

Newsmaker Transcript

White House Daily Briefing

Thursday, February 8, 2017

SPICER:

Good afternoon, everyone.

Just a few minutes ago as many of you have seen we had another example of the real-world results that the Trump administration is getting in its pro-jobs agenda.

Intel CEO Brian Krzanich announced that his company is opening a high-tech manufacturing facility in Arizona that will create roughly 10,000 jobs, between the factory itself and its supply chain, which is the latest wave in an economic optimism that's sweeping the country following the president's victory.

In his inaugural address, the president laid out an ambitious vision to create 25 million jobs over the next decade. From the beginning of his campaign to bringing jobs back to our struggling community has been one of the parts of the president's message that most resonated with the American people.

Having hired tens of thousands people himself, the president is keenly aware of what prevents businesses from being successful in creating jobs in the current economy.

President Obama, by contrast, visited the same factory site where this factory will be built during his last reelection visit in 2012, touting the government incentives that were supposed to bring back jobs that had been lost to Asia. President Trump knows that for business, the real government incentive is the government restraining itself.

For too many years, Washington has smothered industry in this country under burdensome regulations. This administration will set out to free businesses from constraints of government bureaucracy and regulation. Under the president's buy American, hire American agenda, the government is going to get out of the way of businesses to allow them to thrive.

SPICER:

Just last week, the president signed what we've been calling the one-in/two-out executive order requiring that new -- every new federal regulation that's adopted, two must be eliminated. This new rule will provide much-needed relief for businesses who have been regulated and saddled with an absolutely staggering amount of additional red tape, as much as \$1.9 trillion per year by some estimates.

In 2014, the National Association of Manufacturers calculated the companies in every industry paid an average of \$9,991 per employee to comply with federal regulations and it's only gotten worse since that study was conducted.

By relieving even a small portion of this burden, we will allow businesses to grow and hire more people. Projects that have been stalled or scuttled are being revived in anticipation of the president's pro-growth policies. Last quarter, confidence among CEO of U.S.-based companies jumped by 4.2 percent points in the YPO Global Pulse survey, one of the single largest quarter gains in history. This is only the beginning of the president's agenda.

Moving on to recap the president's afternoon and evening yesterday, as you saw, we officially announced the 24 people who will be serving the president in his Cabinet on the White House website yesterday. The president looks forward to having all these distinguish qualified men and women in place as heads of departments and agencies so that our government can start fully working for the American people and enacting the agenda that he brought forward during the last campaign.

The president spoke with two foreign leaders yesterday. During his call with President Rajoy of Spain, the two leaders discussed their shared priorities, including efforts to eliminate ISIS. The president additionally reiterated the United States commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and emphasized the importance of NATO allies and sharing the burden of defense spending.

President Trump also spoke with the President Erdogan of Turkey, during which he conveyed U.S. support to Turkey as a strategic partner and NATO ally and welcome Turkey's contributions to the fight against ISIS.

Last night, the president had an incredibly meaningful visit with current officers who enrolled in the Green Berets qualifications course. These young and -- men and women who will be at the tip of the spear serving our country in some of the world's most dangerous places as intelligence officers. The president told these brave young soldiers how proud he was of their commitment (inaudible) to keep us safe and how humbled he was to serve as their commander-in-chief and that they could always count on him to have their back.

Also yesterday, the Department of Justice presented its arguments before the 9th Circuit Court in the case concerning the temporary restraining order on that president's national security executive order. Again, as I did yesterday, I want to emphasize that the issue before the 9th Circuit right now is extremely narrow. The question is simply whether or not the president's executive order, which we maintain is fully lawful under the Constitution and U.S. code, should remain in effect while the courts actually consider it on its merit. We expect the court to issue a decision on this matter soon and we will have a statement once that's done.

Today, the president spoke before the major cities police chiefs and the major county sheriff's winter conference. In his remarks, the president reiterated his commitment to a great national partnership between his administration and law enforcement. While there are many things that the federal government can do to improve safety in our communities, it's truly rests with the police

officers, sheriffs and deputies who risk their lives every day in our streets and their mission is critical to the future of this country.

These brave men and women have a true friend in the White House, and as the president said many times, we must protect those who protect us. He will continue to do that throughout his administration.

Later this afternoon, the president will participate in a standing legislative strategy meeting of his team here. The team has been working around the clock to engage lawmakers and get the president's agenda moving through Congress.

Yesterday, the vice president attended the Republican policy lunch where he discussed how the administration will work with the Senate to deliver results to the American people. Of course, the vice president also passed a historic vote for Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos on the floor of the Senate and then later swore her in in his office across the street.

The larger intergovernmental affairs team is maintaining direct communications to state, local and tribal leaders so that we know what issues are affecting local communities. So far, they've contacted all GOP state speakers of the House, state Senate presidents and attorneys general and all but eight GOP state Senate majority leaders.

Our legislative team is also obviously engaged in Judge Gorsuch's nomination. He had another full day of meetings in the Senate with both Republicans and Democrats. He met this morning with Senators Flake and Heitkamp, and this afternoon, he'll meet with Senators Cotton, Blumenthal, McCaskill and Heller. We are also pleased to see another Democrat, Senator Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, come out and say that the eminently qualified Judge Gorsuch deserves an up or down vote.

That brings us now to nine total Democrats who have come out and expressed a willingness to treat Judge Gorsuch fairly. We hope more Democrats will continue to join their colleagues in fulfilling their constitutional duty to offer advice and consent on the president's nominee.

