

Transcript of Donald Trump's News Conference

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*The following is a partial transcript of a news conference that President-elect [Donald J. Trump](#) held in New York on Wednesday, as prepared by the Federal News Service.*

**SEAN SPICER:** Morning. Thanks for being here (inaudible) days away from the inauguration of the next president and vice president of the United States. It's an opportunity to be here today to allow the president-elect to take your questions.

After the president-elect makes some remarks, he will introduce Ms. Sheri Dillon, a prominent attorney in Washington, D.C., with the prestigious firm of Morgan Lewis who will — who structured the agreements pursuant to the president's business arrangements and she will give brief remarks.

Before we start, I want to bring your attention to a few points on the report that was published in BuzzFeed last night. It's frankly outrageous and highly irresponsible for a left-wing blog that was openly hostile to the president-elect's campaign to drop highly salacious and flat-out false information on the

According to BuzzFeed's own editor, there are some serious reasons to doubt the allegations in the report. The executive editor of The New York Times also dismissed the report by saying it was, quote, "Totally unsubstantiated, echoing the concerns that many other reporters expressed on the internet."

**SPICER:** The fact that BuzzFeed and CNN made the decision to run with this unsubstantiated claim is a sad and pathetic attempt to get clicks. The report is not an intelligence report, plain and simple. One issue that the report talked about was the relationship of three individuals associated with the campaign. These three individuals; Paul Manafort, Michael Cohen and Carter Page.

Carter Page is an individual who the president-elect does not know and was put on notice months ago by the campaign. Paul Manafort has adamantly denied any of this involvement and Michael Cohen, who is said to have visited Prague in August and September did not leave or enter the United States during this time. We asked him to produce his passport to confirm his whereabouts on the dates in question and there was no doubt that he was not in Prague.

In fact, Mr. Cohen has never been in Prague. A new report actually suggests that Michael Cohen was at — at the University of Southern California with his son at a baseball game. One report now suggested apparently it's another

Michael Cohen. For all the talk lately about fake news, this political witch hunt by some in the media is based on some of the most flimsy reporting and is frankly shameful and disgraceful.

With that, it is my honor to introduce the next vice president of the United States, Mike Pence.

(APPLAUSE)

**PENCE:** We are nine days away from the inauguration of the 45th president of the United States of America.

(APPLAUSE)

I am profoundly honored and humbled that I will take the oath of office to serve as vice president of the United States nine days from today, but I'm even more honored to stand shoulder to shoulder with a new president who will make America great again.

(APPLAUSE)

Now, the president-elect's leadership and his energy during the campaign was impressive. But as the chairman of the transition effort, I can assure the American people that his energy and his vision during the course of this transition has been even more inspiring. To see the way he has brought together men and women of extraordinary capability at a historic pace in this cabinet.

Nineteen of the 21 cabinet officials have been announced, nine committee hearings already scheduled, seven more soon to go on the books in the next several days and it is a — it is a compilation of men and women with an unprecedented caliber of leadership and background to help this administration move our nation forward. Perhaps that's why there's been such a concerted effort by some in the mainstream media to delegitimize this election and to demean our incoming administration.

You know, I have long been a supporter of a free and independent press and I always will be. But with freedom comes responsibility. And the irresponsible decision of a few news organizations to run with a false and unsubstantiated report, when most news organizations resisted the temptation to propagate this fake news, can only be attributed to media bias and attempt to demean the president-elect and our incoming administration and the American people are sick and tired of it.

(APPLAUSE)

But today, we'll get back to real news, to real facts and the real progress our incoming president has already made in reviving the American economy and

assembling a team that will make America great again. And we'll hear from the president-elect about issues that are of paramount importance to the American people today.

So, it is my honor to introduce to all of you, my friend and the president-elect of the United States of America, Donald Trump.

