

NBC's *Today*

02/25/26

7:00:07 a.m. [TEASE]

47 seconds

HODA KOTB: President Trump delivers his State of the Union —

CRAIG MELVIN: — with his eyes on the economy and the next major election. It's February 25. This is *Today*. Addressing the nation.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Addressing the Nation]

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Members of Congress, the state of our Union is strong.

MELVIN: President Trump uses the longest state of the Union in U.S. history to tout his policies, take shots at Democrats and the Supreme Court and send a warning to Iran.

TRUMP: I will never allow the world's number one sponsor of terror, which they are by far, to have a nuclear weapon.

MELVIN: And in a lighter moment, celebrating the triumph of American athletes at the Winter Olympics.

CROWD: USA! USA! USA!

MELVIN: We'll break it all down.

(...)

7:03:16 a.m.

7 minutes

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Trump Delivers State of the Union]

MELVIN: But we are going to start this morning with President Trump's State of the Union.

KOTB: Yeah, his address the longest ever clocking in at one hour and 48 minutes, heavy on patriotism, claiming a new golden age for America while also sparring with Democrats in real time on a host of issues.

MELVIN: We've got it all covered for you this morning. NBC's senior White House correspondent Garrett Haake is going to start us off. Garrett, good morning.

GARRETT HAAKE: Hey, Craig, good morning to you. And yeah, President Trump broke his own record last night in delivering that longest State of the Union speech in history. Overall, the

speech seemed designed as a patriotic pep talk, with the President boasting about his economic record and highlighting the service and achievements of American warriors and champions. But he also lashed out at Democrats repeatedly on immigration and other issues, creating some tense moments and stark reminders of our polarized union. President Trump entering the House chamber with a roar from Republicans and silence an empty seats on the Democratic side for the first State of the Union of his second term.

TRUMP: Our nation is back bigger, better, richer and stronger than ever before.

HAAKE: The President, using nearly two hour speech to highlight successes of his first year, touting falling gas prices and a rising stock market.

TRUMP: A short time ago, we were a dead country. Now we are the hottest country anywhere in the world.

HAAKE: With four Supreme Court justices sitting just feet away, the President briefly criticizing the court's ruling against his sweeping tariff program days after calling some of the justices, "disloyal to the Constitution" —

TRUMP: Unfortunate ruling from the United States Supreme Court.

HAAKE: — but vowing to move ahead with new tariffs, the bulk of which will be paid by U.S. companies.

TRUMP: I believe the tariffs paid for by foreign countries will, like in the past, substantially replace the modern day system of income tax.

HAAKE: The President repeatedly taking swipes at Democrats —

TRUMP: These people are crazy.

HAAKE: — and trying to put them on defense over affordability.

TRUMP: They just used it. Somebody gave it to them, knowing full well that they caused and created the increased prices.

HAAKE: The President also focusing on immigration, even attempting to goad Democrats into standing up and clapping.

TRUMP: You agree with this statement? Then stand up and show your support. The first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens, not illegal aliens. [CHEERS AND APPLAUSE] [SCREEN WIPE] Isn't that a shame? You should be ashamed of yourself not standing up.

HAAKE: The official Democratic response coming from newly elected Virginia Governor

Abigail Spanberger.

GOVERNOR ABIGAIL SPANBERGER (D-VA): The President did what he always does. He lied, he scapegoated, and he distracted.

HAAKE: The President also pushing foreign policy late in his remarks, saying he preferred a diplomatic solution to the ongoing standoff with Iran, but will not allow the regime to acquire a nuclear weapon.

TRUMP: They want to make a deal, but we haven't heard those secret words: We will never have a nuclear weapon.

HAAKE: The biggest bipartisan cheers of the night coming for the gold medal-winning U.S. Olympic hockey team.

TRUMP: Here with us tonight is a group of winners who just made the entire nation proud, the men's gold medal Olympic hockey team.

HAAKE: Mr. Trump adding that he plans to present goalie Connor Hellebuyck with the Presidential Medal of Freedom and later awarding two Medals of Honor to military aviators of different eras: a helicopter pilot wounded in the recent raid to capture Nicolas Maduro, and a Korean War fighter pilot. Viewers may have noticed two moments of disruption during the speech, with one Democrat escorted out of the chamber early after unfurling a sign on the House floor. And that exchange about immigration, which led to a brief but heated back and forth between the President and several Democratic lawmakers. Most of the protests against the President inside the chamber was silent, though, with dozens of Democrats skipping the speech entirely or inviting guests like survivors of abuse by Jeffrey Epstein meant to send a message just by showing up, Craig.

