

Newsmaker Transcript

White House Daily Briefing

Friday, February 3, 2017

SPICER:

Good afternoon, everyone. Happy Friday. It's another busy day here at the White House and across the Trump administration.

The first jobs report under the president's administration was released this morning. It's National Wear Red Day, highlighting the importance of preventing heart disease. It's National Schools -- National Catholic Schools Week. And the president's gonna be signing some executive orders delivering some much-needed regulatory relief to lenders and borrowers in the next few minutes.

We're finishing up the second week here really strong. Yesterday was another great deal we reached with Lockheed Martin for the purchase of a new lot of F-35s. Through the president's intervention, a total of 90 planes -- for a lot of 90 planes, 55 were purchased (inaudible) U.S. military that added up to a total of \$455 million savings for U.S. taxpayers from the previous lot with an average cost production of 7.5 percent. Another big win that the president has delivered on for U.S. taxpayers.

Speaking of good numbers, let's turn to the jobs report. The economy added more than 227,000 new jobs, significantly more than the 175,000 that had been expected. Today's report reflects the consumer confidence that the Trump presidency has inspired. According to a recent Gallup poll, economic confidence is at a new high and ADP showed strong private sector hiring. President Trump campaigned on how to make America work again. Even before he took office, the markets knew he would deliver on that promise.

The president's already taken significant steps to turn our economy around and he is looking forward to ensuring that every American who wants a job has the opportunity to find one. While the president's definitely pleased that the job growth has far surpassed expectations and that the labor force participation is rising, he also recognizes that there is a lot more work to be done. The president has a big and bold agenda to grow the U.S. economy and to create jobs.

In just his first two weeks in office, he's met with more than 50 business leaders across a vast range of industries. This morning, the president participated in a strategic and policy forum with business leaders from some of our country's most successful companies. The president understands the importance of an open dialogue with fellow business leaders on how to make the economy -- the nation's economy stronger.

His firsthand experience as a successful businessman helps to guide his decisions as president and he will continue to seek opinions of other job creators while crafting an economic agenda.

All of these meetings are focused on one primary goal; providing new and improved employment opportunities for all Americans. We're looking at a full range of policy measures to achieve that goal, regulatory relief, tax and trade reform, empowering women in the workplace, rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure and improving our education system.

Also today, in pursuit of that goal, the president will be signing two executive actions as part of his plan to overhaul our financial and (ph) regulatory system. I expect that to happen closer to the 1 o'clock hour. The first is an executive order proposing guidelines and principles that sets the table for a regulatory system that mitigates risk, encourages growth, but more importantly, protects consumers.

The Dodd-Frank Act is a disastrous policy that's hindering our markets, reducing the availability of credit and crippling our economy's ability to grow and create jobs. It imposed hundreds of new regulations and financial -- on financial institutions, while establishing unaccountable and unconstitutional new agency that does not adequately protect consumers. Perhaps worst of all, despite all of this overreaching, Dodd-Frank did not address the causes of the financial crisis, something we all know must be done. It did not solve the too big to fail and we must determine conclusively that the failure of a large bank will never again leave taxpayers on the hook.

The presidential memorandum addresses the burdensome government regulations in the Department of Labor's fiduciary rule. The rule is a solution in search of a problem. There are better ways to protect investors and the Trump administration is taking action to do so. We are directing the Department of Labor to review the rule. The rule's intent may be to have provided retirees and others with better financial advice, but in reality, its effect has been able to -- is to limit the financial services that are available to them.

President Trump does not intend to put unnecessary limits on economic opportunity. The Department of Labor exceeded its authority with this rule and this is exactly the kind of government regulatory overreach the president was put in office to stop. We desperately need to overhaul how we approach financial regulation. The president is taking action to protect American taxpayers and get people back to work.

SPICER:

Moving on, we announced earlier in this week that we would be taking steps to address Iran's recent actions. Today the U.S. sanctioned 25 individuals and entities that provide support to Iran's ballistic missile program and the Islamic Revolutionary Quds Force.