SPICER:

Also on the Hill, we -- we expect Attorney General-designate Sessions to receive a full vote (ph) on the floor of the Senate tonight. As unfortunately has become commonplace in the Senate, Democrats once again spent hours last night in a counterproductive discussion about one of President Trump's clearly qualified nominees, not to mention one of their peers. Senator Sessions has a long and distinguished legal career, serving as both the U.S. attorney of the southern district of Alabama, and also as Alabama's attorney general.

The president looks forward to Senator Sessions' returned to the Department of Justice where he will continue his service to our nation as our chief law enforcement officer. We also anticipate votes later this week on Secretary-designate Price and Mnuchin. Finally before I open up for

questions, the White House has spoken with the governor of Louisiana about the severe weather in the Gulf Coast. We've also be content with the mayors of the affected areas.

FEMA is monitoring the situation around the clock and is in the process of deploying teams to support response and recovery activities. At this time, there have been no additional request for federal assistance, and we'll update you should that change with that, let me go to the first question from Courtis Fuller from WLWT NBC in Cincinnati, Ohio.

QUESTION:

Good afternoon, Cincinnati, among other cities has recently voted to become a sanctuary city, (inaudible), vowing not to enforce federal immigration laws without a specific request. They also say they want to be open and welcoming to refugees. My question today, how will president Trump respond? Will Cincinnati face economic or other sanctions including, for example, funding of the Brent Spence Bridge which he said he would fund when he was on the campaign trail?

SPICER:

Thanks, Courtis. As I have noted before, the end of the day, this order is about two things. One, keeping our cities safe, and two, respecting the hard-earned taxpayers who send their money to the federal government. And the president is going to do everything he can within the scope of the executive order to make sure that the cities you don't comply with it, counties another institutions, that the remains into a cities, they will not get federal government funding in compliance with the executive order. I think more -- more areas like Miami-Dade down in Florida, understand the importance of this order, and we hope cities like Cincinnati and others community around the country follow their lead and comply with that. With that, Anita Kumar.

QUESTIONS:

I have two questions. First one is, can you tell us who is paying or how it is (ph) happening with the prime minister - and Prime Minister Abadi's (ph) visit to Mar-a- Lago, who will be paying for that? I asked the White House yesterday, they referred me to the state, state referred me to the Japanese government who didn't respond. It seems as if the prime minister was paying, and the money was going to the treasury as previously discussed?

SPICER:

When he travels here or to?

QUESTION:

To Mar-a-Lago.

SPICER:

OK.

QUESTION:

And that (ph) it seems the White House would know that and...

SPICER:

Yeah, let me get back to you on that. I - I will follow up with you on the exact financing, I'm not sure how flows (ph), but I'd be glad to find out.

QUESTION:

Second question was during the hearing yesterday, that you talked about in the ninth circuit, there was some discussion about whether there needed to be a tweak to the executive order that -- to make it clear that legal permanent residents would not be included in that. And there was some back and forth on that. Will there be a tweak? Will there be a...

SPICER:

I think there was further - there was further guidance that I spoke about that went out, I think it's been a week ago, correct me if I am wrong. But it talked about we wanted to make it very, very clear that legal permanent residents were not included in that. But again, remember, we're not talking about the merits of the order.

Right now, this discussion that happened last night, and that the court will be ruling on is specific to the temporary restraining order and whether or not it should be maintained until there's a further discussion on the merits. So again, I don't want to get into the legal nuances, but - but right now, the guidance is very clear that was issued several days ago, if not a week ago, that there is not about legal permanent residents, so I just -- they are excluded from this. I don't know why there would be that discussion. That clarification has been made. Jeff (ph)?

QUESTION:

You said you're not talking about the merits of the order, but the president this morning talking about the merits of the order, when he called it "disgraceful?" The hearing that he heard last night?

SPICER:

He wasn't arguing before the night circuit, Jeff. Last night was a motion before the night circuit on the temporary restraining order. I think the president was very clear that U.S. code and the constitution clearly give the president all of the authority that's needed to make sure that he can regulate who comes into this country and prevent any acts of anyone who is not coming into this country in a peaceful manner.

The code - eight -- U.S. Code 11320 is very, very clear on this. And so I think the president was very -- was pointing out the same issue that we had in Boston, which is, once we had a chance to

argue around the merits, we won on it. And so I think that's -- he clearly did not argue in front of the ninth circuit last night.

QUESTION:

He called it "disgraceful." He called it "disgraceful," is that the type of language...

SPICER:

I think the president -- when you look at the U.S. code and how clear it's written and the authority and power it gives the president to do what's necessary to keep this country safe and regulate who comes into this country, I think it's a very, very clear reading.

And the president was very -- you know, I think he further went on to say it doesn't matter what level of education you're at; I don't think you could misread this.

So I think...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

... I think he was very clear, Jeff. So thank you.

Daniel Alford (ph)?

QUESTION:

I was curious about this tweet that President Trump -- about his daughter's brands.

SPICER:

Yes?

QUESTION:

And then it was re-tweeted by the POTUS account. What's the standard that the president is doing in regards to his family businesses or the businesses...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

Well, I think this is less about his family's business, and an attack on his daughter. He ran for president. He won. He's leading this country. And I think for people to take out their concern about

his actions or his executive orders on members of his family, he has every right to stand up for his family and applaud their -- their business activities, their success.

