AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Remarks on Presenting the Commander in Chief's Trophy to the United States Air Force Academy Falcons

May 2, 2017

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. I appreciate it. That's some big people behind me. [*Laughter*] Big, strong, brilliant people. Please sit down.

I want to thank everybody for being here on this very special occasion. It's an honor every single day to serve as your Commander in Chief to the incredible men and women of the United States Air Force—very special, beautiful place. Very, very special.

I also want to welcome the Acting Secretary of the Air Force, Lisa Disbrow, and Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein. Thank you. Thank you, guys.

The cadets here represent not only the future of our Air Force, but also the future of our country. Their skill, dedication, loyalty, and patriotism represent the very best of America.

Thanks especially to the Air Force Academy Superintendent, Lieutenant General Michelle Johnson, and for your outstanding stewardship. You have been truly outstanding, Michelle, and we appreciate it so much. Thank you.

Developing leaders, character—I mean, so many things are developed at the Academy. It's really an amazing, amazing job they do. And we all join the very proud and distinguished heritage of the long, blue line. You know what that is, fellas, right? [*Laughter*] That's a long, big, beautiful, blue line.

I would also like to welcome several Members of Congress who are here today, including—maybe just stand up for a second—Doug Lamborn. Hi, Doug. Ted Poe—Ted. Thank you, Ted. Ted. Don Bacon. Hi, Don. Doug Collins. And my friend, Martha McSally, who, by the way, I think can fly a plane maybe better than anybody up here. [*Laughter*] She's the real deal—right, Martha? She's tough. She likes a certain plane, which I'm going to mention in a minute. She specifically likes a certain aircraft, right? Thank you very much.

And how's health care coming, folks? How's it doing? All right, we're moving along? All right. I think it's time now, right? Right? They know it's time. Thank you. Thank you for being here, folks.

We're also pleased to be joined by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, David Shulkin, who's doing an incredible job with the veterans. Thank you, David. Thank you, David. Taking care of our veterans, for me—and this has been one of my absolute highest priorities and the highest priority, just about, of the administration—and David is working tirelessly to deliver the care our veterans so richly deserve. And it should have happened years ago, but it's happening right now. So thank you very much, David.

Our Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, is here with us as well. Steven is determined to bring jobs and prosperity back to the United States, and he is really doing some very great service with a very complicated set of circumstances, and it's working out well. So, Steven, thank you very much.

Finally—and in this particular case, David and Steven and Congress folks—we have to say this: We are truly and deeply proud to welcome the Falcons of the United States Air Force Academy to the White House, most importantly. Congratulations to you all.

Coach Calhoun, you and your team had quite a season. Like good Air Force guys, you flew under the radar to victory. You know, we're buying a lot of those under-the-radar planes. In fact, you can fly over the radar; you're still not going to detect them. They cost a lot of money, I'll tell you that. [*Laughter*]

This week, our Republican team had its own victory under the radar. That is a very important thing for the men and women of the United States military. And it's a very important thing for the people of our country. In our new budget—and it's been a very hotly contested budget because, as you know, we have to go through a long and rigorous process—but we've ended years of painful cuts to our military and just achieved a $21 billion increase in defense spending. And we didn't do any touting like the Democrats did, by the way.

Not only did we achieve this massive and badly needed increase in defense, but we did so without having to put in place an equal increase in nondefense spending, breaking the so-called parity rule that was breaking our budget and degrading our military. And that's not happening anymore; that I can tell you with surety. So you're going to have the money we need and the equipment we need.

There will never be a time, I will tell you this, when we will be spending more money. We are doing the necessary money. We're going to have the finest equipment of all types—whether it's airplanes or ships or equipment in general—that we've ever had in the history of our country. We are taking care of our military, and we're not going to go back to what we were doing for the last long period of time. Our military is going to be taken care of. That I promise you. Thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you, folks.

With this major investment in the America's national defense—a core campaign promise of mine—we are at last reversing years of military cuts and showing our determination and resolve to the entire world. And believe me, the entire world is watching, and we have resolve like never, ever before. These long-awaited increases will make America more safe and more secure, and give our amazing servicemembers the tools, equipment, training, and resources they need and they very much deserve.

To top that, we achieved the single largest increase in border security funding in 10 years. So we have more money now for the border than we've gotten in 10 years. The Democrats didn't tell you that. They forgot. In their notes, they forgot to tell you that. [*Laughter*] With enough money to make a down payment on the border wall; I think they'll go back and check their papers. This includes swiftly replacing ineffective and failing fencing and walls with an unbreakable barrier. So we're putting up a lot of new walls in certain areas. We're putting up a tremendous amount of money to fix the existing structures that we have, some of which we can keep into the future. They're in good shape, but we have to bring them back to the highest level. We'll be doing that with this payment.