These designations are in response to Iran's ongoing ballistic missile program, including its ballistic missile test on January 29th, 2017, as well as Iran's continued support for terrorism.

We've taken these actions today after careful consideration and will continue to respond with appropriate action.

These designations mark yet another stop in our continued effort to aggressively target Iran's ballistic missile program and terrorism- related activities.

Over at the Department of Defense, Secretary Mattis is on a final day of a two-day trip through Asia. He visited Korea yesterday and Japan today, returning to Washington tomorrow.

Secretary Mattis' visit emphasizes the priority President Trump places on the Asia-Pacific and on strengthening the U.S.-Republic of Korea alliance in the face of a growing North Korea nuclear and ballistic missile threat.

Over at -- in the Senate, the president now has 11 Cabinet nominees waiting a full Senate vote on their confirmations. We look forward to welcome (sic) these individuals into the administration.

Regarding the weekend's plans, the president will debut a second week -- weekly Facebook Live event this evening at 5 o'clock. You can expect him to recap another week of action on behalf of the American people. He'll also comment on his selection of Neil -- Judge Neil Gorsuch to be the next associate judges (sic) of the Supreme Court. And while recognizing Black History Month, he will discuss his mission to deliver more opportunity and safety for the American -- African-American community.

One more note of this week's address, the lead in to the president's remark on Facebook Live will feature some of the incredible artwork throughout the White House that was created by African-American artists. So you definitely don't want to miss this.

As I mentioned previously, the weekend -- this weekend, the president will be shifting the operation of the White House down to the winter White House at a -- Mar-a-Lago. While in Florida, he'll hold meetings and calls with his advisers and staff to plan for another big week of action on behalf of the American people.

We'll provide readouts of these as they occur.

By our count, as of this morning, the administration has already racked up more than 50 -- 60 significant actions, 21 executive actions, 16 meetings with foreign leaders and 10 stakeholder meetings, to name a few.

We're looking at another productive week next week.

On Monday, the president will visit Central Command and Special Operations Command headquarters at MacGill (ph) Air Force Base. While at MacGill (ph), the president will receive command briefings from both CENTCOM and SOCOM, have lunch with the enlisted troops, and we have an all-hands address to personnel.

General Dunford and General Flynn will also be present for the meetings. And the president will return to Washington that evening.

With that, I'm going to go to my first Skype question seat, Jackie Nespral from NBC 6 in South Florida.

Jackie?

QUESTION:

Good afternoon. On behalf of the viewers in South Florida, thanks so much for this opportunity.

You know, a lot of focus on foreign affairs this week, and new sanctions announced today against Iran. And, of course, Miami, as you know, is home to the largest Cuban-American community in the country. And during the campaign, President Trump talked about his discontent with the warming of U.S.-Cuba relations implemented by President Obama. And in the last days of his administration he ended the wet foot-dry foot policy, leaving thousands of Cubans in limbo.

So my question is twofold. A, has there been any contact between your administration and the Cuban government? And B, are there any plans to change the current policy right now?

SPICER:

Thanks, Jackie.

We are in the midst of a full review of all U.S. policies towards Cuba.

The president is committed to a -- an agenda of ensuring human rights for all citizens throughout the world. And as we review those policies in Cuba, that will be forefront in their policy discussions. But there's nothing that we have on that front at this point.

Francesca Chambers?

QUESTION:

(OFF-MIKE) new sanctions on Iran. Previously, this morning, the president had said that they were playing with fire. You've said that appropriate actions will continue to be taken.

Is this the full extent of the punishing actions that we're seeing right now? And are military options still on the table in response to the administration saying that all options are on the table?

SPICER:

Thanks for the question.

I think one of the things that the president has said throughout the campaign, during the transition and since becoming president, is that he doesn't like to telegraph his options. That's how he believes that you can have a much greater successful option.