So, look, when it comes to his family, I think he's been very clear how proud he is of what they do and what they've accomplished. And for someone to take out their concern with his policies on a family members of his is just -- is not acceptable. And the president has every right as a father to stand up for them.

I'm going to go to Norma Garcia (ph) from KXTX.

QUESTION:

Thank you.

In (inaudible) to penalize sanctuary cities. In this state and other states around the country, there is a growing concern among undocumented immigrants whose lives are deeply rooted in the United States and have no criminal records.

My question is: Is this administration ready to tackle comprehensive immigration reform? If so, can you give us a timeline for it? If not, what is the plan to deal with undocumented immigrants who live in this country long term?

SPICER:

Thanks, Norma.

I think, you know, this has come up several times. I don't think that anybody doubts the president's concern or priority that is placed on immigration. He's talked about it on -- you know, when you talk about a comprehensive approach, he's talked about building a wall. He's talked about making sure we go after criminals in this country. He's talked about walking through the process and addressing DACA and DAPA in time.

I think this is a big problem. This is -- there's no question that both on the security side and on reforming the current immigration system that is so clearly broken, that he is walking through this already both in terms of executive action, and then will continue to work through Congress.

So to your question about the timeline, I think he's already enacting several pieces of it and he's going to work with Congress to get further down that.

Ama Javers (ph)?

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

Playing off of the questions (inaudible) on the business activities that you describe the president taking offense to, Nordstrom has (inaudible) says this was not a political decision. It was a business decision. Ivanka Trump, as you know, has said she has divorced herself, separated herself from (inaudible).

So how is she being treated unfairly if she's not (inaudible)?

SPICER:

Well, I think there's clearly a targeting of her brand and it's her name still out there. So she's not directly running the company, it's still her name on it. And there's clearly efforts that -- to undermine that name based on her father's positions on particular -- on particular policies that he's taken.

This is a direct attack on his policies and her name. And so that -- that -- there's clearly an attempt for him to stand up for her because she is being maligned because they have a problem with his policies.

John Roberts? (ph)

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

And actually to clarify that -- the timing of that tweet, it looked like he was right after (inaudible) during (inaudible).

SPICER:

I -- I've heard the conjecture. He was free when that happened. Thank you for asking.

QUESTION:

My second question was on the (inaudible).

SPICER:

That was actually -- that's two.

QUESTION:

Oh, I'm sorry. That was a clarification of the one.

(CROSSTALK)

(LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

(inaudible) today that if he does not prevail in court, talking about the (inaudible) issue, that we will never be safe. We will never have the safety and security we're entitled to.

What does that mean? Does that mean that this is the only tool in his toolbox? And if this E.O. gets batted down by the court, we're toast?

SPICER:

No -- but I think that when you -- I mean, again, look, let's -- 8 U.S. Code 1182 says whenever the president finds that the entry of an alien or any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may by proclamation and for such periods as he shall deem necessary suspend the entry of aliens or any class of aliens or immigrant or non-immigrants or impose on the entry of aliens or restrictions he may deem necessary and appropriate.

I guess at some point if you don't look at that statute and say that the president has the power that Congress and the president have deemed necessary to keep this country safe, you've got to wonder how far you're going to allow that to get eroded.

So, the point is is that at some area, you've got to wonder if the president doesn't -- isn't able to execute on the power that's been vested into him and it's codified in U.S. Code, at some point you have to wonder what else is at question.

We have -- we have a president that acted 100 percent lawfully to keep people out of this country from seven countries that we did not have the proper information to ensure they were coming into this country with the appropriate means and motives. If at some point the president doesn't have the power as given to him in law to protect this country, I think that really questions what a slippery slope we're on.

John?

QUESTION:

Sean, two questions (ph).

SPICER:

Of course.

(LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

President -- the president said this morning that he paid very close attention to the arguments before the 9th last night.

SPICER:

Yeah.

QUESTION:

Was he happy with the presentation the DOJ attorney (inaudible) made? There was some concern by supporters of this extreme vetting program that he wasn't strong enough. He seemed to be searching for answers, particularly (inaudible).

SPICER:

I think there was a lot of back and forth during that entire argument. He made some solid points and I think that he did what he had to to represent the president's case and to represent the administration's case on the TRO.

I think the president has really focused on the merits of this case and looking forward to getting it back either to the 9th Circuit or the lower court or however it has to move. He feels very confident on the merits and that's where I think his focus has been. So I don't -- I'm not concerned. I think the president's main concern has been on the merits of this case and making sure that an executive order that was lawfully executed and went through the entire process.

Remember, we've got to go back and remember that the DOJ's Office of Legal Compliance vetted this order, deemed it was legal. So we've followed the entire process to make sure that this was done correctly, constitutionally, legally and every otherwise. And so to now -- now our focus is making sure -- whether or not we have to wait a day or two or whatever for the TRO, we look forward to the opportunity to discuss this on the merits.

Jen Jacobs?

QUESTION:

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold on. Just as a point of clarification.

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

So he is -- he was happy with his presentation (inaudible)?

SPICER:

I think he is looking forward to the merits of this discussion. That's where -- that's -- and I think he was pleased with some of the points that got made. But his focus is on the merits of the order and making sure that ultimately we're able to do what we can to get this order back in place and protect the American people.

Jen?

QUESTION:

Russ (ph) did two.

