

White House press briefing Jan 31 2025

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Speakers:

Karoline Leavitt - 76.22%

White House Press Secretary

John Ashbrook - 7.61%

Ruthless Podcast Host

Peter Doocy - 8.24%

Senior White House correspondent for Fox News

Reporter - 1.94%

Reporter, Kelly

Reporter - 5.99%

Reporter

Notes:

No notes.

Karoline Leavitt

00:00:01

Good to see all of you. Happy Friday. It's great to be back with you. I want to provide an

update on President Trump's actions in the wake of the catastrophic air collision that tragically claimed the lives of 67 people at Reagan National Airport on Wednesday night. Everyone in this White House continues to mourn the victims and keep their friends and families in our thoughts and prayers during this unimaginable time.

Karoline Leavitt

00:00:27

First, within moments of the collision, the President and his newly appointed team were in immediate communication. The President was briefed on Wednesday evening following the crash, again on Thursday morning, and he has continued to receive updates as recovery efforts continue on the ground. The President, as you know, took time to address the nation yesterday afternoon to deliver accountability.

Karoline Leavitt

00:00:53

President Trump swiftly signed a memorandum directing an immediate assessment of the Federal Aviation Administration to ensure the federal government is maintaining the highest personnel and policy aviation safety standards. The memorandum directs the Secretary of Transportation and the FAA Administrator to immediately review all hiring decisions and changes to safety protocols made during the prior four years and to take all necessary corrective actions to achieve uncompromised aviation safety.

Karoline Leavitt

00:01:26

The review will include a comprehensive assessment and reversal of any deterioration in hiring standards and aviation safety standards and protocols during the previous administration. Aviation safety was addressed by President Trump before this tragic collision even took place. On his second day in office, the President signed a memorandum to immediately stop Biden DEI hiring programs and return to non discriminatory merit based hiring.

Karoline Leavitt

00:01:56

And in 2018, during President Trump's first term, the Department of Transportation announced it would put an end at that time to use the biological questionnaire that was introduced by the Obama administration which punished skilled applicants. President Trump has long led on the issue of aviation safety and he will continue to do so.

Karoline Leavitt

00:02:18

He will continue to deliver on the promises he made to the American people at record speed. The Senate has already confirmed eight of President Trump's exceptional cabinet nominees, including most recently, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy. As you of course know, EPA Secretary Lee Zeldin and Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, who is scheduled to be sworn in later today.

We expect the Senate to continue quickly confirming the remainder of President Trump's well qualified nominees in the days ahead. Earlier this week in the East Room, the President proudly signed the Lakin Riley act into law. Surrounded by Lakin's loving parents and sister. This common sense bipartisan law mandates the federal detention of illegal aliens who are accused of theft, burglary, assaulting a law enforcement officer in any crime that causes death or serious bodily injury.

Karoline Leavitt

00:03:10

Like the animal who murdered Lake and Riley in cold blood this was the first piece of legislation President Trump proudly signed as the 47th President of the United States. And it will guarantee that Lakin did not die in vain. As Lakin's mother, Allison, tearfully said during the signing event, President Trump said he would secure our borders and that he would never forget about Lakin.

Karoline Leavitt

00:03:33

And he hasn't. He's a man of his word, and we trust that he will fight for the American people. Those are the words of Lakin's mother, and we will never forget them. So to help lock up even more criminal illegal aliens, President Trump signed a memorandum this week to detain them at Guantanamo Bay.

Karoline Leavitt

00:03:51

This action will expand the migrant operations center at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay to full capacity to provide critical extra detention space for high priority criminal illegals. Our brave ICE agents continue to arrest more and more of these types of individuals every day in communities across our country. And I have more updates for you.

Karoline Leavitt

00:04:14

On January 27, 2025, ICE Chicago arrested a citizen of Guatemala who has been convicted of solicitation to meet a child disturbing and sentenced to 24 months probation. On January 28, 2025, ICE Atlanta arrested a citizen of South Korea who has been convicted of nine counts of possession or control of material depicting minors in sexually explicit conduct.

Karoline Leavitt

00:04:40

On January 28, ICE New York arrested a Mexican national previously charged by the state of New York for attempted murder and possession of a weapon and assault. And on January 28th, Ice Philly arrested a citizen of Mexico who has been convicted of possession of child pornography. Our message is if you are a criminal illegal alien, you will be arrested and deported.

On another important matter. The nation's report card was released this week and the news is not good. It showed that US Students had record low reading comprehension scores last year. It's National School Choice Week, and in part of the President's commitment to education, he just left a roundtable in the Roosevelt Room focused on this issue with leaders from across the country.