So I'm not going to go into the full extent.

I think today's sanctions really represent a very, very strong stance against the actions that Iran has been taking, and make it very clear that the deal that they struck private -- previously was not in the best interest of this country, and that President Trump is going to do everything he can to make sure that Iran is stayed in check.

QUESTION:

So it is possible that there are more actions coming, though?

SPICER:

I -- I just -- I would never rule anything off the table. I think the president made it clear throughout the table -- throughout his time that that's what's gonna happen.

Jeff, yeah?

QUESTION:

Thanks a lot, Sean.

I wanted to ask about one of the members that has been announced as being part of President Trump's team is Gina Haspel. Senator Ron Wyden has written to the president saying that her background makes her unsuitable to be the CIA deputy director. And what he was specifically referencing was her role in the enhanced interrogation program that the CIA had during the course of the Bush administration.

Do you believe that this background is a disqualifier for that position?

SPICER:

I think she has had an unbelievably distinguished career as a covert operative. She basically gave up that to come out and serve in this role at the request of Director Pompeo. And I think she has been a very, very distinguished servant to the American people, and is highly qualified for that position.

Next, I'm gonna go to Josh McElveen over at -- from -- at WMUR in New Hampshire.

Josh?

QUESTION:

Thanks for taking the question.

I know you're looking forward to the Patriots come down in a couple of months. A lot of people up here are hoping that happens as well.

Getting to business, though, for more than two years, the number one public health and safety threat facing this state is the heroin and opioid crisis. During the campaign the president promised to be swift and aggressive when it came to this problem, stopping the flow of drugs coming across the border. Increasingly, though, the problem lies in synthetic fentanyl being cooked up in labs in the Northeast.

What is the administration doing on that front, as well as the treatment aspect of addiction?

And secondly, if I may, with the understanding it is a state issue, New Hampshire is poised to become a right-to-work state, but the vote is expected to be close. Given the administration's favorable view of right-to-work, is it actively engaged in that effort? And if not what is the general message from the White House?

SPICER:

Thanks, Josh.

First on the opioid crisis that is a major problem for not just New Hampshire, but so many states across the country, I think one of the things beyond the health issue is -- is to make sure that we are looking at border issues. And the flow of heroin through our southern border is something that the president obviously takes -- that's part of his whole strong immigration stance, strong border security. Having that wall built, having additional assets on the southern border will go a long way to stem the flow of illegal drugs into the country from our southern border through the states.

It was obviously, as you mentioned, a big issue that he made in New Hampshire throughout the primary, and continued so on the campaign. And (inaudible) something that -- as soon as Tom Price and others are confirmed throughout the department, this has got a health component to it, it's got a border issue to it, so there is a multi- government approach that needs to be taken to the opioid crisis.

With respect to right-to-work, I think you accurately portrayed it. The president believes in right-to-work. He wants to give workers and companies the flexibility to do what's in the best interest for job creators.

Obviously the vice president has been a champion of this as well. It's something that is a big deal in Indiana and something that he has championed as well.

QUESTION:

Sean?

SPICER:

Blake (ph)?

QUESTION:

Sean, I want to ask you about Dodd-Frank.

SPICER:

Yeah.

QUESTION:

Beyond the executive order that's going to be signed here momentarily, is the administration planning on or working with Congress to overturn certain portions of the law itself that can't be done with an executive order? If so, what might that be, what might that timeline be? And can you say if a full repeal of Dodd-Frank is actively being considered or not?

SPICER:

Well, I think there's two aspects of this: There's the administrative piece, which he's starting to address through executive actions; and then there's a legislative piece that I think we're gonna work with Congress on.

But, I mean -- I think, I'd go back to what I said earlier, that Dodd-Frank has been a -- has not -- has been both a disaster in terms of the impact that it's had, but also it hasn't achieved the goal. And I think that there's no question that the president talked about this extensively, the impact that it's had. And -- and it's not -- it's not an either/or. It's, frankly, just not doing what it set out to do.