(APPLAUSE)

**TRUMP:** Thank you very much.

It's very familiar territory, news conferences, because we used to give them on an almost daily basis. I think we probably maybe won the nomination because of news conferences and it's good to be with you.

**TRUMP:** We stopped giving them because we were getting quite a bit of inaccurate news, but I do have to say that — and I must say that I want to thank a lot of the news organizations here today because they looked at that nonsense that was released by maybe the intelligence agencies? Who knows, but maybe the intelligence agencies which would be a tremendous blot on their record if they in fact did that. A tremendous blot, because a thing like that should have never been written, it should never have been had and it should certainly never been released.

But I want to thank a lot of the news organizations for some of whom have not treated me very well over the years — a couple in particular — and they came out so strongly against that fake news and the fact that it was written about by primarily one group and one television station.

So, I just want to compliment many of the people in the room. I have great respect for the news and great respect for freedom of the press and all of that. But I will tell you, there were some news organizations with all that was just said that were so professional — so incredibly professional, that I've just gone up a notch as to what I think of you. OK?

All right. We've had some great news over the last couple of weeks. I've been quite active, I guess you could say, in an economic way for the country. A lot of car companies are going to be moving in, we have other companies — big news is going to be announced over the next couple of weeks about companies that are getting building in the Midwest.

You saw yesterday Fiat Chrysler; big, big factory going to be built in this country as opposed to another country. Ford just announced that they stopped plans for a billion dollar plant in Mexico and they're going to be moving into Michigan and expanding, very substantially, an existing plant.

I appreciate that from Ford. I appreciate it very much from Fiat Chrysler. I hope that General Motors will be following and I think they will be. I think a

lot of people will be following. I think a lot of industries are going to be coming back.

We've got to get our drug industry back. Our drug industry has been disastrous. They're leaving left and right. They supply our drugs, but they don't make them here, to a large extent. And the other thing we have to do is create new bidding procedures for the drug industry because they're getting away with murder.

Pharma, pharma has a lot of lobbies and a lot of lobbyists and a lot of power and there's very little bidding on drugs. We're the largest buyer of drugs in the world and yet we don't bid properly and we're going to start bidding and we're going to save billions of dollars over a period of time.

And we're going to do that with a lot of other industries. I'm very much involved with the generals and admirals on the airplane, the [F-35](#), you've been reading about it. And it's way, way behind schedule and many, many billions of dollars over budget. I don't like that. And the admirals have been fantastic, the generals have been fantastic. I've really gotten to know them well. And we're going to do some big things on the F-35 program, and perhaps the F-18 program. And we're going to get those costs way down and we're going to get the plane to be even better. And we're going to have some competition and it's going to be a beautiful thing.

So, we've been very, very much involved, and other things. We had Jack Ma, we had so many incredible people coming here. There are no — they're going to do tremendous things — tremendous things in this country. And they're very excited.

And I will say, if the election didn't turn out the way it turned out, they would not be here. They would not be in my office. They would not be in anybody else's office. They'd be building and doing things in other countries. So, there's a great spirit going on right now. A spirit that many people have told me they've never seen before, ever.

We're going to create jobs. I said that I will be the greatest jobs producer that God ever created. And I mean that, I really — I'm going to work very hard on that. We need certain amounts of other things, including a little bit of luck, but I think we're going to do a real job. And I'm very proud of what we've done.

And we haven't even gotten there yet. I look very much forward to the inauguration. It's going to be a beautiful event. We have great talent, tremendous talent. And we have the — all of the bands — or most of the bands are from the different — from the different segments of the military. And I've heard some of these bands over the years, they're incredible.

We're going to have a very, very elegant day. The 20th is going to be something that will be very, very special; very beautiful. And I think we're going to have massive crowds because we have a movement.

**TRUMP:** It's a movement like the world has never seen before. It's a movement that a lot of people didn't expect. And even the polls — although some of them did get it right, but many of them didn't. And that was a beautiful scene on November 8th as those states started to pour in.