Karoline Leavitt

00:05:30

The national report card showed that 70% of 8th graders were below proficient in reading and 40% of 4th graders did not even meet the basic reading levels. This is completely unacceptable to the President and he continues to take aggressive actions to address this education problem in our country. He signed an executive order this week prohibiting federal funding of the indoctrination of our children, including radical gender ideology and critical race theory in the classroom.

Karoline Leavitt

00:05:58

The President believes American education should focus on cultivating patriotic citizens who are ready for the workforce. And this action will help get schools back on track and defend fundamental parental rights in education. The President also signed a school choice executive order expanding educational freedom and opportunity for families. And in lighter news, but in exciting news, after announcing our briefing room changes on Wednesday, this White House has received more than 10,000 submissions from individuals across the country who are eager to join all of you.

Karoline Leavitt

00:06:34

We might have to make this room a little bit bigger to do that. Who want to participate in our new media seat at a future briefing? So in this seat today, we have the Ruthless podcast. They humbly started by entertaining small audiences on Capitol Hill. But after four years, this program has become one of the most influential podcasts in America.

Karoline Leavitt

00:06:55

They previously reached number one on the charts and earned over 25 million downloads as they deliver political news with a humorous touch. The hosts are Josh Holmes, Michael Duncan, comfortably smug, and the man joining us today, John Ashbrook. So with that, I will take your questions. John, please kick us off the thank you very much.

John Ashbrook

00:07:14

You know, Caroline, in your first briefing, the media went after this administration for deporting illegal immigrants they claimed were not criminals. The question is, do you think they're out of touch with Americans demanding action on our border crisis?

Miss the media out of touch? I think the media certainly is out of touch, and I think that's proven by a number of things, John. Number one, there was a New York Times poll that was released prior to President Trump's inauguration by the New York Times, which of course, is a legacy media outlet, that showed that 83% of Americans support deporting the individuals that you mentioned, illegal immigrant criminals, especially those who have committed heinous crimes in the interior of our country.

Karoline Leavitt

00:07:59

And I received a very actually interesting statistic on this front from ICE this week. 97% of the deportations that this administration has made thus far are of individuals who had a removal order from the previous administration, but were never removed from the interior of our country. So this shows that the previous administration was actually defying our laws.

Karoline Leavitt

00:08:24

And all this administration is doing is simply following the laws, the immigration laws of this great country. Thanks for the question, John. Anything else?

John Ashbrook

00:08:32

No, that's it.

Karoline Leavitt

00:08:32

Okay, great. Peter.

Peter Doocy

00:08:34

Thanks, Caroline.

John Ashbrook

00:08:36

If President Trump is telling us that air traffic control towers are staffed with unqualified controllers, these DEI hires who never should have been brought on, then it's not safe to fly commercially, is it?

Karoline Leavitt

00:08:48

Ms. The President was asked and answered this yesterday, and he believes that it is still indeed safe, and Americans should feel safe traveling our skies. With that said, two things can be true at the same time, and we certainly have seen the deterioration of federal hiring standards at the Federal Aviation Administration and the president wants to increase those standards.

He wants pilots in this country who have the great responsibility of flying American citizens by the tens of millions every single day to be chosen for that position based on their merit and their skills. And so the administration will continue to prioritize this.

John Ashbrook

00:09:25

Was the air traffic controller in the DCA tower on Wednesday night hired or not fired at some point because of his or her race?

Karoline Leavitt

00:09:33

Ms. That investigation is ongoing. And so when we have updates on the exact individuals who were involved in the collision, including the air traffic controller, also the pilots of the helicopter and others, we will confirm those I don't want to confirm names from this podium today. We're not in a position to do that.

Karoline Leavitt

00:09:51

But I will say the president has still rightfully pointed out that there has been problems with the aviation industry over the the past several years, and this started under Barack Obama in 2014.

John Ashbrook

00:10:04

And when the president says on Truth Social, the Black Hawk helicopter was flying too high by a lot, it was far above the 200 foot limit. That's not really too complicated to understand, is it? Is he suggesting a helicopter malfunction or a crew error or a crew doing this intentionally?

Karoline Leavitt

00:10:21

Ms. No, the President is simply stating what he said in that true social post, which is that the helicopter was flying, flying higher than it should have been, which is one of the reasons that led to this collision. And the other reasons for that are still being investigated. And I will let that investigation play out.