SPICER:

We're (inaudible) started.

(LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

We have reported that Russia has sent its biggest shipment of missiles ever to Syria. Just wondering what the White House's reaction is?

SPICER:

I think I'll have to -- we don't have any comment on this at this time.

Jen?

QUESTION:

OK. The Muslim Brotherhood?

SPICER:

Yeah?

QUESTION:

Is it accurate that the administration is weighing (ph) labeling the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization? And will you do the same for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard?

SPICER:

I think there's no one that can question the president's commitment to -- to fully attacking and addressing the threat that we face by radical Islamic terrorists. He has been -- made very clear

during the campaign that the first step is understanding, knowing and proclaiming who the enemy is, and he's going to do whatever it takes.

That being said, I'm not gonna get ahead of any announcements that we may or may not have coming in the future. But make no mistake, the president understands the threat that our nation faces and he's -- everything he can to attack it, root it out and destroy it.

Cecilia?

QUESTION:

Thank you. The president also said today that in the last two weeks, he learned a lot and that terrorism is far greater -- and that terrorism is a far greater threat than people understand. That sounds like he is telling the American public that they have something to fear. Is there a specific threat that he is talking about? And should the American public, based on that statement right there, be fearful?

SPICER:

No, but I think the American people should understand that the president's committed to doing this. There are -- we face a very, very real threat in ISIS and radical Islamic terrorism and we've got to do everything we can and that the reason that he is taking the steps that he is is because we are -- we must remain ever vigilant. We can't let our guard down. We have to be ahead of the curve and that the president's gonna take the steps necessary to protect this country and its people.

And that -- the idea that we should sit back and not fully appreciate the constant threat that we're in, it's week after week, month after month that we're hearing of another instance, lone wolf, et cetera, et cetera, that is going (ph) throughout this country -- excuse me, throughout the world. My apologies.

QUESTION:

But what...

SPICER:

And so I think what the president is doing is trying to make sure that the American people understand that he's doing everything he can to protect them and to keep our institutions and our people safe.

And so this is not something that we can rest on our laurels, that we can't (ph) understand. He was just down at CENTCOM and SOCOM Monday morning getting a full briefing of the threat that we face from around the world and this -- and their motives. And I think that that's something that he weighs very heavily on his mind when he meets with these people, gets these briefing, meets with the green beret soldier, that he recognizes that there are so many people out there putting their life on the line to protect this country and to make sure that we understand the threats and that it's

his job and his obligation to do everything within his power to take that information and do what he can to protect the country.

SPICER:

And so just to put a pin in it, I just want to be clear. We don't -- while we may not face an imminent threat today, we don't know when that next threat comes. Is it next week? Is it next month? Is it next year?

But the president wants to get ahead of the curve and make sure we're not talking about what we should have done, but taking every step necessary to make sure that it doesn't happen.

Steve?

QUESTION:

(Inaudible), but is the threat today greater than it was yesterday or last week? Because that's what's...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

I understand what he's saying. What I'm telling you is that we shouldn't ever be behind the curve on the threats that this country faces.

We should make sure -- we don't know when the next one's coming. We don't know when the next lone wolf is coming. We don't know when the next attack is.

We've got amazing intelligence that's trying to root out and make sure that it doesn't happen again. But what we can't do is wait for the next attack to come and say I wish we had done the following. And the steps that he's taken are proactively making this country and our people safer.

Steve?

QUESTION:

What is the White House response to Republican proposal for a carbon tax voted today?

And secondly, could you just set up tomorrow's meeting with the airline CEOs a little bit? What do you hope to get out of it? What do you hope to discuss?

SPICER:

So I'm not going to comment on pending legislation. We'll wait and see where that comes. It's not going to be a habit of ours to comment on every bill that gets introduced or marked up in committee until we have a statement of administration policy.

And with respect to the meeting tomorrow, we'll have a further readout on that later tomorrow. But I will say in general, as you know, he's met with intelligence now. He met with -- I mean executives from the car manufacturers, manufacturing companies, technological companies, unions.

So this -- these continued meetings that you'll see in the next months and years are going to be an attempt to make sure they're sitting down with business leaders from around the country to figure out how he can use his office and this administration to further their ability to create jobs and grow the economy.

So this is going to be more of a pattern. You're going to continue to see this, him meeting with people who want to share that agenda to grow great jobs, manufactured here, with wages up here. Bring benefits to good paying jobs, et cetera.

QUESTION:

(Inaudible) the fact that he did have this meeting about the current intentions?

SPICER:

No. I just -- look, we're not at a policy -- we have nothing to announce on that.

If I can go now to our next -- let me just -- sorry. We've got Josh Smith from WJHL in southwest Virginia.

QUESTION:

First off, thanks so much for taking questions from journalists covering local news. We appreciate it.

WJHL is in northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia. That is coal country. And I have two questions related to coal.

Then candidate Trump came to Abingdon, Va. last year. And he made a bold promise. If it helped to rescue the mining industry, that he would help to bring back coal jobs. And he would push back against coal environmental regulations.

If the executive order last week was a first step, what specifically is the president willing to do, planning to do to make good on that promise to help the coal industry? To encourage coal production and use, and to deal with what some call its demonized image?

And as a follow-up I got to ask two questions because when am I ever going to get to do this again?

What assurances can the president give those who hear him talking about and pushing back against environmental regulations and bringing back coal? What assurances can he give those who are very worried about the impact on the environment?

