled out. But no, I'm not going to have the family involved because I don't — I don't think they were treated fairly. They did such a good job.

KRISTEN WELKER:

But will it feel very different to be —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

A little bit, yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— in the White House and not have them there?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Sure. It will feel a little bit different. But, I mean, think of what we did. We did the tax cuts, biggest tax cuts in history. We did the — and that's a big thing, and that also spurred the economy. But if you look at the Abraham Accords, if you look at peace in the Middle East, we would have had so many different things, and they had it really go through Russia, Russia, Russia, hoax. Guys like Schiff, who's a real low life as an example. Adam Schiff. He's a low life and now he gets elected senator, so sad, but — but my kids got treated so unfairly, so I don't want them to go through it.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Last question, because I'm getting a wrap —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah.

KRISTEN WELKER:

I understand that on day one, you're going to be signing a flurry —

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yes.

KRISTEN WELKER:

— of executive orders.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

A lot.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Can you give me just — what are the top ones people should know about?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

A lot will have to do with economics. A lots going to have to do with energy. A lots going to do with having — having to do with the border. We're going to immediately strengthen up the border and do a real job and some of the basics. So we're going to end the electric mandate immediately for the cars. It's ridiculous. I — we want it — people to buy electric cars —

KRISTEN WELKER:

All on day one?

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Yeah, we want people to buy electric cars. But you know what? They have to be able to, if they want gasoline powered, if they want hybrids, they got to have that. So we're going to be ending that. We're going to be ending a lot of the environmental things that were ridiculous, that hurt our country very badly and didn't do anything for the environment. So we'll be doing, you know, standard things.

KRISTEN WELKER:

All right.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Thank you.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Thank you so much.

PRESIDENT-ELECT DONALD TRUMP:

Very much.

KRISTEN WELKER:

Really appreciate it.