MELVIN: Garrett Hake from the White House. Garrett. Thank you. Let's bring in NBC senior Washington correspondent Hallie Jackson. Now, Hallie, good morning to you. The majority of that speech last night was devoted to domestic issue the economy, immigration. Let's start there, Hallie. How did the President fare on those?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: State of the Union Takeaways]

HALLIE JACKSON: Yeah, big topics, important topics, Craig and Hoda, and the President celebrated what he sees as good news on the economy, but he didn't acknowledge that many Americans don't feel good about the economy. There was no real I-feel-your-pain moment. And Americans — make no mistake, they don't feel good. Polls consistently show that people say they're not happy with how the President has handled issues like the cost of living. We didn't hear much new on what a number of Trump voters before the speech told me. They wanted to hear about how to make their lives more affordable right now. And then on immigration. This is a reliable topic for President Trump. It's where you saw that moment. Garrett referenced him trying to bait Democrats by challenging them to stand if they agreed with him — bet you see that

in GOP attack ads from now until November — but the President is under water on this issue. More Americans say they disapprove of his handling of border security and immigration. And interestingly, the number of people who say they strongly disapprove is up double digits since last year, Craig and Hoda.

KOTB: All right, let's talk about foreign policy. He brought up Iran later in the speech, right, Hallie?

JACKSON: Yeah, this was a back half topic for him late into the night, and one that a lot of people had been listening for. Hoda, what kind of case would the President make for possible military strikes on Iran as he's building up military firepower in the region? This is a region on edge. The answer to that came down to Iran's nuclear capabilities. You heard the President trying to square his previous claim that that has been obliterated with why he would need to take action now to prevent Iran from building it up. This is delicate for him politically. He ran on a pledge remember to avoid foreign entanglements, but, in office, he really hasn't been shy about those. Just look at that raid on Venezuela, which he also, of course, highlighted in his speech.

MELVIN: So, Hallie, all of this, of course, coming with the first — first primaries, actually just a few weeks away. Now, how does last night's speech tee up Republicans? How does it tee up Democrats as we head into the primary season?

JACKSON: Craig, I think that's the right frame to look at this, because this is, in many ways, a tone setter here, the coalition that propelled the president to victory back in 2024 has started to crack. Now, of course, the President is not on the ballot himself in the midterms, but Republicans are hoping that his voters are going to show up at the polls to turn out to help keep seats in the House and Senate even with the Republican Party facing some historical headwinds here. So, in many ways, the State of the Union was setting the tone for the rest of the party in this key year. But far and away, the biggest issue in the midterms is going to be affordability and while there was some red meat for Republicans in the speech, not as much meat on the bone on how to make people's lives less expensive. Now, with Craig and Hoda, the first midterm primaries coming up already next week.

MELVIN: And so it begins. All right. Our senior Washington correspondent, Hallie Jackson. Hallie, thank you.

KOTB: Thank you, Hallie.

(...)

8:00:10 a.m. [TEASE]
23 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: State of the Union]

MELVIN: Coming up, State of the Union. President Trump addressing the nation in a nearly

two-hour speech.

TRUMP: Our nation is back, bigger better, richer, and stronger than ever before.

MELVIN: Heavy on patriotism and claiming a new golden age for America, while sparring with Democrats in realtime on issues like immigration. We're live at the White House with the latest.

(...)

8:02:11 a.m.

3 minutes and 13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; Trump Delivers State of the Union

MELVIN: And we are going to start with the State of the Union. President Trump declaring “a turnaround for the ages” in a speech that lasted nearly two hours. The president using the address to tout his policies, spar with Democrats, and also welcome home the U.S. hockey team. NBC’s senior White House correspondent, Garrett Haake, joins us with a closer look at all of it. Garrett, good morning to you again.

HAAKE: Craig, good morning. The President’s speech last night designed as a patriotic pep talk, with the President boasting about his economic record, and highlighting the service and achievements of American warriors and champions. But he also lashed out at Democrats repeatedly, creating some tense moments and stark reminders of our polarized union. President Trump entering the House chamber with a roar from Republicans and silence and empty seats on the Democratic side for the first State of the Union of his second term.

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SPANBERGER: The President did what he always does. He lied, he scapegoated, and he distracted.

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MELVIN: Garrett Haake from the White House for us. Garrett, thank you.