And so I think we're going to continue not just to act through administration -- administrative action, but through -- through working with Congress in figure out a legislative fix.

Major Garrett?

QUESTION:

Sean, meetings with the Australian ambassador here yesterday with Chief of Staff Priebus and Steve Bannon. Can you describe what that meeting was about?

And did the administration make a commitment, which we heard from the State Department yesterday, that in fact all of those subject to the Obama administration agreement are still possible refugee resettlers, just with extreme vetting or some sort of process? What was communicated?

And on the Iran sanctions, Adam Szubin is the acting treasury secretary. He was, of course, in charge of sanctions at the Treasury Department before. Oftentimes these are a long time in development. Were these sanctions something that were, kinda, on his desk or had been identified, and that's what made them so, if not easy, available to enact so rapidly?

SPICER:

Yeah, I think those are -- you -- I think you correctly pointed out -- I mean, he -- he served in the last administration. These kind of sanctions don't happen quickly, but I think the timing of them was clearly in reaction to what we've seen over the last couple of days. We knew we had these options available to us because they had been worked through the process. But we acted swiftly and decisively today because the timing was right.

So, you know, they were in the pipeline, they had been staffed and approved and the president made the decision that now was the time to do it based on recent action.

And I'm sorry -- and on the -- Chief of Staff Priebus and Chief Strategist Bannon did meet with the prime minister yesterday. I think they had a very productive...

QUESTION:

Ambassador.

SPICER:

Ambassador. Thank you, appreciate the correction. They did have a very productive and candid conversation. We have a tremendous amount of respect for the people of Australia, for Prime Minister Trumble (sic) and it was a follow-up on the call. But we're going to continue to work through this. We are going to honor the commitments that we've made in some way. Meaning that we are going to vet these people in accordance with the agreement that happened and we'll continue to have further updates as we do.

John Roberts?

QUESTION:

Sean, (inaudible) last night on settlements in Israel, has there been a shift in U.S. policy? While you said that you didn't think that they were helpful to achieving peace, you also didn't think that they were an impediment to peace, which would represent a departure from both Obama and Bush. And there was no reaffirmation of a two-state solution in that statement, so where are you on that?

SPICER:

The president's committed to peace. That's his goal. And I think when the president and Prime Minister Netanyahu meet here on the 15th, that will obviously be the topic on that. At the end of the day, the goal is peace. And I think that's -- that's what you have to keep in mind, I think that is going to be a subject that they discuss when they meet on the 15th, and that's as far as I want to go on that.

QUESTION:

Back to the settlement. What is your position on settlements in terms of whether or not they -- you've said that they were not an impediment to peace, but you also don't want them building new ones. So...

SPICER:

Right, I mean, I think the statement is very clear about that. We don't believe that the existence of current settlements is an impediment to peace, but I think the construction or expansion of existing settlements beyond the current borders is not going to be helpful moving forward.

Trey (ph)?

QUESTION:

Seventeen members of Congress requested that President Trump not interfere with the current way unemployment is calculated by the Department of Labor. Does the president intend to comply with their request? And a related question. How many of the 227,000 jobs added to the U.S. in January does the president attribute to his administration versus the Obama administration?

SPICER:

I think -- look, when you look at the confidence index, I'm not going to get in -- unfortunately we don't have that kind of a breakdown. I think that you've seen the actions that he's taken, whether it's Carrier or some of the other companies, Sprint, SoftBank. Clearly, there is a desire for companies to want to come be part of this Trump agenda and build and manufacture, create jobs, bring jobs back.

But I'm not at liberty to start parsing the BLS and other reports as far as where that comes down. But look, his team led by Gary Cohen was really pleased with the numbers this morning. Obviously we are pleased that -- 227,000 jobs is a great kickoff. We hope they get better, we know that there's a lot more work to do, and that's why the president continues to meet with business leaders, union leaders, to help figure out how we can grow the economy.

