

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration

July 4, 2018

Happy Fourth of July to everybody. It's a great day. Melania and I are honored to celebrate American independence with the heroes who protect American independence: the men, the women of the United States military. These are our finest. Thank you very much.

Joining us today are two of your biggest fans and strongest supporters: our great Vice President, Mike Pence, and his incredible wife, Karen Pence. Thank you Karen, Mike.

We're also honored to be joined by members of my Cabinet: Secretaries Alex Azar, Ben Carson, Elaine Chao, Kirstjen Nielsen, Acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke, Administrator Scott Pruitt, and Ambassador Bob Lighthizer. Thank you for being here.

Two hundred and forty-two years ago, on July 4, 1776, America's founders adopted the Declaration of Independence and changed the course of human history. But our freedom exists only because there are brave Americans willing to give their lives to defend it and defend our great country. American liberty has been earned through the blood, sweat, and sacrifice of American patriots.

The immortal story of the American warrior is written in the fields of Gettysburg, the sands of Iwo Jima, the mountains of Afghanistan, and the snow of Valley Forge. It is the story of courage, honor, duty, loyalty, and love.

Today we are honored to recognize a few of the incredible men and women who serve our country and defend our great American flag. From the Army, we have retired Captain Jason Pak. Jason is a West Point graduate who was injured in Afghanistan while proudly serving with the 2d Infantry Division. Also with us today is Jason's dad Yeong-tae, who is also a West Point graduate and his mom Young-ae. What an inspiring family. I met them right behind the stage. And I want to tell you, their story is an incredible one. Thank you all for your service, and thank you for your incredible work for our military and for our country. Thank you very much, Jason. Thank you. Thank you.

Representing the Navy, we have Petty Officer First Class Steve Swift. He is a master explosive ordnance disposal technician, and that's a tough job and a dangerous job—also known as the bomb squad. He is a very good technician and has done just incredible work, recently earning distinction as Sailor of the Quarter for his unit. Joining him are his wife Crystal, his daughters Kaitlin and Gwen, and his parents Katherine and Stephen Sr. Thank you, Steve, and thank you to everyone serving America in our incredible Navy. Thank you. Thank you very much, Steve.

From the Coast Guard, we have Lieutenant Ryan McCue. He is a helicopter pilot who protects all of us here in the Capital. One of Ryan's most important jobs is to intercept aircraft that fly where they are not supposed to be flying in and around the Capital area. Ryan is assigned to Air Station Atlantic City, but is temporarily assigned here, away from his wife Shannon and son Colin. They miss him. Ryan, thank you and your family for what you have done and continue to do for all of us. Thank you. Thank you very much, Ryan.

The men and women of the United States Coast Guard are doing a phenomenal job keeping America safe from drugs, crime, and terrorism, and we are incredibly grateful to each

of you. And I have to say that, during the hurricanes, the Coast Guard saved 16,000 lives. It's an incredible achievement. Incredible.

From the Air Force, we have Captain Brooks Peel. As a weather officer, he leads deployable weather forecasting teams to make it possible for American aviators to own the skies, anywhere we fly. He also helped lead the Air National Guard's response to Hurricane Maria. He did an incredible job. And because of his exceptional leadership, he was named Weather Company Grade Officer of the Year for 2017. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Incredible.

And we have the Air Force—and by the way, I might add, we very well may soon have the space force. You've been hearing about that. [*Applause*] Everyone is very excited about that.

I'm also told that Brook happens to be the reigning champion of his fantasy football league. His sister Charla is with him today. And I want to thank you, Brooks, and I want to thank everybody from the United States Air Force. Great people and very talented people.

Finally, from the Marine Corps, we have Staff Sergeant Jonathan Race, here with us with his wife Sydney and his son William. As senior analyst for the Cyber Incident Response team, he is one of the very talented people who protect our Nation from cyber attacks. And he is very, very good at his craft. In fact, he's done such a great job that they not only asked him to develop a new curriculum on cyberwarfare, they also asked him to teach the first class of the newly established Cyberspace Marines. So to Johnathan and every American who wears the Marine Corps uniform, we are truly grateful. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you.

To every servicemember here today and stationed around the world—they're all watching—and to your incredible families—these are truly unbelievable people—thank you for keeping America safe, strong, proud, mighty, and free.

God bless you, God bless our military, and God bless America. Happy Fourth of July. Thank you everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Peter M. O'Rourke; and Raleigh, NC, resident Charla Peel, mother of Capt. Brooks Peel, USAF.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Independence Day celebration.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Azar, Alex M., II; Carson, Benjamin S., Sr.; Chao, Elaine L.; Lighthizer, Robert E.; McCue, Colin; McCue, Ryan; McCue, Shannon; Nielsen, Kirstjen M.; O'Rourke, Peter M.; Pak Yeong-tae; Pak Young-ae; Pak, Jason; Peel, Brooks; Peel, Charla; Pence, Karen; Pence, Michael R.; Pruitt, E. Scott; Race, Jonathan; Race, Sydney; Race, William; Swift, Crystal; Swift, Gwen; Swift, Kaitlin; Swift, Katherine; Swift, Stephen, Jr.; Swift, Stephen, Sr.; Trump, Melania.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Military families; Armed Forces, U.S. : National Guard; Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Armed Forces, U.S. : Space presence and activities, strengthening efforts; Defense and national security : Cybersecurity :: Strengthening efforts; Drug abuse and trafficking : Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Environmental Protection Agency; Health and Human Services, Department of : Secretary; Holidays and special observances : Independence Day; Homeland Security, Department of :

Secretary; Housing and Urban Development, Department of : Secretary; Natural disasters : Response and recovery efforts; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Trade Representative, Office of the U.S.; Transportation, Department of : Secretary; Veterans : Service and dedication; Veterans Affairs, Department of : Acting Secretary; White House Office : Vice President.

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