SPICER:

Well, I think that there's this -- I mean I think when you hear him talk about coal specifically, it's under the guise of clean coal. And I think the technology we're able to utilize these days make it one of the cleanest uses of technology that we have. And the president's point is that as we bring back this industry we can do it in a way that is environmentally friendly, and it becomes a great and greater energy source for us.

Just the other day the Department of Energy noted that we expect I think it's about a 3 percent increase in coal production in this country, which is a noticeable reverse of where it's been in the past.

You mentioned the executive order and the talk that the president's had over the past year or so about his desire to bring back coal. Largely that has to do with regulation that the EPA has put on existing coal plants that have ensured that they couldn't operate in an effective way to stay open.

I think the president's working with industry to roll back a lot of that, and do it in a way that's environmental friendly. And I think that you can do that utilizing the technology you have and harness the power of clean coal, Josh. Thanks.

QUESTION:

Sean?

SPICER:

Preston (ph).

QUESTION:

Sean? Sean? Sean?

QUESTION:

I just want to know...

SPICER:

Hold that one. You start.

QUESTION:

OK. Yemen has withdrawn permission for the United States to run Special Operations background missions against suspected terrorists in the wake of the recent raid there that claimed so many civilian lives.

Does that not undercut the administration's ability to fight terrorism in that region? And do you stand by your assessment that it's a success?

SPICER:

Well, I'll take the last one first. It's absolutely a success. And I think anyone who would suggest it's not a success does disservice to the life of Chief Ryan Owens. He fought knowing what was at stake in that mission. And anybody who would suggest otherwise, doesn't fully appreciate how successful that mission was, what the information that they were able to retrieve was and how that will help prevent future terrorist attacks.

QUESTION:

Senator John McCain...

SPICER:

I understand that. I think my statement's very clear on that Kristin (ph). I think anybody who undermines the success of that raid, owes an apology and disservice to the life of Chief Owens.

QUESTION:

(inaudible)

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

I -- I -- hold on Kristin (ph), can I answer the question? I'm answering the question, please let me finish.

The raid -- the -- the action that was taken in Yemen was a huge success. American lives will be saved because of it, future attacks we prevented. The life of Chief Ryan Owens was done in service to this country and we owe him and his family a great debt for the information that we received during that raid. I think any suggestion otherwise, is a disservice to his courageous life and the actions that he took, full stop.

With respect -- I'm sorry, what was the first part?

QUESTION:

Is that your message to Senator John McCain?

SPICER:

That's my message to anybody who says that. Anybody. I just -- I don't know how much clearer I can be Kristin (ph).

Hunter Walker (ph)?

QUESTION:

Sean, Sean.

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

Thank you Sean. This morning President Trump asked local law enforcement officials to help assist with deportation. If he doesn't get the cooperation he's hoping for, does he plan to have DHS and CPB pro-actively begin deportations of undocumented criminals in the order zone?

SPICER:

Well, I -- I think that -- look, when you talk about immigration and what he's doing, whether it's the wall or enforcing existing regulations or visa reform, I don't think anybody questions the president's commitment to border security and immigration reform. In fact, it's usually quite the opposite.

So when it comes to the steps that he's going to take, I think I have addressed this multiple times what his priorities are gonna be. But you've seen Secretary Kelly talk about construction of the wall, his implementation of the executive order to keep people out. There's going to be a considerable amount of action on this front on immigration and border security.

It started day one and it's going to continue through the last possible day, until the president feels that this border is 100 percent secure and we've got the immigration system completely under control.

QUESTION:

Is defunding his only tool to get cooperation from the...

SPICER:

Look, I'm not going to get ahead of it. I think when you saw the support (ph) and some of the side conversations that the sheriffs and police officers had, and the conversations we had beyond that,

the sheriffs the other day, the support they've issued on behalf of his executive action and his agenda as a whole.

These are the folks on the front line in many cases, Hunter (ph), that are on the border, that see what some of this does and how it affects families and businesses. Not to mention the cost that it is to both our country in terms of what we have to do to support the immigration of the southern border in particular, but also the cost that it has on our economy and our jobs.

So you're gonna continue to see a flurry of activity over and over and over again to make sure that this president continues to show the importance that he puts on both border security and immigration reform.

Yeah?

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

Thank you, Sean. Yesterday on CNN, Kellyanne Conway confirmed that the announcement that Prime Minister Trudeau is gonna be here next week, can you confirm which day? Have discussions on reviewing the Canadian part of NAFTA started? And can you confirm that (inaudible) is being considered as ambassador to Ottawa?

SPICER:

So, I will have further updates on the prime minister's schedule, either later today or tomorrow. I'm not in a position where I can finalize that. But we will have...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

Guys, slow your roll.

(LAUGHTER)

So, we will -- with respect to the ambassador, we have no additional ambassador nominations or announcements to make on that front. I'm sure at some point we will have soon.

With respect to the agenda, as -- as the president spoke with Prime Minister Trudeau a few weeks ago. They talked about trade and security and commerce, and I think all of that's gonna be discussed at the time when the president and him further have further have -- further meet or discuss this.

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

Just on NATO. Canada, of course, is one of the 28 member countries. The president has been calling out countries to pay their fair share...

SPICER:

Right.

QUESTION:

... of dues. What are his options if countries don't listen to him? Then what is this...