Reporter

00:10:36

KELLY Some of our colleagues have obtained a memo from the Defense Intelligence Agency that talks about not holding any activities or programming related to Black History Month to be in line with the President's views on diversity, equity and inclusion. Does the president plan to have a proclamation about Black History Month in his first term?

Reporter

00:10:59

Each of the four years of his term he did so and called on those in government to have

programming activities and celebrations. Is he going to do that this year?

Karoline Leavitt

00:11:09

Ms. Yeah. The President looks forward to signing a proclamation celebrating Black History Month. I actually spoke with our great staff secretary. It's in the works of being approved and it's going to be ready for the President's signature to signify the beginning of that tomorrow.

Reporter

00:11:21

If an agency is calling off those kinds of activities in an attempt to be in alignment with the President's views on DEI and other things, should they adjust that now and have those programs and make those celebrations however they see fit in the office?

Karoline Leavitt

00:11:37

Ms. The president is leading here at the White House, and I'll leave it to the proclamation that he will sign very soon. Mary Great to See you. Thanks for having us. So I wanted to follow up on the gender executive orders that you mentioned. First of all, we know that President Trump has taken a bunch of steps to protect children from irreversible transgender procedures.

Karoline Leavitt

00:11:54

Is he interested in backing congressional legislation on this point? And does the Trump administration have interest in investigating doctors who perform these irreversible procedures on kids, such as a double mastectomy on a minor girl? Ms. Well, the President has already taken a very strong stance on this issue this week with the signing of his executive order, a few executive orders in this space.

Karoline Leavitt

00:12:15

First, he made it the official policy of the federal government that there are only two sexes, male and female, and we have directed all federal agencies to comply with that policy. As for congressional legislation to support the president's agenda in this space and certainly ending the mutilation of young children, the chemical castration of young children, which is a barbaric practice that the vast majority of Americans do not support for young minor children.

Karoline Leavitt

00:12:42

Certainly the president would support Congress's efforts, as he has already made that very clear this week. Jennifer, on Rick Grinnell's trip to Venezuela to meet with Nicolas Maduro, is there anything you can share on timing on that, what his agenda is, what the mission of

that trip is? Yes. So I can confirm that Rick Grenell is in Venezuela today.

Karoline Leavitt

00:13:01

I can confirm that Rick Grenell is going to Venezuela or is in Venezuela with very two immediate directives from the president of the United States. Number one, Rick Grenell has been instructed to identify a place and ensure that repatriation flights of trend Aragua members, Venezuelan nationals who have broken our nation's laws will land in Venezuela.

Karoline Leavitt

00:13:27

As I said at this podium a few days ago, we expect every nation on this planet to cooperate with the repatriation of our citizens. And so Rick Grinnell is in Venezuela to ensure that can continue. And number two, Rick Grinnell is in Venezuela to ensure that all US Detainees in Venezuela are returned home.

Karoline Leavitt

00:13:46

That's his mission. And I will provide a readout after this trip on Bob Hernandez. Can you tell us if anyone has approached the White House or the president about a pardon or a commutation?

Peter Doocy

00:13:55

Ms.

Karoline Leavitt

00:13:56

I been part of those discussions. If they have, I am not sure if they have, but I won't speculate on potential pardons that may or may not happen. To my awareness, the answer is no. Justin.

John Ashbrook

00:14:08

Friends at Reuters are reporting that the president has made a decision on the Canada and Mexico tariffs, but that they won't actually be implemented until March 1st. I was wondering if you could confirm that and talk through some of the President's thinking.

Karoline Leavitt

00:14:20

Ms. I saw that report and it is false. I was just with the president in the Oval Office and I can confirm that tomorrow, the February 1st deadline that President Trump put into place, that a statement several weeks ago continues. The president will be implementing tomorrow a 25% tariffs on Mexico, 25% tariffs on Canada and a 10% tariff on China for the illegal fentanyl that they have sourced and allowed to distribute into our country, which has killed tens of millions of Americans.

These are promises made and promises kept by the president.

John Ashbrook

00:14:54

The the president yesterday said that last night he was planning to discuss whether an exemption would be made on oil imports. Do you have any information on what decision he made there or will there be exemptions at all offered under this?

Karoline Leavitt

00:15:06

Ms. I don't have an update or readout for you on the exemptions, but those tariffs will be for public consumption in about 24 hours tomorrow, so you can read them then. Caroline Steven Nelson, thank you very much, Carolyn.

Peter Doocy

00:15:19

I have three questions, if that's all right. I'd like to ask you about press freedom and then about two economic matters on press freedom. On Tuesday, you announced plans to roll back the more restrictive press badge policy of the Biden White House, but there's a different anti press freedom policy I wanted to ask about.