And we focused very hard in those states and they really reciprocated. And those states are gonna have a lot of jobs and they're gonna have a lot of security. They're going to have a lot of good news for their veterans.

And by the way, speaking of veterans, I appointed today the head secretary of the Veterans Administration, David Shulkin. And we'll do a news release in a little while. Tell you about David, he's fantastic — he's fantastic. He will do a truly great job.

One of the commitments I made is that we're gonna straighten out the whole situation for our veterans. Our veterans have been treated horribly. They're waiting in line for 15, 16, 17 days, cases where they go in and they have a minor early-stage form of cancer and they can't see a doctor. By the time they get to the doctor, they're terminal. Not gonna happen, it's not gonna happen.

So, David is going to do a fantastic job. We're going to be talking to a few people also to help David. And we have some of the great hospitals of the world going to align themselves with us on the Veterans Administration, like the Cleveland Clinic, like the Mayo Clinic, a few more than we have. And we're gonna set up a — a group.

These are hospitals that have been the top of the line, the absolute top of the line. And they're going to get together with their great doctors — Dr. Toby Cosgrove, as you know from the Cleveland Clinic, has been very involved.

Ike Perlmutter has been very, very involved, one of the great men of business. And we're gonna straighten out the V.A. for our veterans. I've been promising that for a long time and it's something I feel very, very strongly.

So, you'll get the information on David. And I think you'll be very impressed with the job he does. We looked long and hard. We interviewed at least 100 people, some good, some not so good. But we had a lot of talent. And we think this election will be something that will, with time — with time, straighten it out and straighten it out for good 'cause our veterans have been treated very unfairly.

OK, questions? Yes, John (ph)?

**QUESTION:** (Inaudible) so much.

**TRUMP:** Thank you.

**QUESTION:** Appreciate it.

A couple of aspects of the intelligence briefing that you received on Friday that we're looking for further clarification on.

**TRUMP:** Sure.

**QUESTION:** First of all, did the heads of the intelligence agencies provide you with the two-page summary of these unsubstantiated allegations? And secondly to that, on the broader picture, do you accept their opinion that Vladimir Putin ordered the hack of the DNC and the attempted hack of the RNC?

And if you do, how will that color your attempts to build a relationship with a leader who has been accused of committing an act of espionage against the United States?

**TRUMP:** OK, first of all, these readings as you know are confidential, classified. So, I'm not allowed to talk about what went on in a meeting.

And — but we had many witnesses in that meeting, many of them with us. And I will say, again, I think it's a disgrace that information would be let out.

I saw the information; I read the information outside of that meeting. It's all fake news. It's phony stuff. It didn't happen. And it was gotten by opponents of ours, as you know, because you reported it and so did many of the other people. It was a group of opponents that got together — sick people — and they put that crap together.

So, I will tell you that not within the meeting, but outside of the meeting, somebody released it. It should have never been — number one, shouldn't have even entered paper. But it should have never have been released. But I read what was released and I think it's a disgrace. I think it's an absolute disgrace.

As far as hacking, I think it was Russia. But I think we also get hacked by other countries and other people. And I — I can say that you know when — when we lost 22 million names and everything else that was hacked recently, they didn't make a big deal out of that. That was something that was extraordinary. That was probably China.

We had — we had much hacking going on. And one of the things we're gonna do, we have some of the greatest computer minds anywhere in the world that we've assembled. You saw just a sample of it two weeks ago up here where we had the six top people in the world — they were never in the same room

together as a group. And we're gonna put those minds together and we're going to form a defense.

**TRUMP:** And I have to say this also, the Democratic National Committee was totally open to be hacked. They did a very poor job. They could've had hacking defense, which we had.

And I will give Reince Priebus credit, because when Reince saw what was happening in the world and with this country, he went out and went to various firms and ordered a very, very strong hacking defense.

And they tried to hack the Republican National Committee and they were unable to break through.