SPICER:

Well, I think -- look, every country is obligated to pay for two percent of their GDP. And the president has made it very clear that for too long, many countries have been getting a free ride. When he has talked to these countries -- and as I've just read out, both Erdogan and (inaudible) -- he has addressed this. Not just with them, but to so many of the other NATO countries.

And by and large, every single one of them agrees with that. They understand the importance of NATO. And the president's very clear that in order for NATO to be successful, these folks have to pay their fair share.

Carol Lake (ph)?

QUESTION:

Thanks you. I want to follow on Kristin (ph) and then I just have a question about Turkey. Do -- both the White House have a reaction to reports that Yemen has revoked permission for the U.S. (inaudible)?

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

I'm sorry. Thank you.

Yemen, more than most countries, fully appreciates the -- the fight that we have with ISIS. And I think we're going to continue to work with them to strengthen our diplomatic relationship, to understand our fight against terrorism. And so at this point, I'll leave it at that we understand that we share that commitment with them and we're going to continue to work with them to combat ISIS and to make sure that we do that.

I'm not -- I'm not in a position to go any further at this time.

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

(inaudible) Turkey (inaudible), President Erdogan said today that the U.S. agreed to work with Turkey to take Raqqa. Can you clarify what the president said to him in that phone call?

SPICER:

I think the readout was as specific as we want to get with his conversation with...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

... I think the readout that we put out on Turkey was as far as we want to go with that. Thank you.

Hold on. I'm going to go to our last one -- Adriana Cohen, a radio host and columnist for the Boston Herald.

QUESTION:

Great to be with you, Sean.

Last night, Boston Mayor Walsh went on a television show to talk about sanctuary cities. What does the president make of his vow to house illegal immigrants in Boston city hall to shield them from the Trump administration?

SPICER:

I think the president's executive order is pretty clear when it comes to these kind of actions. Again, I think -- I referenced it earlier in the briefing -- but it's two-fold. One is there's a concern about the safety of the American people on how we let people come into this country. And second, with respect to the American taxpayer.

And if we're going to be sending federal tax dollars to folks, to Washington, I think they need to be used appropriately. And the president's going to do everything in his power to respect the money that taxpayers send to -- send to Washington and is spent facilitating legal activities and on American citizens.

Blake? (ph)

QUESTION:

Thanks, Sean.

Earlier today, the president said that the wall is in the process of being designed. Given his previous background, is he or does he plan on being actively involved with the designing and the implementation of that wall?

And separately, last night Elizabeth Warren -- any reaction from the White House on whether you believe what Mitch McConnell did was the correct thing? Critics say she was silence on the Senate floor.

SPICER:

On the wall, I mean, the president's a builder. He understands, and I think he's going to make sure that as this project moves forward, that he's going to stay in close touch with Secretary Kelly to make sure that it fits his specs. But he takes enormous attention to detail and he wants to make sure it gets done right.

So I would expect that a project of this magnitude and one that is this high on his priority list will get the necessary attention from the president.

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

I'm sorry?

QUESTION:

Senator Warren last night...

SPICER:

Yeah, I would just -- I would refer you back to Senate rules. I mean, this is not something that we tend to discuss here. I'll leave it to Senator McConnell and the Senate to discuss Senate rules.

Yes?

QUESTION:

I just wanted to follow up again on Yemen.

SPICER:

Yes?

QUESTION:

I'm not sure exactly what you are trying to say here.

It seems like the report was that the Yemenese government has asked the U.S. to stop doing any ground operations with regard to AQAP. Is that the request that you got from the Yemenese government?

SPICER:

We'll -- we'll have further information on that going forward. I think we are in touch with Yemenese officials. We're working this through diplomatic channels. But they understand the fight and the commitment that we both share when it comes to rooting out ISIS. And I'll have more information on that.

Yes?

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

(inaudible) Halley (ph) had mentioned one part of it. The other part of it this morning was that there's been a big increase in traffic to the U.S. from certain areas. Can you say what certain areas he's referring to? And what data (inaudible)?

SPICER:

I'll have to get -- I'll get back to you on that. I've got to pull the data field on that.

Margaret? (ph) Yes?

QUESTION:

(inaudible) parts on Turkey. Did the president dispatch the CIA director to Turkey, as Turkish reports are saying right now (inaudible)?

SPICER:

I just saw the CIA director. So if it happened, it hasn't happened in the last hour.

QUESTION:

OK. The rest of my question was about (inaudible) -- about Gulen -- whether there was discussion of extraditing Fethullah Gulen who (inaudible) as a terrorist.

SPICER:

I have nothing further than the readout at this time. So.

QUESTION:

On -- the second question, though, was about your statement, you don't know when the next lone wolf is coming.

SPICER:

Right.

QUESTION:

I believe, based on numbers, that the vast majority of lone wolf attacks in this country have been carried out by people who were either American, American born, or naturalized American citizens. So, what specifically are you referring to there? And...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

Well, I guess my question, Margaret (ph), would be...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

... we've had -- I think there's at least, just for example, within the seven countries that we've talked about, there's at least 20-some-odd people that over the last few years have come into this country and been convicted of or charged with acts of terrorism. So the question...

(CROSSTALK)

QUESTION:

... the people who are lone wolf...

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

I understand that. But what I'm getting at is you don't know, I don't know, when is the next act; who's going to commit it; how are they going to commit it.