Peter Doocy

00:15:36

The Biden White House adopted a mysterious prescreening process for journalists allowed into large event spaces that in the pre pandemic phase, first Trump term, were open to all journalists on campus. This effectively limited the diversity of reformers present and blocked the asking questions that large segments of the American public wanted answered. As press Secretary, can you commit to abolishing this mysterious prescreening process?

Karoline Leavitt

00:16:01

There were a lot of mysterious processes that my team and I have had to unravel over the past two weeks that were implemented by the previous White House, in particular the previous press shop here. And so I can commit to to greater access and transparency, which I believe we already have, by ensuring that the 440 journalists whose credentials were revoked will be reinstalled.

Karoline Leavitt

00:16:24

They will get their credentials if they wish to. We've also, of course, opened up a new seat to new media. And as far as open press events here at the White House, if we tell you it's open press, it's open press.

Peter Doocy

00:16:34

So just to confirm this pre screening thing is something you're aware of and may work to undo to the maximum extent possible. Ms.

Karoline Leavitt

00:16:40

When we say something is open press, it will mean it's open press economic.

Peter Doocy

00:16:44

Matters, and I can just ask them both at once for you. In New York City, Governor Hochul's congestion pricing went into effect this month. Vehicles that drive through parts of Manhattan have to pay a \$9 toll. President Trump has made clear his opposition. He said that it's the most progressive tax known to womankind.

Peter Doocy

00:17:02

Will the administration be trying to block this? And the second question is billions and maybe tens of millions of Americans who voted for President Trump were excited about his plans to do away with taxes on tips over time, Social Security benefits, But there's uncertainty about the timing of this. So can you clarify for them when this is going to happen?

Peter Doocy

00:17:21

And does President Trump want this to be in the first all three of those in the first batch of legislation early this year?

Karoline Leavitt

00:17:26

Ms. Well, to answer your question in one swoop, I will say that President Trump is committed to lowering taxes for Americans, cutting taxes for Americans. As for congestion pricing in New York, I do know that the president spoke with Governor Hochul about that. I don't have any actions, so to speak, to read out for you on that issue today.

Karoline Leavitt

00:17:45

Number two, when it comes to no taxes on tips and Social Security, the president has made it very clear to our allies on Capitol Hill that is a critical piece of this reconciliation package. And he expects that his tax cuts from 2017, which put a lot more money back into the American people's pockets, those must be implemented.

Karoline Leavitt

00:18:05

And no tax on tips. The president is intent on delivering on that promise and he will get it.

Done overtime also as part of reconciliation.

Karoline Leavitt

00:18:11

Ms. Yes, sure. A couple of things, Caroline. Can you guarantee that those tariffs won't increase prices for Americans, including at the gas pump in the grocery store? Ms. I think Americans who are concerned about increased prices should look at what President Trump did in his first term. He effectively implemented tariffs. And the average inflation rate during the first Trump administration was 1.9%.

Karoline Leavitt

00:18:33

In fact, when President Trump left office, it was 1.4%. So President Trump is going to do everything he possibly can to cut the inflation crisis that the previous administration imposed on the American people, and he will continue to effectively utilize tariffs because tariffs do increase prices for Americans. Will the administration reverse them?

Karoline Leavitt

00:18:50

Ms. That's a hypothetical question. And the president is intent on ensuring that he effectively implements tariffs while cutting inflation and costs for the American people. And, you know, the media has this way of just looking at everything in a microscope rather than looking at the whole of government economic approach that this president is taking.

Karoline Leavitt

00:19:08

He will effectively implement tariffs. He's also, as I just answered from Steven's question committed to tax cuts. He's also clearly committed, as evidenced by his executive orders, to unleashing the might of our energy industry, which we know will eventually drive down inflation. And all the other economic measures that this president has made will have a Trump incoming economic boom just like we saw in in our first term.

Karoline Leavitt

00:19:32

And has the White House found any FOX businesses?

Peter Doocy

00:19:35

Mr. Yes. Thanks, Carolyn.

Karoline Leavitt

00:19:36

You're welcome.

Peter Doocy

00:19:37

Justin Trudeau, the Canadian prime minister, said today that if the US Imposes tariffs, he will respond and he will not relent until the tariffs are removed. Are we seeing the start of a trade war with Canada?

Karoline Leavitt

00:19:48

Ms. I don't think so. I think the president is going to implement those tariffs tomorrow and he will respond to Mr. Trudeau's comments in due time, I am sure.

Peter Doocy

00:19:57

What type of things have to happen? What does the administration need to see in order to avoid those tariffs?