And make no mistake, we are beginning to build the wall, and we will keep out the gang members, criminals, drug and human traffickers that threaten our citizens and that threaten our security. Any Member of Congress who opposes our plans on border security—and I know these folks didn't—is only empowering these deadly and dangerous threats. And we will not put up with it, and the public won't put up with it.

This bill also includes important health care resources for our great coal miners who have not been treated well—but now they're being treated very well—and continues to make funding available so inner-city children here right in the Nation's Capital can go to the school of their choice. Choice is so important.

After years of partisan bickering and gridlock, this bill is a clear win for the American people. We brought lawmakers together from both sides of the aisle to deliver a budget that funds the rebuilding of the United States military, makes historic investments in border security, and provides health care for our miners and school choice for our disadvantaged children. Very importantly, there is no long-term bailout for the insurance companies that the Democrats desperately wanted to subsidize—donors—the badly failing Obamacare.

Do you know what a donor is, fellas? [*Laughter*] You'll learn when you get a little older. [*Laughter*] You'll learn about donors. I used to be a donor. Used to get everything I wanted.

This is what winning looks like, something that you folks really know a lot about. What a record. The Falcons had 10 wins and only 3 losses, a tremendous achievement. And they played tough, tough teams. And they played some teams that were slightly larger, right, Coach?

Head Coach Troy Calhoun. Oh, yes.

The President. Slightly—Coach is saying, boy, they're big. But you beat them, right?

Coach Calhoun. We did.

The President. You beat them. He knows how to win. Just spoke to Bob Kraft of the New England Patriots, right, and he gave you a little pep talk.

Coach Calhoun. Yes, sir.

The President. And he's a big fan too. And—but we know one thing: As good as this coach is, even he says he's not replacing Belichick—is that right? [*Laughter*] But someplace else. You're going to stay where you are. You'd better stay right where you are, Coach, right? [*Laughter*] Don't let them sign him. He'd better never leave us. He'd better never leave. [*Laughter*]

And the Falcons—not only that, but finished very strong. You ended the season with six straight victories, including a win in the Arizona Bowl, which is a big deal. Who did you beat?

Coach Calhoun. We beat South Alabama.

The President. South Alabama. Good team too. But we all know the games that you're most proud of—I shouldn't say this, because I love these teams too. Should I say it?

Players. Yes! Yes, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. I thought they were great Americans, Coach. [*Laughter*]

Coach Calhoun. They are.

The President. All right. The games they were—they beat Navy—good team. Do I have to give the score?

Coach Calhoun. Yes!

The President. Beat Navy 28 to 14. And you beat West Point 31 to 12. Does anybody feel guilty that you made me do that? No? [*Laughter*]

It's a great privilege for me for the first time to present you the Commander in Chief's Trophy, my first time. Established in 1972, the Commander in Chief's Trophy has been claimed by the Air Force Academy—this is pretty hard to understand. You did go under the radar, Coach. I mean, it's really an amazing thing. A record—listen to this—20 times. You have the record. More than any other of the service academies. Pretty amazing.

As the United States Air Force celebrates its 70th birthday this year, this trophy will serve as a point of pride for the Academy's cadets, graduates, and all of the members, past and present, of the United States Air Force that we love.

I love the Air Force. I love those planes. I love buying those planes at a reduced price. I have been really negotiating—[*laughter*]. I have cut billions—I have to tell you this, and they can check, right, Martha?—I have cut billions and billions of dollars off plane contracts sitting here. Do they give me credit? No, but that's okay. So we can either do one of two things—we can buy more planes, or we can cut the budget. What do you want to do? She says buy more planes. [*Laughter*] I think you're right. Nowadays, I think you're right.

As proud as we are of your achievements on the field, we are even more proud of you, and all of those who attend our service academies, in general, for your distinguished service on behalf of our great Nation. Whenever an Air Force crew flies, you'll always find a powerful symbol of American strength and American prestige.