The point is that you don't look at odds and say, "hey, let's play the odds on American lives." You do exactly what you can to prevent any attack from occurring.

And so, you know, I think you can go through any system and say, you know, when was the last time that somebody committed a shoe bomb and so let's not take -- the TSA...

QUESTION:

But that's not what I'm asking.

SPICER:

No, I get what you're asking. You're asking when is the next terrorist attack and we don't know.

QUESTION:

No. What is being done about people who are radicalized in the basement in front of the computer screen who are...

SPICER:

Right, and I think the president's looking...

QUESTION:

... not affected by...

SPICER:

Right, and i think the president has asked both for a plan to defeat ISIS, from stuff that is coming in from this and he's taking steps, but he's also looking at working with the FBI and domestic intelligence agencies to gather the best information we can to prevent acts on our soil from people, wherever they may be.

QUESTION:

So something more is being done on that front that we haven't heard about?

SPICER:

But -- no, no, no. But he has tasked -- he has tasked the FBI. It is a whole of government approach to what's going on. We're not looking at this myopically and just saying these are the seven countries. We -- those -- that whole point of that first executive ban, and I know that's not entirely what you're asking, was to start with countries that we didn't have the appropriate vetting measures to ensure that they could come into this country.

As we move forward through this 90-day period, we're reviewing other countries, other options that are -- those are the external threats coming into this country. At the same time, the president has looked at options within the domestic intelligence gathering to figure out whether it's cyber or

other ways that we can determine are there ways to prevent or get ahead of additional threats that we might face in this country.

But it's not -- it's not an either/or proposition. It's a whole of government approach to what's going on.

QUESTION:

A bipartisan group of senators are introducing legislation, and I know you don't like to talk about legislation, that would allow the Senate to sign off on a reduction in sanctions against Russia. Would the president support such a (inaudible) by Congress on sanctions?

SPICER:

There's two sets of sanctions, Tamara, that we've got to deal with, right? One is the ones with respect to Crimea and I think that Ambassador Haley has addressed that very forcefully at the U.N., that until Russia leaves Crimea, those sanctions are (inaudible). With respect to the other ones, you know, I don't want to get ahead of the legislation if that's what that specifically is dealing with.

But again, we're not going to get into pending legislation. With respect to the sanctions that specifically deal with Ukraine and Crimea, I think Ambassador Haley has spoken very, very clearly about that.

Yeah?

QUESTION:

Sean, thanks. The president said this morning in his address to the law enforcement officials that he'll have a zero tolerance policy for attacks against law enforcement officers. Has a specific policy proposal -- what does that mean exactly? More death penalty cases on the federal level? What does he mean?

SPICER:

I think that what the president said not just yesterday with his meeting with the sheriffs but then today, is that he wants them to understand that he is a true friend. They have a true friend in the White House, somebody who understands the dangers that they face every day by putting their lives on the line to protect the American people, whether it's pulling someone over for a traffic stop and not knowing what's in the car or going up to a house to serve a warrant and not knowing who's behind that door.

These men and women every day, day in and day out, are willing to put their lives on the line and make huge sacrifices. So he wants them to know that they have a true friend here in the White House that's gonna have their back. How that manifests itself going forward, I don't -- you know, the president will have further details as that moves forward. But for right now, I think his number

one message to them was you've got a friend, he's got your back, let's do what we can to get these cities (ph).

I think the other thing that was important is that, you know, he mentioned Chicago. Their crime rate -- their murder rate's up 45, 50 percent and in so many of these cities it's up. It's unacceptable and I think the president is disgusted that so many American lives are taken, injured, whatever, that we can't walk down the streets of our own cities in safety.

And I think he wants to make sure that they understand his commitment not just to preventing acts of terrorism from coming into this country, but also that -- whether it's gang violence or whatever, that people feel safe and that law enforcement is empowered to do what it can to keep our communities safe, to work with communities, to establish policies that both respect our citizens, but do so in a way that makes them feel safe and allows them to drive and walk down the streets of our cities.

Charlie?

QUESTION:

Journalist Matt Drudge tweeted today that the Republican Party should be sued for fraud, basically upset about the lack of any legislation to repeal Obamacare or any tax cut legislation. So what's your message to him and anyone else who's worried about sort of the big push in the beginning -- might be concerned that that momentum is stalling?

SPICER:

I -- I think it's hardly stalling. I think it's a mammoth thing to repeal and replace. I think the -- that there's no question the president's commitment to doing this. You've heard Speaker Ryan talk about how we're going to - we should be able to have this wrapped up by the end of the year. It's a big bill. It got jammed through and it was very sweeping, we're talking about 1/5 of our economy.

We can even do it quickly as the Democrats did and end up with a monstrosity where premiums go up, access is limited, or we can do it right. And I think the president, while he wants to get this done as soon as possible and understand what's at stake, he wants to do it right. He understands how important healthcare is to American families and individuals.

And so, his goal is to get it done right and have an outcome that achieves the goals that it sets out to do. That's it, plain and simple.

QUESTION:

I have a series of questions, I want to...

SPICER:

...Please.

(LAUGHTER)

SPICER:

Look at what you started, Hallie Jackson (ph).

QUESTION:

Don't blame it on Hallie (ph), OK? Going back to the issue of policing, what happens when there is a situation - you're talking about good policing. But what happens when there are situations that we've seen over the last few years that have been highlighted with this accountability piece (ph) with cameras?

What happens when there is bad policing? What...