Karoline Leavitt

00:20:01

Well, the tariffs are incoming tomorrow on Canada, and the reason for that is because both Canada and Mexico have allowed an unprecedented invasion of illegal fentanyl that is killing American citizens and also illegal immigrants into our country. In fact, I have more language for you right here. Canada, Mexico and China, which, as I mentioned, President Trump will implement a 10% tariff on China, have all enabled illegal drugs to pour into America.

Karoline Leavitt

00:20:29

The amount of fentanyl that has been seized at the southern border in the last two years alone has the potential to kill tens of millions of Americans. And so the president is intent on doing this. And I think Justin Trudeau would be wise to talk to President Trump directly before pushing outlandish comments like that to the media.

Peter Doocy

00:20:45

If I may, one more, Lindsey, go.

John Ashbrook

00:20:47

Back to the plane crash for one Can I go back to the plane crash for just one second?

Karoline Leavitt

00:20:50

Ms. You're interrupting your colleague, but sure. I'm sorry.

John Ashbrook

00:20:52

I thought you called on me just.

Before I called on Lindsey.

John Ashbrook

00:20:55

The president this morning said the Blackhawk helicopter was flying too high. I'm wondering if he's basing that on what he learned from investigators and if.

Peter Doocy

00:21:01

You could offer a little bit more.

John Ashbrook

00:21:02

Of a window into how he is keeping abreast of this investigation. Is the NTSB briefing him separately? Is he meeting in the Situation Room? Can you just sort of offer a window into that?

Karoline Leavitt

00:21:12

Ms. Yeah. The President based that statement on truth because it is truth and it's fact, and it was relayed to him by the authorities who are overseeing the investigation into this horrific plane collision. And the president, as I said in my opening remarks, continues to be briefed on the collision by everybody across his Cabinet, the secretary of transportation, the secretary of defense, the ntsb, who the commissioner there was in the Oval Office with him yesterday.

Karoline Leavitt

00:21:36

Lindsay Lindsey, go ahead. Lindsey, go ahead. In a few days, the CIA actually revealed that they do also believe that COVID 19 was from a lab leak in Wuhan, China. How is the president planning on responding to to this additional intel from the CIA and will it impact how we respond to them with tariffs?

Karoline Leavitt

00:21:57

Ms. Yeah. Kudos to John Ratcliffe for revealing that truth and that fact to the American people. Many years too late, the Biden administration had a chance to let the American people know the truth about that, and for some reason they chose not to. I also would just like to point out that several years ago when I was working in this press shop and President Trump would take to this podium to brief the American people on COVID 19, he suggested that Covid very well may have come from a lab in Wuhan, China, and many members in this very room mocked him for that, said he was spewing conspiracy theories.

Karoline Leavitt

00:22:31

He was not. We now know that to be the confirmable truth. It took many years for it to

come out, but the president was right in this instance. Again, sure. Caroline, thank you. I wanted to ask about Secretary Rubio's trip to Panama first. Sure. What did the conversations look like with President Trump on that?

Karoline Leavitt

00:22:46

The president of Panama says it is, quote, impossible to negotiate over the canal. So what are you expecting from this visit? So I have not been present for Secretary Rubio's conversations with President Trump about the Panama Canal. I have been present for President Trump's own thoughts on the Panama Canal, and you all seen them as well in his public statements that he has shown he believes it's unacceptable that the canal is essentially run by the Chinese Communist Party.

Karoline Leavitt

00:23:13

If you look at both ends of the canal, massive Chinese Communist Party linked companies run the canal. That's unfair to the American people, many of whom lost their lives many years ago building this canal. The American taxpayers are paying millions of dollars for the canal, and the president believes it's in our national interest as a nation for Secretary Rubio to go there and begin these discussions, and that's exactly why he's doing that.

Karoline Leavitt

00:23:37

Caroline. Sure.

John Ashbrook

00:23:38

Thank you very much, Caroline. Is the United States in the process of pulling out of Syria militarily? Because the president wanted to do that in his first term as well, and he had a lot of pushback from the Pentagon and Congress. And based on what he said yesterday, is he considering doing that in a short time?

Karoline Leavitt

00:23:54

Ms. The President was asked and answered this question yesterday, and he, as the commander in chief of the United States Military Reserves, the right to review troop deployments overseas at any point in time.

John Ashbrook

00:24:04

Is that a topic right now?