Yeah, Ashley?

QUESTION:

The government revealed in an Alexandria court case today that over 100,000 visas have now been revoked as part of the president's travel ban. Does that include visa holders who are already in the United States? And will the government begin finding them and trying to support them?

SPICER:

I'll have to -- I'll have to get back to you on that. I don't have all the details on that right now.

Yeah?

QUESTION:

Six hours ago, the president tweeted that professional anarchists, thugs and paid protesters are proving the point of millions of people who voted to make America great again. Does the administration have any intention of investigating the groups who have been riding (inaudible)?

SPICER:

I think we know who they are. I don't know that we need to do an investigation.

Yeah?

QUESTION:

Has the president seen the letter sent from Senator McCain yesterday? And if so, is he looking into arming the Ukrainians (ph)?

SPICER:

I don't know, I'll have to get back to you on that.

Yeah?

QUESTION:

Ambassador Nikki Haley came out with a strong statement on Russia yesterday. Does -- does the administration have plans to keep the sanctions against Russia in place or do they have any intention of adding more sanctions?

SPICER:

So there's -- there's two things. One, I think I commented the other day on -- on the sanctions that Treasury put out. Those are in fact routine -- or the clarification -- they are a routine clarification that occurs.

With respect to the sanctions, I think Ambassador Haley made it very clear of our concern with Russia's occupation of Crimea. We are not -- and so there's -- I think she spoke very forcefully and clearly on that.

If I can, I'd like to go to the third Skype question, Christopher Sign from ABC 15 in Arizona.

QUESTION:

Sean, thank you for doing this. Hello from a sunny and beautiful Phoenix.

With the likely confirmation on the horizon, with a new Veteran Affairs secretary, there has been discussion regarding privatizing the V.A. There's also still concerns regarding wait times, even overall care and some reports regarding the suicide rate. What is the reform that the administration is seeking here? Also, will the administration protect whistleblowers?

Second part of the question, we've seen protests here in Phoenix (inaudible) nationwide as well. When you talk about unity, what is the administration doing to bring more unity to the nation and even more transparency? As -- here in Phoenix, we saw that secret meeting on the tarmac and we talked about -- how is the administration repairing all this?

SPICER:

Thanks, Chris.

First, I think the president, mostly through deed, continues to show that he wants to bring people together in this country, figure out how to move the country forward both economically, job wise. I think that is something that he continues to show a desire for. Talked about it in his inaugural address and prayer breakfast.

So I think he's gonna continue to show through both word and deed his desire to move the country forward. I'm trying to think -- can you go back to the first part?

QUESTION:

That's all right. The confirmation -- likely conformation of the....

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

Look, I think, first and foremost, on V.A. reform, you know, the number one thing is to get Dr. Shulkin confirmed. And so many of these, as I brought up in the past couple days, it's hard to talk about how we're gonna enact in a agenda -- a reform when Senate Democrats continue to slow walk some of these folks, and I think that's a big problem.

Dr. Shulkin is the right individual to reform the V.A., to understand whether it's lending or medical care, the problems and the challenges that we face at the V.A. These are people who have served our nation and deserve the best care they can get, whether that's the mortgage lending, health care or the variety of other stuff that the V.A. serves or provides to our veterans.

And I think that what the president has done is talk to people like Dr. Toby Cosgrove at Cleveland Clinic and other business leaders about providing a better approach to serving the needs of our veterans. Right now, you're right, there are still wait times that are unacceptable, there's care that's unacceptable. We've got to address that and he's gonna continue to do it.

David Jackson (ph)?

QUESTION:

Sean, during the campaign, though, Candidate Trump repeatedly said he was gonna void the Iranian nuclear deal.

SPICER:

Right.

QUESTION:

The bottom line, is he gonna do that or is he gonna let it stand?