SPICER:

...Then we have to deal with it. I mean, I don't - I think the president wants to do what he can but again, I think you're right, we've got to have good policing. But that's - he wants to stand with them, talk about how we can do proper training, what kind of funding they need to do their job better. In so many cases, the police are asking for the resources because they've become fearful of making routine stops by preventing it (ph).

So I think it's - it's working with the police, integrating those kind of back and forth and having a back - a dialogue in communities to make sure that we're doing it, as you put it, like in a way that instills confidence in our citizens and our communities. But we can do this right and we can make...

QUESTION:

...Is that either/or though (ph)?

SPICER:

No, absolutely not.

QUESTION:

OK.

SPICER:

No, no, no. We've got to do this - look, police officers from around this country on a daily basis put their lives out there and I think that they want to - they want to keep communities safe. Like teachers, they entered this not - no cop signs up or sheriff because of the money. Like teachers,

they do it because they care about this community, they care about making this country better, their community better.

But I think in return they should provided the resources and policies they need to do their job well and to do so that ensures that we, you know, have this back and forth dialogue with the American people that continues to earn the respect that they deserve for the sacrifice that they're making.

QUESTION:

Next question...

SPICER:

...How many do we got? Just so I.

QUESTION:

Maybe three. Maybe three.

(LAUGHTER)

SPICER:

No, no, no.

QUESTION:

Is black history month - let me go (ph).

(LAUGHTER)

SPICER:

You can play that one (ph).

QUESTION:

I've got a couple more days (ph).

SPICER:

OK.

(LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

All right, so listen, on the issue - on the issue of last evening with Elizabeth Warren (ph). Coretta Scott King, these words - I want to get your reaction to these words that were not allowed. Mr. Sessions has used the awesome power of his office to chill the free exercise of the vote by black citizens in the district he now seeks to serve as a federal judge.

And she's basically saying that Sessions has indifference towards criminal violations of civil rights law. What do you say to that?

SPICER:

Well obviously we have a lot of respect for her and the sacrifices that she made and the sacrifices that frankly she endured in her life. But I would respectfully disagree with her assessment of Senator Sessions then and now. His record on civil and voting rights I think is outstanding. And like Arlen Specter, the late Arlen Specter, I can only hope that if she was still with us today, that after getting to know him and to see his record and his commitment to voting civil rights that she would share the same view that Senator Specter did where he said "although I voted against him, getting to know the man that is now, I regret that vote."

And I would hope that if she was still with us today that she would share that sentiment because Senator Sessions' record both as - as U.S. Attorney for Alabama as attorney general and as senator has been one that has stood up for voting rights, he prosecuted the Klan - the Klan. He stood up for Coretta Scott King getting - for getting the gold medal. He has been a tireless advocate of voting and civil rights throughout his career.

And I would just hope that if she was still with us today that she would share the sentiments of former Senator Specter.

QUESTION:

OK, and last two.

SPICER:

OK.

QUESTION:

Diversity here (ph), the administration's diversity issues, you've been slammed on that recently. I understand that there's been a meeting, Vice President Pence has been talking to J.C. Watts, Michael Steele and others to collaborate on that. And also, there's a lot of groundswell about this HBCU executive order. What's going on with that?

SPICER:

So, the HBCU presidents will be in town later this month as part of the national celebration. We'll have further updates on both the meetings that we may have with them, the activities surrounding that in terms of the administration, and then I think we'll have further updates on both the meetings that we may have with them, the activities surrounding that in terms of the administration, and then I think we'll have further updates on - as I mentioned, with all executive orders, we have nothing to update on that.

But obviously, the president, you know, has a strong commitment to - to them and understands over the last eight years, they've been woefully neglected and I think he wants to really show a commitment in funding to HBCUs and so you'll see, I think, not just a push this month but in his budget and going forward.

QUESTION:

Share (ph) PLUS loans, Pell Grants...

SPICER:

...I think his budget will address a lot of these issues.

(CROSSTALK)

SPICER:

And I think - look, we're going to continue to reach out to a lot of folks to get their ideas and their input. I think he's shown that both through the transition and now but we're going to continue to reach out to people of different backgrounds, of different color, of different gender, of different economic - you know, socioeconomic, of different industry, of different parties.

The president, I think, continues to show a desire to reach out and talk to people who I think share an agenda of moving the country forward and doesn't really care about their background, their voting history, any of those other ideological traits. They share a commitment to moving this country forward and lifting people up, that's his end of the (ph).

QUESTION:

You mentioned the one in, two out order in your opening. There was a lawsuit filed in federal court this morning challenging that lawsuit. What else (ph) - where is that and what's your response to it?

SPICER:

Well, I think the lawsuit presumes a lot of outcomes that are widely inaccurate. I think it presumes that certain things would get - be part of the one out. The bottom line is that overregulation has stemmed economic growth and job creation. Reviewing those to make sure that they are meeting

their intent and not stifling job creation at the expense of whatever they were intended to do is something that should be smart and welcomed (ph) by everybody.

The idea that we're willy-nilly just allowing regulations to occur. But the lawsuit specifically is wildly inaccurate. It makes a ton of assumptions that call for speculation on what may or may not happen in the future and that's highly - you know, it's just subjective at best and doesn't have any basis in fact. Thank you guys, look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

QUESTION:

More hands up here, Sean.

SPICER:

I know, I see them. Tomorrow.