Karoline Leavitt

00:24:05

Yes. Thank you. Two questions. So we now know that the staffing was not normal at the air traffic tower. And so with the government raising the hiring of new federal workers and

offering buyouts, are you not afraid that more incidents of different kind could happen with less staffing in different agencies? Ms. Well, the President is intent on ensuring that we are increasing staffing at these agencies, and that's why he signed a very strong executive order on his second day in office immediately terminating DEI hiring practices at the faa.

Karoline Leavitt

00:24:39

He also, following the tragic crash, as you all know, in the Oval Office yesterday, signed a memorandum directing an immediate assessment of the FAA to ensure the federal government is maintaining the highest personnel and aviation safety standards. And I would also just say there's a cultural piece to this as well. If you are an American who has spent many years studying aviation and you graduate from school and you're an air traffic controller based on skill and merit, and then you apply for a job and you're forced to fill out a biographical questionnaire asking you the color of your skin and asking you where you're from in details that aren't relevant at all to the job description, I think that deteriorates the morale of people in this industry.

Karoline Leavitt

00:25:21

And if you talk to people in this industry, they'll tell you that, in fact, many of them filed a lawsuit against the FAA a couple of years ago under Joe Biden's administration because they were denied positions because of this DEI hiring practice that was putting identity politics over merit and skills. That's unacceptable.

Karoline Leavitt

00:25:42

And I think just to put a fine point on this, because this is the third or fourth question I've answered on this subject. When you are flying on an airplane with your loved ones, which every one of us in this room has, do you pray that your plane lands safely and gets you to your destination, or do you pray that the pilot has a certain skin color?

Karoline Leavitt

00:25:59

I think we all know the answer to that question, and as President Trump said yesterday, it's common sense. Rob crilly, yeah, I'd just like to follow up on that last question. Has there been any sort of assurance from the FAA that they will immediately improve staffing levels, given the reports of.

John Ashbrook

00:26:13

Not normal staffing levels on Wednesday?

Karoline Leavitt

00:26:15

Oh, absolutely. You had Secretary Duffy here yesterday at the White House at this podium saying that he is on it and we can all trust that he definitely will be John Decker, Thanks a lot, Carol.

John Ashbrook

00:26:25

You called on me, right?

Karoline Leavitt

00:26:27

Yes, I did.

Reporter

00:26:27

Thank you very much.

Karoline Leavitt

00:26:28

As long as your name is still John Decker.

Reporter

00:26:29

It is, absolutely. Thank you. The president's meeting today with the founder and CEO of Nvidia. What is that meeting concerning and who sought that meeting?

Karoline Leavitt

00:26:39

Ms. I don't have details on this. It's a private meeting. It will take place at 2:30pm I'll try to get there in time and I can let you know after.

Reporter

00:26:46

How's that on Guantanamo Bay? Can you give more details about setting up that detention facility at Gitmo? How will that come about? What's the timing in terms of standing it up? And, of course, this has happened before. During the Clinton administration, detainees of Cuban and Haitian descent were both detained at Guantanamo. Are you looking at that model in setting up this detention facility?

Karoline Leavitt

00:27:09

Secretary Hegseth, I believe, was on television this morning answering this question, and he said that detention Department of Defense is already on it. He has directed his agency to ensure that Gitmo is increasing their capacity for beds. And that's exactly what President Trump's executive order did. It directed Secretary Hegseth and also Secretary Noem to expand the migrant operations center at the naval station to provide for this extra detention space.

And as Secretary Hegseth confirmed this morning, that operation is underway. Caroline, on the tariffs, can you clarify whether those will actually be going into effect tomorrow or whether there might be some lead time and are those they will be going into effect, correct, and are those meant to be in place long term or is there a scenario in which Canada, Mexico and China can offer concessions and then they would be removed?

Karoline Leavitt

00:27:58

Ms. At this point, the president has made it very clear those tariffs are going to be implemented in effect. If the president at any time decides to roll back those tariffs, I'll leave it to him to make that decision. Decision. But starting tomorrow, those tariffs will be in place. Sure.

John Ashbrook

00:28:11

Thanks.

Peter Doocy

00:28:11

Caroline. Yes, can you confirm a report by our friends at the Daily Mail that the British prime minister, Keir Starmer, is going to be visiting the White House in February? And also, if I may, do you have any more details on Netanyahu's visit here next week?

Karoline Leavitt

00:28:26

Ms. Sure. I have not seen that report about the prime minister. I can go check back with our friends at the National Security Council and get back to you on that. I can confirm that Prime Minister Netanyahu will be here on Tuesday, February 4, for a working meeting and visit with the president, and I'm sure you will all be here very excited to cover that visit.

Karoline Leavitt

00:28:48

Sure. Daniel.