We have to do that for our country. It's very important.

(CROSSTALK)

**QUESTION:** ... just to the last part of that question (inaudible) how could all of this potentially color your attempts to build a better relationship with President Putin?

**TRUMP:** Well, you know, President Putin and Russia put out a statement today that this fake news was indeed fake news. They said it totally never happened.

Now, somebody would say, "Oh, of course he's gonna say that."

I respected the fact that he said that.

And I — I'll be honest, I think if he did have something, they would've released it; they would've been glad to release it.

I think, frankly, had they broken into the Republican National Committee, I think they would've released it just like they did about Hillary and all of the horrible things that her people, like Mr. Podesta, said about her. I mean what he said about her was horrible.

If somebody said about me, what Podesta said about Hillary, I was the boss, I would've fired him immediately or that person. Because what he said about her was horrible.

But remember this: We talk about the hacking and hacking's bad and it shouldn't be done. But look at the things that were hacked, look at what was learned from that hacking.

That Hillary Clinton got the questions to the debate and didn't report it? That's a horrible thing. That's a horrible thing.

Can you imagine that if Donald Trump got the questions to the debate — it would've been the biggest story in the history of stories. And they would've said immediately, "You have to get out of the race." Nobody even talked about it. It's a very terrible thing.

Yeah?

**QUESTION:** Can I ask you a question, sir?

(CROSSTALK)

**QUESTION:** Thank you, Mr. President-elect.

On that intelligence report, the second part of their conclusion was that Vladimir Putin ordered it because he aspired to help you in the election.

Do you accept that part of the finding? And will you undo what President Obama did to punish the Russians for this or will you keep it in place?

**TRUMP:** Well, if — if Putin likes Donald Trump, I consider that an asset, not a liability, because we have a horrible relationship with Russia. Russia can help us fight ISIS, which, by the way, is, number one, tricky. I mean if you look, this administration created ISIS by leaving at the wrong time. The void was created, ISIS was formed.

If Putin likes Donald Trump, guess what, folks? That's called an asset, not a liability.

Now, I don't know that I'm gonna get along with Vladimir Putin. I hope I do. But there's a good chance I won't. And if I don't, do you honestly believe that Hillary would be tougher on Putin than me? Does anybody in this room really believe that? Give me a break.

OK?

(CROSSTALK)

**QUESTION:** ... President Obama...

(CROSSTALK)

**QUESTION:** ... make clear whether during your visits to either Moscow or St. Petersburg, you engaged in conduct that you now regret and that a reasonable...

(CROSSTALK)

**QUESTION:** Would a reasonable observer say that you are potentially vulnerable to blackmail by Russia or by its intelligence agencies?



**TRUMP:** Lemme just tell you what I do.

When I leave our country, I'm a very high-profile person, would you say?

I am extremely careful. I'm surrounded by bodyguards. I'm surrounded by people.

And I always tell them — anywhere, but I always tell them if I'm leaving this country, "Be very careful, because in your hotel rooms and no matter where you go, you're gonna probably have cameras." I'm not referring just to Russia, but I would certainly put them in that category.

And number one, "I hope you're gonna be good anyway. But in those rooms, you have cameras in the strangest places. Cameras that are so small with modern technology, you can't see them and you won't know. You better be careful, or you'll be watching yourself on nightly television."

I tell this to people all the time.

I was in Russia years ago, with the Miss Universe contest, which did very well — Moscow, the Moscow area did very, very well.

And I told many people, "Be careful, because you don't wanna see yourself on television. Cameras all over the place."

And again, not just Russia, all over.

Does anyone really believe that story?

I'm also very much of a germaphobe, by the way, believe me.

(LAUGHTER)

(CROSSTALK)

**QUESTION:** ... how you plan to disentangle yourself from your business. But first, I have to follow-up on some of these Russian remarks.

