

NBC's *Today*

12/18/25

7:00:12 a.m. [TEASE]

22 seconds

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: President Trump makes his case to the American people.

CRAIG MELVIN: With a major focus on the economy. It is December 18. This is *Today*. Addressing the nation. President Trump delivering a rare prime-time speech defending his first year back in office —

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Addressing the Nation]

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: 11 months ago, I inherited a mess. And I'm fixing it.

MELVIN: — while blaming Democrats for the biggest concern for voters: the high cost of living. We'll break down the President's message and reaction in a live report from Washington.

(...)

7:03:34 a.m.

3 minutes and 12 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Happening *Today*; White House Address]

MELVIN: But we do start in Washington where President Trump delivered a rare prime-time address from the White House.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Happening *Today*]

GUTHRIE: His 18-minute speech focusing mainly on the economy and the border, and laying the blame on his predecessor.

MELVIN: NBC's senior White House correspondent Garrett Haake joins us now with a full breakdown. Garrett, good morning.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Delivers Primetime Address to Nation]

GARRETT HAAKE: Hey, Craig, good morning. In the President's speech last night, it felt in many ways like a campaign rally speech on fast forward. The end of the year address meant to tout progress on the border and the economy with the President offering at times exaggerated and misleading claims to advance his arguments. All of it while repeatedly pointing fingers at his predecessor, President Biden, for what he says was the mess left for him to clean up. President Trump addressing the nation from the White House, boasting about what he views as his administration's top achievements so far.

TRUMP: After 11 months, our border is secure, inflation has stopped, wages are up, prices are down.

HAAKE: Nearly a year into his second term, the President attempting to blame Americans' ongoing economic anxieties on his predecessor, mentioning former President Joe Biden seven times.

TRUMP: 11 months ago, I inherited a mess. And I'm fixing it.

HAAKE: In a rapid fire address, the President ticking off what he called his administration's early victories, beginning on the southern border.

TRUMP: We inherited the worst border anywhere in the world, and we quickly turned it into the strongest border in the history of our country.

HAAKE: The President falsely claiming 25 million people entered the country illegally during the Biden administration, while Border Patrol statistics show the real number was closer to 10 million. Mr. Trump focused most of his speech on the economy, and promising more relief is on the way next year, thanks to his tariff plan and the so-called Big Beautiful Bill.

TRUMP: And next spring is projected to be largest tax refund season of all time.

HAAKE: But it comes amid persistent polling showing Americans souring on his handling of cost of living issues. And while some specific grocery costs have gone down, consumer prices generally have risen every month since April. Democrats have been hammering the affordability issue.

SENATOR MARK KELLY (D-AZ) [on MS NOW's *The Briefing with Jen Psaki*, 12/17/25]: Somebody must have showed him some, like, abysmal poll numbers.

HAAKE: The President also announcing what he called a warrior dividend, A holiday bonus for 1.4 million U.S. service members.

TRUMP: In honor of our nation's founding in 1776, we are sending every soldier \$1,776. Think of that. And the checks are already on the way.

HAAKE: Mr. Trump says those military bonuses will be paid for with tariff tax revenue, but it's Congress that has the power to decide how any tariff revenue is spent. The president also touting his administration's targeting of alleged drug boats near Latin America, just hours after the Pentagon announced a new boat strike in the eastern pacific on Wednesday.

TRUMP: They decimated the blood-thirsty foreign drug cartels.

HAAKE: But the President made no mention of a potential military conflict with Venezuela, just one day after announcing a naval blockade of sanctioned Venezuelan oil tankers.

(....)

8:00:09 a.m. [TEASE]

18 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Address to the Nation]

MELVIN: Coming up, speaking out. President Trump delivering a rare prime-time white house address focusing on the economy and defending his record, while laying the blame on the previous administration.

TRUMP: 11 months ago, I inherited a mess. And I'm fixing it.

MELVIN: We're live at the White House.

(....)

8:02:22 a.m.

1 minute and 24 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; Trump Delivers Primetime Address to Nation]

MELVIN: We're gonna start with President Trump's prime-time address to the nation, defending his first year back in office, while also blaming Democrats for the high cost of living. NBC's Garrett Hake joins us now from his perch at the White House. Garrett, good morning.

HAAKE: Hey, Craig, good morning. And that speech last night felt in many ways like a Trump campaign rally on fast forward. The end of the year address was meant to tout progress on the border and on the economy, with the President offering at times exaggerated and misleading claims to advance his arguments. All of that while repeatedly pointing fingers at his predecessor, President Biden, for what he says was the mess left for him to clean up.

TRUMP: 11 months ago, I inherited a mess. And I'm fixing it. [SCREEN WIPE] We are making America great again. Tonight after 11 months, our border is secure, inflation has stopped, wages are up, prices are down.

HAAKE: The President did roll out one notable new policy, a so-called warrior dividend. It's a bonus for more than \$1.4 million members of the military in the form of a check for \$1,776, which the President says will be paid for by tariff revenue and is already on the way to military mail mailboxes. The President made no specific mention of Venezuela last night despite threatening the country with a naval blockade of its oiling shipping just the day prior and striking another alleged drug smuggling boat yesterday killing four people, Craig.

MELVIN: Garrett Haake from his post there at the White House. Garrett, thank you.