

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

**Remarks to United States Troops at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar,
California**

March 13, 2018

Thank you, Colonel. I am really thrilled to be here at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, home of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing and the mighty Miramar Marines. Thank you very much. This is beautiful. *[Applause]* This is beautiful. And we are here today to celebrate your incredible achievements. So relax, be at ease, and let's have a good time for a couple of minutes, okay? And thank you for being here, Darrell.

Colonel, I want to just thank you and Colonel Woodworth. I salute you both. You are really tremendous, the job you've done. You lead the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing and the Miramar Marines with the excellence and honor for which this Corps is admired. All throughout the world, they talk about you.

I want to thank all of the incredible soldiers, sailors, airmen, and coastguardsmen who traveled here today from the stations all across the San Diego region. I have a message for you straight from the heart of the American people, and you know what that is: We support you, we thank you, we love you, and we will always have your back like you have ours. Thank you.

And very importantly—most important—to all of the military spouses and family members here today, we know that you really serve too. In many cases, you're the real boss in the family, right? We know that. So thank you. None of this would be possible without your incredible sacrifice and the tireless support that you give. So thank you all.

And finally, to the thousands of marines here today from Miramar—*[laughter]*—and Camp Pendleton, I want you to know how proud we are of everything you do.

And you know, we have General Kelly here—four star—and he's doing a great job in Washington. I think he likes what you do better than what he does, but he's doing a great job. He misses you.

Your devotion fills our allies and our families with confidence. Your courage fills our enemies with dread. And your example inspires countless young Americans, who dream of being the best, to someday wear the uniform of the United States Marines.

All of you know the truth of the famous saying, "Once a marine, always a marine." Now, I have to say, the Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard—you're great too. You know, we have a couple of them scattered. *[Laughter]* But I'm with you all the time. Today we're with those marines.

I'll tell you, I gave a speech recently at the Coast Guard Academy. It was so great. And between Annapolis and West Point, Air Force Academy, we've done them all, or we're doing them. So we'll see you guys very soon. But today, I hate to say it, congratulations. And I'm proud to say that we have several really tough marines serving in our administration.

So not only John Kelly, but Defense Secretary—now, did anyone ever hear of "Mad Dog" Mattis? No. *[Applause]* He's doing a great job. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General "Fighting Joe" Dunford. You know Fighting Joe. And our new Director of the Secret Service and veteran of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, General Tex. You know General? You know him? "Tex A.," I call him. Big General Tex A. Right? We know him. So, Tex, thank you.

Our administration is stacked with marines because marines are the kind of people you want at your side. And trust me, you don't ever want to be on the other side of a fighting marine. It's trouble. It's painful.

The Marines are the first into battle and the first to fight. Marines never give up, never give in, never retreat, and never, ever surrender. You are faithful to each other, faithful to your mission, and you are always faithful to the country that you love: the U.S.A. And as your Commander in Chief, just like every President before me, I have no greater comfort than knowing I can have absolute faith in you.

In 1918, when foreign military aggression threatened our way of life, we called on the Marines. Marine Sergeant Dan Daly urged his men through those horrible trenches with the courageous battle cry that you all know very well: "Do you want to live forever?" That was the question, and that was the cry.

In 1945, when we needed someone to scale the cliffs and to plant the flag on a rugged mountain peak in Iwo Jima, we called on the Marines.

In 1950, when setbacks loomed in Korea—although we're doing a pretty good job with Korea right now. [*Laughter*] I'll tell you. And hopefully, something positive will come out of it. Hopefully, something very positive is going to come out of it. We'll see. And we're prepared for anything, right? We always have to be prepared for anything. But I really believe something very positive could happen—great for Korea, North and South and great for the world and great for this country.

So when it loomed in Korea and when we needed warriors who would fight against all odds in the Chosin Reservoir, we called on the Marines, the legendary men of the "Frozen Chosin."

In 1962, when America needed a man to board a rocket, launch into space, and orbit the Earth for the first time, we called on a marine: the one and only John Glenn.

The legendary acts like these—of sacrifice, courage, of heroism—are the proud legacy of the United States Marines. You can be very proud. Your heritage drives you, your heroes inspire you, and your actions immortalize you in the pages of American history. Incredible history. And every day, you push yourselves to new heights of excellence and new depths of courage, keeping America safe, America strong, and America free.

You honor your duty to your country. Now we must honor our duty to you. For too long, the men and women of the United States Armed Forces have been asked to do more with less. You've borne the costs of underinvestment and deferred modernization and also deferred maintenance. You've endured longer and more frequent deployments. You've spent countless hours fixing and maintaining old equipment.