Based on your comments here today, do you believe the hacking was justified? Does Russia have any leverage over you, financial or otherwise? And if not, will you release your tax returns to prove it?

**TRUMP:** So I tweeted out that I have no dealings with Russia. I have no deals that could happen in Russia, because we've stayed away. And I have no loans with Russia.

As a real estate developer, I have very, very little debt. I have assets that are — and now people have found out how big the company is, I have very little debt — I have very low debt. But I have no loans with Russia at all.

And I thought that was important to put out. I certified that. So I have no deals, I have no loans and I have no dealings. We could make deals in Russia very easily if we wanted to, I just don't want to because I think that would be a conflict. So I have no loans, no dealings, and no current pending deals.

Now, I have to say one other thing. Over the weekend, I was offered \$2 billion to do a deal in Dubai with a very, very, very amazing man, a great, great developer from the Middle East, Hussein Damack, a friend of mine, great guy. And I was offered \$2 billion to do a deal in Dubai — a number of deals and I turned it down.

I didn't have to turn it down, because as you know, I have a no-conflict situation because I'm president, which is — I didn't know about that until about three months ago, but it's a nice thing to have. But I don't want to take advantage of something. I have something that others don't have, Vice President Pence also has it. I don't think he'll need it, I have a feeling he's not going to need it.

But I have a no conflict of interest provision as president. It was many, many years old, this is for presidents. Because they don't want presidents getting — I understand they don't want presidents getting tangled up in minutia; they want a president to run the country. So I could actually run my business, I could actually run my business and run government at the same time.

I don't like the way that looks, but I would be able to do that if I wanted to. I would be the only one to be able to do that. You can't do that in any other capacity. But as president, I could run the Trump organization, great, great company, and I could run the company — the country. I'd do a very good job, but I don't want to do that.

Now, all of these papers that you see here — yes, go ahead.

**QUESTION:** (inaudible) do you believe the hacking was justified? And will you release your tax returns to prove what you're saying about no deals in Russia?

**TRUMP:** I'm not releasing the tax returns because as you know, they're under audit.

(CROSSTALK)

**QUESTION:** ... since the '70's has had a required audit from the IRS, the last place to release them, but as president sir...

**TRUMP:** You know, the only one that cares about my tax returns are the reporters, OK? They're the only who ask.

**QUESTION:** You don't think the American public is concerned about it?

**TRUMP:** No I don't think so. I won, when I became president. No, I don't think they care at all. I don't think they care at all.

(APPLAUSE)

**TRUMP:** I think you care — I think you care. First of all, you learn very little to a tax return. What you should go down to federal elections and take a look at the numbers. And actually, people have learned a lot about my company and now they realize, my company is much bigger, much more powerful than they ever thought. We're in many, many countries, and I'm very proud of it.

And what I'm going to be doing is my two sons, who are right here, Don and Eric, are going to be running the company. They are going to be running it in a very professional manner. They're not going to discuss it with me. Again, I don't have to do this. They're not going to discuss it with me. And with that, I'm going to bring up Sheri Dillon, and she's going to go — these papers are just some of the many documents that I've signed turning over complete and total control to my sons.

(CROSSTALK)

**DILLON:** Good morning. It's my honor and privilege to be here today at President-elect Trump's request.

He's asked me, as you just heard, to speak about the conflicts of interest and the steps he's taking. As you know, the business empire built by President-elect Trump over the years is massive, not dissimilar to the fortunes of Nelson Rockefeller when he became vice president. But at that time, no one was so concerned.

President-elect Trump wants the American public to rest assured that all of his efforts are directed to pursuing the people's business and not his own. To that end, as he explained a few moments ago, he directed me and my colleagues at the law firm Morgan Lewis and Bockius to design a structure for his business empire that will completely isolate him from the management of the company.

He further instructed that we build in protections that will assure the American people the decisions he makes and the actions that he takes as president are for their benefit and not to support his financial interests.