Peter Doocy

00:28:49

Thank you, Caroline.

Karoline Leavitt

00:28:50

You're welcome.

Peter Doocy

00:28:50

Back on the Guantanamo Bay subject specifically, obviously, why does the president feel like that's the best location or a good location to make sure that Americans are safe from

violent illegal migrant crime?

Karoline Leavitt

00:29:02

Ms. Well, it's a really good question. And the memorandum that he signed, the order that he signed builds on his previous executive actions, obviously to secure our southern border and deport illegal criminals from the interior of our country. We know that we have an issue with detention space here in the interior, which is a big reason why Congress needs to pass this reconciliation package as quickly as possible to ensure that DHS and ICE have the funding they need to detain these individuals that the administration is very swiftly rounding up and deporting, arresting and deporting these illegal immigrant criminals.

Karoline Leavitt

00:29:37

And so the president feels it's an appropriate place. Taxpayers are already funding it. The space is there. Why not use it? And the secretary of defense, as I said, is working on that as we speak. Sure. Yes.

John Ashbrook

00:29:49

Thank you so much for having me here answering your question. So I want to talk more about the success that ICE is having finding these violent criminal aliens, some of them being sexual predators. But my friend Ben Berkhom reports that the Chicago mayor and the Illinois governor are preventing ICE agents from going into jails and prisons to enforce detainers against illegal aliens.

John Ashbrook

00:30:11

In Maryland, the attorney general has also put out a memo hindering local police cooperation with ice. Does the administration have any comment on leftist state local officials defying ICE and Trump's deportation efforts?

Karoline Leavitt

00:30:26

Yeah, I think it's very interesting that Democrat officials in these cities who have been completely overrun and overwhelmed by illegal immigrant criminals would refuse support and help to cure this problem that has especially taken over their cities. I guess they don't want to admit they've been wrong with their sanctuary city policies. I'm not sure you'll have to ask them about their intentions, but they would be very wise to comply with this administration because this administration is hell bent on enforcing our nation's immigration laws.

Karoline Leavitt

00:30:55

And this administration will continue to arrest and detain and deport illegal migrant criminals. And what we won't do is defy our nation's immigration laws like the previous administration who had these orders of removal on illegal immigrants across the country and were refusing to execute on them. We will continue to remove illegal criminals from our nation's interior.

John Ashbrook

00:31:19

Are these sanctuary city leaders? Are they violating the law?

Karoline Leavitt

00:31:22

I would certainly think so. I'd have to check back on which specific law they're violating, but certainly if they're not enforcing our nation's immigration law. Sounds like they are breaking the law. And I would also add that their constituents don't approve of that. You've seen residents in Chicago show up at their city council meetings infuriated with their leadership in that city because they are working very hard to provide for their families.

Karoline Leavitt

00:31:45

They want public safety and law and order, and their officials have abandoned those very basic American principles in these cities. And the American people want law and order. It's, again, an overwhelmingly popular policy to deport illegal criminals from our nation's interior, and this administration will continue to affect that goal. Sure.

John Ashbrook

00:32:06

A question on Colombia.

Peter Doocy

00:32:07

We just interviewed Colombian President Gustavo Petro.

John Ashbrook

00:32:10

And he insisted that he's not going.

Peter Doocy

00:32:12

To take any Colombian deportee from the US if they arrive in South America handcuffed. How this administration responds to that.

Karoline Leavitt

00:32:20

When did the Colombian president make those remarks?

Today during an interview with us at Univision.

Karoline Leavitt

00:32:24

Well, I will share those with the president of the United States, and I will get back to you on his response.

Peter Doocy

00:32:29

What happens here. Nicolas Maduro, Caroline, there are more than 150,000 disabled Americans who are working today. The president talked a lot yesterday about hiring the best and the brightest to work in the federal government. Safety aside, does he believe that disabled people do have a place to work in the federal government, and does he also support the current protections for disabled people working in the private sector as well?

Reporter

00:32:58

Ms.

Karoline Leavitt

00:32:58

The President has made it very clear, clear that this is a common sense solution to solving some of the problems that we have seen at the Federal Aviation Administration. And also when it comes to many of the federal agencies across our government, people should not be hired based on their disabilities, based on their skin color, their gender, their race.

Karoline Leavitt

00:33:18

None of that matters. What matters to this president and this administration is how well you can do your job. And the American people agree with that sentiment. So it's about competence, skill and merit. And so the president is focused on ensuring that the most competent individuals, the best and the brightest in this country are in positions in this federal government, especially when it comes to public safety, can't overemphasize the importance of those jobs.

