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Remarks on Signing an Executive Order on Reviving the National Space Council

June 30, 2017

The President. Thank you very much. You don't mind if I do that, right?

[*At this point, the President removed a binder from the podium and dropped it to the floor.*]

Get rid of that. [*Laughter*]

Thank you very much to our great Vice President and also for the fantastic job that Mike has been doing.

The future of American space leadership—we're going to lead again. It's been a long time. It's over 25 years, and we're opening up, and we are going to be leading again like we've never led before.

We're a nation of pioneers, and the next great American frontier is space. And we never completed—we started, but we never completed. We stopped. But now we start again. And we have tremendous spirit, and we're going to have tremendous spirit from the private sector, maybe in particular from the private sector.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to an American hero who've I've known actually for a long time, Buzz Aldrin, who is with us today. Known him a long time. Thank you also to astronauts Benjamin Drew and David Wolf and former NASA Flight Director Gene Kranz for being with us and for working with us on exactly what we're doing today. Thank you all very much. We appreciate it. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

We're also joined by our great Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, who spent the morning negotiating trade deals with South Korea. And as you know, that trade deal is coming due, and it actually came due a couple of weeks ago. And I think we're going to make a good deal, right?

Secretary of Commerce Wilbur L. Ross, Jr. We've made some progress.

The President. I think so. That's what the word is. And good for both countries.

Also distinguished Members of Congress are with us and leaders of several of America's great aerospace companies.

Today we're taking a crucial step to secure America's future in space by reviving the National Space Council after it was—has been dormant almost 25 years if you can believe it.

During the campaign, Vice President Pence promised that our administration—because Mike's very much into space—would revive the National Space Council, and with this Executive order, we're keeping that promise. I feel very strongly about it. I've felt strongly about it for a long time. I used to say before doing what I did—I used to say, what happened? Why aren't we moving forward?

Today's announcement sends a clear signal to the world that we are restoring America's proud legacy of leadership in space.

Our Vice President cares very deeply about space policy and for good reason: Space exploration is not only essential to our character as a nation, but also our economy and our great nation's security.

Our travels beyond the Earth propel scientific discoveries that improve our lives in countless ways here, right here, at home: powering vast new industry, spurring incredible new technology, and providing the space security we need to protect the American people. And security is going to be a very big factor with respect to space and space exploration. At some point in the future, we're going to look back and say how did we do it without space?

The Vice President will serve as the Council's chair. Several representatives of my administration will join him including the Secretaries of State, Defense, Commerce, Transportation, and Homeland Security; the Chairman of the great—I'll tell you, he's doing a fantastic job, always working, always fighting, and winning—winning big against ISIS, that I can tell you, seeing what's happening there—the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the National Security Adviser, NASA, and the Director of National Intelligence.

The Council will also draw the expertise of other White House offices as well as insights from scientists, innovators, and business leaders from across the country. We have many business leaders that want to be a big part of this. I think private—the privatization of certain aspects is going to be very—is going to play a very crucial role, don't you think? They are truly into it. This coordination will be accomplished through an Advisory Group that is being convened by today's Executive order, which I'll be signing in a minute.

The National Space Council will be a central hub guiding space policy within the administration. And I will draw on it for advice and information and recommendations for action. And the Vice President, myself, and a few others are going to pick some private people to be on the Board. I will say that's not easy because everybody wants to be on this Board. People that you wouldn't have believed loved what we're doing so much they want to—some of the most successful people in the world want to be on this Board.

The human soul yearns for discovery. By unlocking the mysteries of the universe, we unlock truths within ourselves. That's true. Our journey into space will not only make us stronger and more prosperous, but will unite us behind grand ambitions and bring us all closer together. Wouldn't that be nice? Can you believe that space is going to do that? I thought politics would do that. [*Laughter*] Well, we'll have to rely on space instead.

Every launch into the skies is another step forward toward a future where our differences seem small against the vast expanse of our common humanity. Sometimes, you have to view things from a distance in order to see the real truth. It is America's destiny to be at the forefront of humanity's eternal quest for knowledge and to be the leader amongst nations on our adventure into the great unknown. And I could say the great and very beautiful unknown. Nothing more beautiful.

With the actions we are launching today, America will think big once again. Important words: think big. We haven't been thinking so big for a long time, but we're thinking big again as a country. We will inspire millions of children to carry on this proud tradition of American space leadership—and they're excited—and to never stop wondering, hoping, and dreaming about what lies beyond the stars.

So I just want to tell you that we are now going to sign an Executive order, and this is going to launch a whole new chapter for our great country. And people are very excited about it, and I can tell you, I'm very excited about it. Thank you all very much.

All right. You know what this is: space. That's all it has to say is space. There's a lot of room out there, right?

Apollo 11 crewmember Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr. Infinity and beyond. [*Laughter*]

The President. This is infinity here. It could be infinity. We don't really don't know. But it could be. There's got to be something, but it could be infinity, right?

[*The President signed the Executive order.*]

Okay. Here's the big question: Who's it—who's getting it?

Audience members. Buzz!

The President. All right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:13 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to; Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson; Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis; Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao; Secretary of Homeland Security John F. Kelly; Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., USMC; National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster; Robert M. Lightfoot Jr., Acting Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and Director of National Intelligence Daniel R. Coats. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

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Names: Aldrin, Edwin E. "Buzz," Jr.; Chao, Elaine L.; Coats, Daniel R.; Drew, Benjamin A., Jr.; Dunford, Joseph F., Jr.; Kelly, John F.; Kranz, Eugene F.; Lightfoot, Robert M., Jr.; Mattis, James N.; McMaster, H.R.; Pence, Michael R.; Ross, Wilbur L., Jr.; Tillerson, Rex W.; Wolf, David A.

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