From the A–10 "Wart-Hog"—stand up, Martha. This is what she'd fly. She said, please, please, Mr. President, order more. You think that's just a great plane, right? It does some pretty big damage, I know that. Okay, and we're working on that, okay? She loves that plane—to the F–16 "Viper"—not as good? Not as good. [*Laughter*] To the B–2 "Spirit"—a little different, but still, no? Pretty good, though. Our proud aircraft and airmen fill our friends—and you wouldn't believe it—with the level of confidence, and they really, truly strike fear into the hearts of our enemies. And I tell you, we have so many of those planes coming in. We have planes coming in from all different corners and all different sizes and speeds and with different capabilities. You're going to be very proud of what we're doing with the Air Force. And wherever—[*applause*]. Thank you. Thank you.

And wherever our space and cyber airmen operate world-class systems for modern warfare, the full might of America will be on display for all to see. With the new budget increases we have achieved in our spending bill, we'll be able to purchase the greatest planes ever built, including the F–35—that is some plane—and the next generation of military aircraft. We will maintain and expand our superiority in the air and our ability to protect and project America's vital security interests.

Just across the river, not far from the White House, stands a soaring tribute to the men and women of the United States Air Force. The three arching spires of the Air Force Memorial represent the core values of this noble branch of our Armed Forces: integrity first, service before self, excellence in all you do.

For 70 years, the United States Air Force has embodied those principles. I know each of you will uphold these standards with devotion and dignity throughout your military career. And I know that each of you will continue to make your country proud.

These are great people. I met everybody in the Oval Office. They actually said this is the first time you've been invited into the Oval Office, and actually, the New England Patriots said that last week—[*laughter*]—that they were not invited in. But we invite them into the Oval

Office. I think we should invite them into the Oval Office, right? Don't you think? But we're very, very proud of you, Coach.

Together, the five branches of the United States Armed Forces—Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, and Coast Guard—are the greatest force for peace and justice the world has ever known. And believe me, getting stronger and stronger and stronger by the day. One of the reasons that I was elected, one of the reasons that I'm standing here is called, people want their military to be strong—not weak, but strong—really strong.

You keep us safe, you keep us strong, and you keep us free. Thank you all for your service, and congratulations again to the winners of the Commander in Chief's Trophy, the great Air Force Falcons. Thank you. Congratulations.

With that, I'd like to invite Coach Troy Calhoun, a great coach—loved by his players, by the way. I said, do you love him or do you dislike him? And by the way, some coaches are pretty well disliked, but they're good coaches too. But I like this combination much better—a great coach, Troy Calhoun. And congratulations, Coach. Thank you, man.

Coach Calhoun. Thank you. Appreciate it. Mr. President, we're overwhelmed with the graciousness of you and your staff. This certainly has been an unbelievable trip for our young men and young women that have been able to come along. And we are so proud.

In only 3 weeks, under your command, they will become commissioned and second lieutenants in our United States Air Force. And what they will bring is courage, integrity, boldness. And unquestionably, they're champions, but more than anything else, they're absolute winners. So, ladies and gentlemen, the young men and young women of the United States Air Force Academy.

Hey, at this time, we have a couple of mementos we'd like to leave for the President. I will say this: Our Commander in Chief, you look at our roster, we never have anybody that's ever worn jersey number one. Here in the last 9 years, I think we've got a new tenant holder who—to that spot. So, sir, I'm going to invite up Weston Steelhammer and Jacobi Owens, two our captains, to present a little gift to you.

[*At this point, the President was presented with an Air Force jersey.*]

The President. Whoa! That's so great. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Robert K. Kraft, chairman and chief executive officer, and William S. Belichick, head coach, National Football League's New England Patriots. Mr. Calhoun referred to Weston Steelhammer, defensive back, and Jacobi Owens, running back, U.S. Air Force Academy football team.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Commander in Chief's Trophy, presentation.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Bacon, Donald J.; Belichick, William S.; Calhoun, Troy; Collins, Douglas A.; Disbrow, Lisa S.; Goldfein, David L.; Johnson, Michelle D.; Kraft, Robert K.; Lamborn, Douglas L.; McSally, Martha E.; Mnuchin, Steven T.; Poe, L. Theodore; Shulkin, David J.

Subjects: Air Force, Department of the : Acting Secretary; Air Force, Department of the : Air Force Academy, U.S.; Air Force, Department of the : Chief of Staff; Armed Forces, U.S. : Funding; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Budget, Federal :

Appropriations :: Consolidated; Congress : Bipartisanship; Defense and national security : Border security; Defense, Department of : Procurement contracts, improvement efforts; Education : School choice and voucher programs; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Health and medical care : Health insurance, protection of coverage; Immigration and naturalization : Illegal immigration; Mexico : Border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Sports : Football; Treasury, Department of the : Secretary; Veterans Affairs, Department of : Secretary.

DCPD Number: DCPD201700304.