Karoline Leavitt

00:33:46

So just follow up on her question before President Trump is holding China accountable on fentanyl by ramping up tariffs. So how is President Trump planning to hold China accountable on Covid origins? Ms. I haven't spoken to the president about the COVID origins specifically in regards to any actions he may or may not take when it comes to China.

Karoline Leavitt

00:34:06

But as I have previewed quite a few times today, he will be implementing a 10% tariff on

China tomorrow. Thanks so much. Has the President made up his mind about a timeline for tariffs on the East? No, he has not. And will it be a one size fit all or will it be differentiated among governments?

Karoline Leavitt

00:34:28

I won't get ahead of the President on tariffs when it comes to the European Union. What I can tell you again is that the President will be implementing 25% on Canada, 25% on Mexico, 10% on China tomorrow for the reasons that I have repeatedly laid out in this briefing. News Max, go ahead.

Karoline Leavitt

00:34:43

Yes, thank you so much. No, the gentleman behind you, James Rosen. Yes, James, thank you.

Reporter

00:34:48

Thank you, Caroline. Two quick questions on foreign policy and then one very long and tedious and ponderous Rosen question thereafter. First, on Iran. We've heard very little about the President's forthcoming Iran policy besides his determination to prevent that nation from achieving a nuclear weapons capability. Is it the President's objective, short of the use of US Military force, to use the broad array of his powers to try to hasten the end of the Iranian regime?

Karoline Leavitt

00:35:19

I think the President has actually made his position on Iran very clear. And he made that clear when there were the negotiations about the cease fire, which we know obviously is now in place. And the deadline on that cease fire has continued. He said that Hamas and Iranian backed terrorists would have hell to pay if that ceasefire didn't move forward.

Karoline Leavitt

00:35:37

And then quickly thereafter, it did. I also do have news on the hostage front, which I'm very surprised nobody asked about this because it is big news story. And the White House applauds the release of eight additional hostages from Hamas captivity thanks to the cease fire deal secured by President Trump. Three Israeli and five Thai nationals are being reunited with their families and their loved ones after being held in unstable, unspeakable conditions for over 15 months.

Karoline Leavitt

00:36:05

And the President remains committed to the release of all remaining hostages. And they should have never been taken by the brutal terrorist group Hamas in the first place. And I

think President Trump's working meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister next week emphasizes his continued support for Israel in ensuring that brutal terrorists in that region have hell to pay.

Karoline Leavitt

00:36:25

Sure.

Reporter

00:36:26

Can I just finish the other two questions? I know you want the long, ponderous Rosenhole, but first, on the Grinnell trip, as you know, under the previous administration, the U.S. recognized the opposition candidate in last year's elections, Edmundo Gonzalez, now exiled as the legitimate President of Venezuela. Does the President's dispatching of Ambassador Grenell to negotiate directly with President Maduro today.

Reporter

00:36:53

Meanwhile, that the US now officially recognizes President Maduro as the legitimate President of Venezuela?

Peter Doocy

00:36:58

Ms.

Karoline Leavitt

00:36:59

Absolutely not. As I made it very clear, Ambassador RICK Former ambassador and now special envoy Rick Grenell is going to Venezuela with two very clear make sure that Trend Aragua members, of which there are 400 currently in custody, are repatriated back to Venezuela and that all United States detainees return home. Thank you very much, guys, just on.

Reporter

00:37:21

The president's use of language in this room yesterday, and without seeking to cast myself as some kind of moral exemplar because it's rather late in the day to try. Nonetheless, this was an event yesterday that began with a moment of silence for the victims of the air crash and the president's own invocation of a loving God.

Reporter

00:37:38

And then he uncorked that expletive to insult a former cabinet officer. It was the same expletive that I saw him use in the east room in 2020 when he famously held up the Trump acquitted headline. My question is if you could shed any light for us on how the president perceives his use of public profanity, which is a practice that certainly sets him apart from

all of his predecessors.

Reporter

00:38:03

Does he regard it as an effective communications device, part of his appeal, or is it something that he lapses into inadvertently, perhaps, in times of frustration and later regrets?

Karoline Leavitt

00:38:12

Ms. I think one of the things that the American people love most about this president is that he often says what they are thinking but sometimes lack the courage to say themselves. And I think yesterday at this podium, you heard President Trump express great frustration, perhaps even anger, with the previous administration's policies, many of which have led to the crises that our country is currently facing and that this president is focused on fixing.

Karoline Leavitt

00:38:37

Thank you guys very much. Have a great weekend. We'll see you next week.