You have fewer ships than we should, fewer planes than we should, and you have fewer of you than we should. Today I am very pleased to report that all of that is changing, and all of that, as you have seen, is changing quickly.

The Trump administration is committed to a policy of peace through strength. We have finally ended the devastating defense sequester that you have lived with for many years. We are now undertaking the largest military buildup since Ronald Reagan and one of the largest buildups we've ever had in the history of our Nation.

Last year, I requested and received an additional \$21 billion to address urgent readiness shortfalls. The 2-year budget agreement I just reached with Congress will provide \$700 billion in defense funding this year, the largest ever. Larger, by far, than any country has ever spent. And next year, we will raise that number to \$716 billion. That's a lot of money. Even for you, that's a lot of money. *[Laughter]*

We're also investing in our greatest weapon of all, our most powerful weapon, our most beautiful weapon, our most brilliant weapon: you. In 2019, we want to give you your largest pay raise in over a decade. You deserve it. *[Applause]* You deserve it. You deserve it.

And we're building new F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, and we're going to send them right here to Miramar, along with lots of other fighters and lots of other weaponry, weaponry like we've never had before or sent before. They'll be sent also all over the world.

And I understand some of you really great pilots could use some new CH-53s. Is that a correct statement? Do you want to see some new ones? *[Applause]* Huh? That's—*[laughter]*. That's the group. Well, you're getting them, okay? You know, you're—brandnew, right off the line. We're getting a lot of great stuff.

I'm happy to report that in the near future, Miramar is getting brandnew CH-53K King Stallions—the big ones—you're getting. They'll be sent soon. They're coming. They're being made.

We're also modernizing our nuclear capabilities and rebuilding our nuclear infrastructure. We're investing more money than we have ever done before because we have to be so far ahead of any other country. It's a capability we never even want to think about using, but we have to be prepared. And in a nuclear front, we are so far—and will be so far—ahead of any other country. We have no choice. We've increased investment in hypersonic weapons systems by 50 percent, and we're accelerating development of a hypersonic system that can fly five times the speed of sound. That's pretty quick.

In space, the United States is going to do Colonel Glenn proud. We are finally going to lead again. You see what's happening. You see the rockets going up left and right. You haven't seen that for a long time. Very soon, we're going to Mars. You wouldn't have been going to Mars if my opponent won. *[Laughter]* That I can tell you. You couldn't even be thinking about it. You wouldn't be thinking about it.

My new National Strategy for Space recognizes that space is a warfighting domain, just like the land, air, and sea. We may even have a space force—develop another one—space force. We have the Air Force; we'll have the space force. *[Laughter]* We have the Army, the Navy. You know, I was saying it the other day, because we're doing a tremendous amount of work in space; I said: "Maybe we need a new force. We'll call it the space force." And I was not really serious, and then I said: "What a great idea. Maybe we'll have to do that." *[Laughter]*

That could happen. That could be the big breaking story. Look at all those people back there. Look at them. *[Laughter]* Oh, that fake news. *[Applause]* They know. They understand. *[Laughter]*

So think of that: space force. Because we're spending a lot and we have a lot of private money coming in. Tremendous. You saw what happened the other day—and tremendous success.

From the very beginning, many of our astronauts have been soldiers and sailors, airmen, coastguardsmen, and marines. And our servicemembers will be vital to ensuring America

continues to lead the way into the stars. We're going to lead the way in space. We're way, way behind, and we're catching up fast—so fast that nobody even believes it.

I also have released a new National Security Strategy that underscores the vital importance of homeland security. It's all about homeland security, right? We protect people all over the world, but we're going to protect them better than ever before—our homeland. It's about time, right? Nobody is going to mess with us.

Dangerous criminal and terrorist organizations relentlessly seek to exploit our immigration system. I've just come from a trip to the border, where I met with our wonderful border agents—Border Patrol and the ICE agents, unbelievable people—and reviewed prototypes of a new physical wall that will protect our border and protect our country. We don't have a choice in either. We need it for the drugs. We need it for the gangs. We need it for lots of reasons. We have to have it. It will be 99.5-percent successful. People won't be able to come over it. The drugs will stop, by a lot. Although, we have to get a lot tougher with drug dealers. Have to. But that wall will stop so much.

And we looked at the different prototypes, and it was fascinating. And we have two or three that really work. We had people trying to scale—we've done them every way. You know, I'm a builder. What I do best is build. *[Laughter]* Okay? You know, other people, they build a wall and then say, "You know, it doesn't work." "Well, wait a minute, we just built a thousand miles of wall." "Well, we made a mistake; it doesn't work. We should of done it a different way." We're doing it before we build. Better idea, right? Do you think? A little better. We're going to have a great wall. It's going to be very effective. It's going to stop people from—you're not going to see them climbing over this wall too easily, that I can tell you. *[Laughter]*

I've also called on Congress to close dangerous loopholes that are exploited by traffickers, smugglers, and cartels. Human trafficking in this modern age is worse throughout the world than it's ever been. Who would think that? In this modern—human trafficking is worse than it's ever been.