SPICER:

Look, today -- I think today's action speaks for itself in terms of the sanctions. He's made it very, very clear, David, that the deal that was struck was a bad deal, that we gave Iran too much and we got too little for it. And I think that he is gonna continue to be tough on Iran in a way that wasn't done in the last eight years.

I think today's actions and the way that we expedite those sanctions are another example of how he's gonna stay tough on them.

Let me go to the fourth Skype, Dale Jackson, from WVNN Talk Radio in Huntsville, Alabama.

QUESTION:

Sean, thank you very much for taking questions from outside the elite media bubble there in D.C.

My question is about immigration. Donald Trump made this the forefront of his campaign, the foundation of it, yet the DACA and DAPA Programs still exist, and I learned from a member of Congress yesterday that the Trump administration is still issuing work permits (inaudible).

Question one is, when are these programs going to be ended? And question two, when will they stop issuing work permits to these individuals?

SPICER:

Well, thanks, Dale.

I think, as you know, Secretary Kelly just assumed office. We are reviewing these programs. We've made it very clear that we'll have further updates on immigration. With (inaudible) DACA and DAPA, the president has made significant progress on addressing the pledge that he made to the

American people regarding immigration problems that we face, and I think we're gonna see more action on that in the next few weeks.

Yes, sir?

QUESTION:

Yesterday, the president described NAFTA as a catastrophe. We've heard about his concerns with Mexico, but I'm wondering if you can outline some of the irritants that he finds along the Canadian border and if there's any talk of a meeting with Prime Minister Trudeau?

SPICER:

I think the -- the -- he has spoken to Prime Minister Trudeau. I know that they're looking at setting up a time to come down. We've been in constant contact with Canadian officials and I think that will be a meeting set up shortly.

Sarah (ph)?

QUESTION:

Thanks, Sean.

Russia's foreign minister has pressed the administration for further details on the president's plan to establish safe zones in Syria. The president has said to have discussed this yesterday with King Abdullah. When can we expect further details on that plan?

QUESTION:

That's a good question. I think that we are -- as you noted in the readouts from last weekend, that has been a subject that has come up with all of the Middle East leaders that he's talked about. It's an area that he feels strongly about and I think as he continues to have follow-up conversations, we can expect further details. It's something that -- Secretary Tillerson obviously just got sworn into office -- that there will be further follow-up on that.

Yeah?

QUESTION:

The president will meet with Japanese Prime Minister Abe next Friday.

SPICER:

Yes.

QUESTION:

So (inaudible) topic of the meeting. Will the president tell (ph) Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Japan should pay more and pick up all the expense (inaudible)?

SPICER:

Right. I think there's going to be a lot of both trade and national security. I think as we get closer to the meeting, I'll have further information on it. But right now, as you can imagine, there's an economic aspect to this and then there's a national security aspect to this (inaudible).

Glenn?

QUESTION:

Sean, you've referenced polls a couple of times from the podium, but a poll came out today. CBS says the president's at 40 percent approval rating. We've seen the approval rating drop during the transition period. He talked about polls a great deal during the campaign. What do you think that says about the way the American people are looking at these actions that he's taking? And what do you think it says about his pledge to unite the country on the eve of his election?

SPICER:

I think there's also a Rasmussen poll that showed he had a 51 percent approval rating (inaudible) poll the other day that showed -- again, I don't have it handy. But a majority of people -- hold on.

QUESTION:

(OFF-MIKE)

SPICER:

I understand that. And I think that as the president's policies continue to get enacted -- you know, for all of the hysteria regarding his efforts to protect the country on those seven countries where we have -- didn't have the proper vetting in place to ensure that the American people were safe, what we did have was a very high response from the American people in support of that. His policies continue to do it.

The president understands this is a marathon, not a sprint. As he continues to get people back to work, protect this country, I think the poll numbers will act in accord.

Jeff?

QUESTION:

Sean, you mentioned (inaudible) the head of that agency?

SPICER:

I don't have a staff announcement on the CBFPB (sic) right now, but we'll -- we'll see where we go.

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

Yeah.

QUESTION:

But you want to...

SPICER:

I think we'll have further updates on that. That's an area that we need to work with Congress on.

April?

QUESTION:

Sean, two things. One, you said something about President Trump talking on Facebook live (inaudible) the address, that he was going to talk about Black History Month and issues pertaining to the African-American community.

A couple -- well, when you first came a couple days into the administration, I asked about the agenda -- the black agenda that he had possibly formulated -- was formulating as he came out may be the day before with the issue of Chicago or the day after, something around that time, Chicago and sending the Feds in if it doesn't change. Has he now formulated a plan to deal with the black community, not just with issues of law and order -- what is that?

SPICER:

I mean, he had a meeting with African-American leaders the other day in the Roosevelt Room. I think part of this is -- to your point, isn't just law and order. It's jobs, it's education, it's health care, small business lending, there's a lot that goes along with that agenda. And I think part of these business meetings that he had are about hiring and small business and job creation. All of those issues I think are at the forefront of small business -- that community.

So it's not just a single thing. I think there's a lot, whether it's -- it's crime and law and order, education, health care, small business, job creation, that impacts that entire segment of the population that -- whether they're living in a rural part of the country or in inner city, and I think that's what he's really focused on right now.

QUESTION:

I'm not finished. So (inaudible) formulating the agenda?

SPICER:

Absolutely.

QUESTION:

OK. So the second question, CBE (ph). What's on the table for that?

SPICER:

We're not getting -- I have nothing to announce on that right now.

QUESTION:

You have nothing to announce, but people are concerned...

SPICER:

I understand. People -- I understand. We've heard a lot of rumors about what may or may not. When we have something to announce on that, we will do it. But I don't think it should be any surprise that the president, when it comes to rooting out radical Islamic terrorism which is what that initially was supposed to be focused on, he's going to make sure that he's that -- that is a major focus of keeping this country safe.

And so I don't have anything further for you on that. I'm just...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

April, there are reports. I don't have anything for you. I just made it -- I just said I don't have anything for you, but I will be very clear that this president's commitment to rooting out radical Islamic terrorism is something that is at the forefront of his agenda and I know that there's been a lot of reports about where that program or that effort is going to lay.

QUESTION:

(OFF-MIKE)

SPICER:

Well, I -- I have nothing else. Thank you, April.

Cecilia?

QUESTION:

Sean, thank you.

The (inaudible) tough talk, tough language on Iran playing with fire. Should Americans be ready for the possibility of military action with Iran? Is that on the table?

SPICER:

Look, I've said this before. The president's been very clear. He doesn't take options off the table, but he understands the impact of something like that. The sanctions today I think are gonna be very, very strong and impactful and I hope that Iran realizes that after the provocative measures that they've taken, that they understand that this president, this administration's not gonna sit back and take it lightly.

SPICER:

John (inaudible)?

QUESTION:

Thank you, Sean.

Monday, several published reports on say that it will be a tie in the Senate on the confirmation of Betsy DeVos as secretary of education and Mike Pence will have to cast an historic tie-breaking vote as vice president. Should we be watching for any surprises? Has the Congressional Affairs Office perhaps gotten one more vote from the no camp into the yes, or do you expect the vice president to be on hand to confirm her?

SPICER:

Well, I would say this. Betsy DeVos, as I mentioned before, is an unbelievable champion of education for children, for teachers, for parents. I hope that that vote, you know, gets 60, 70 votes. She is an unbelievable, remarkable woman who has fought very hard to improve our nation's education system and to make sure that schools are serving children. And I think that we're going to make sure we do everything we can and we feel 100 percent confident that she will be confirmed Monday night and be that next secretary of education.

Thank you, guys. Have a great weekend. The president's about to sign executive orders. I hope you have a great weekend.

To those of you who can't travel down to Florida, we'll be gagging on the plane on Monday.

Thank you, have a great weekend.