Each of you has sworn an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. Our task, in government, is to ensure that we preserve what we have gained through the incredible sacrifice of you and many people before you. That is why my administration is confronting sanctuary city policies that nullify Federal law, violate our Constitution, and threaten the safety and security of our Nation. They shield criminals. We can't do that. And that is why we are asking Congress to ensure that no Federal funds subsidize this dangerous and unlawful behavior.

We want to protect you, and we want to protect all of our families. We want to protect our Nation. We're also taking action to protect our homeland from rogue actors overseas through enhanced missile defense. We're spending a tremendous amount on missile defense, and that's money well spent. And it's also jobs. We make them here. We make them right here. It's also jobs. We're adding new interceptors, improving sensors, and advancing radar capabilities by many, many times.

I have empowered our commanders in Afghanistan with the authorities they need to win, enabling the full might of the American military. The coalition to defeat ISIS has now liberated almost 100 percent of territory previously held by these terrorists in Syria and Iraq. We did a great job. You did a great job. You did a great job. They would have been around for a long time, and they were getting bigger and stronger, and you saw it. And we knocked the hell out of them. We knocked them.

I want to say a special thanks to all of the men and women from the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Miramar Air Station, and stations across the San Diego region, especially the two Miramar-based squadrons who have just returned from deployment: the Death Rattlers and the Greyhawks. Where are you? *[Applause]* Right? Good. It's a good-looking group. Good. That's great. Thank you. Great job. Your service has been extraordinary.

We won't let up until ISIS is completely destroyed. ISIS never thought this would happen. They never got hit like this. We took off the gloves. In 1 year, we did more damage to ISIS than other administration—a certain other administration did in many years. We took off the gloves.

We're also working with allies and partners to block Iran's path to a nuclear weapon, and confront its sponsorship of terror and bloodshed all around the world. Everywhere we go in the Middle East, it's Iran, Iran, Iran. Behind every problem is Iran. Well, we're dealing with it in a very serious fashion. One of the worst deals I've ever seen was the Iran deal—\$150 billion we gave them. For what?

With your skill and your bravery, I know that the United States military will forever remain the greatest fighting force in the history of the world. And we're making it now with \$700 billion and \$716 billion the following year. We're giving you the tools that they were trying to take away from you. So important. And the Marines, as always, will be at the tip of the spear.

So to the fighting men and women of Miramar and all across the San Diego area: We must all think bigger, build faster, push farther, dare higher, and be greater than ever, ever, ever before. Each one of you is vital to our mission. You're fighter pilots, helo pilots, mechanics, engineers, hospital corpsmen, sailors, and sergeants. But above all, you are great American patriots, just great American patriots. You race into battle, rush into fire, fly into danger, and you give all to defend our Nation, our people, and the American way of life. And they love you.

A century ago, every man who heeded Sergeant Daly's battle cry was pushed on to victory and to glory by that same love of country. As war engulfed Iwo Jima, our young heroes set their eyes upon the same beautiful sight: red, white, and blue perched atop that incredible rocky peak. And when Colonel Glenn looked down on the United States, as he soared beyond the limits of our atmosphere, he was filled with the same pride of one beating American heart.

Our pride makes us strong. Our strength keeps us free. And because of heroes like you, our freedom will never die. We are becoming stronger and stronger and stronger as a Nation. And while a lot of you don't think about it, our economy is setting records. Our unemployment is at alltime lows. African American unemployment is the lowest it's been in history. Hispanic unemployment is the lowest it's been in history. Women unemployment is the lowest it's been in 18 years. And we're setting records.

And last week, we had over 150 million people working. That's more people working in our country than ever before in its history. We are making a lot of progress for you.

Now, all across this Nation, we pray for our country and we thank God for our United States Marines. Today, and every day, we pledge to remain always faithful.

It is an honor to be with you. You are very, very special people. Thank you. God bless you. And God bless America. Thank you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. in Hangar 4. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Michael Borgschulte, USMC, assistant wing commander, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing; Rep. Darrell E. Issa; Col. Jason G. Woodworth, USMC, commanding officer, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar; White House Chief of Staff John F. Kelly; Randolph D. "Tex" Alles, Director, U.S. Secret Service; and 2016 Democratic Presidential nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization.

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