

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks on Signing the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Act and an Exchange With Reporters

November 16, 2018

The President. Well, thank you for coming over so fast. I think this was a little bit unexpected. You didn't expect to be here. But I think that this is so important what we're doing right now, that you should be here, and it should be covered.

Today it's my great honor to sign the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Act into law. The people behind me and alongside of me have been working long and hard on this for—actually, for years. And I want to congratulate them.

We're grateful to be joined by House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy. It's very good. Majority Leader—that sounds good, Kevin.

House Majority Leader Kevin O. McCarthy. Yes, it does. [*Laughter*]

The President. Huh? Senator Ron Johnson, who's been a fantastic ally and somebody who's doing a really incredible job. And he chairs the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. And Chairman Michael McCaul, who just had a great victory in Texas, and he's in charge of the House Committee on Homeland Security. And, Michael, congratulations.

Representative Michael T. McCaul. Thank you, sir. I appreciate it.

The President. That was a big—that was a very solid victory.

I also want to thank Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen and Under Secretary Chris Krebs for being here. And they, too, have been working long and hard on this bill.

Every day, America's adversaries are testing our cyber defenses. They attempt to gain access to our critical infrastructure, exploit our great companies, and undermine our entire way of life. And we can't let that happen.

This vital legislation will establish a new agency within the Department of Homeland Security to lead the Federal Government's civilian response to these cyber threats against our Nation. We've had many, many threats against our Nation. Cyber is going to be the newest form. And the threats have taken place, and we've been doing pretty good in knocking them out, but now we'll be—this will make us, I think, much more effective. We're putting people that are the best in the world in charge. And I think we're going to have a whole different ballgame. Cyber is, to a large extent, where it's at nowadays.

The men and women of the new Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency will be on the frontlines of our cyber defense. They will partner with the private sector and all levels of government, to defend America's power grids, banks, telecommunications, and other critical parts of our economy.

The cyber battlespace evolves—and it is evolving, and, unfortunately, faster than a lot of people want to talk about. But battlespace it is. So as the cyber battlespace evolves, this new agency will ensure that we confront the full range of threats from nation-states, cyber

criminals, and other malicious actors, of which there are many. This is going to go a long way. This is a very, very important piece of legislation, and it is my honor to have all of you with us.

Thank you, Ron. Thank you very much. And we appreciate your hard work. Thank you. Mr. Leader, thank you.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill and handed the pen to Sen. Ronald H. Johnson.*]

The President. Okay. I think—[*applause*]. Thank you, everybody.

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia Decision Ordering Reinstatement of CNN Chief White House Correspondent Jim Acosta's White House Hard Pass/White House Press Corps

Q. Mr. President, yes, do you have any comment on the CNN ruling a moment ago?

The President. No. Just, people have to behave, and they have to do—we're writing up rules and regulations to make our position. I think you were treated very unfairly, both of you. I think you were treated very unfairly, because you had somebody interrupting you. And if they don't listen to the rules and regulations, we'll end up back in court, and we'll win. But more importantly, we'll just leave, and then you won't be very happy, because we do get good ratings.

Q. Mr. President——

White House Press Corps

Q. Mr. President, when you talk about rules and regulations, what do you mean, sir?

The President. Decorum—you can't take three questions and four questions and just stand up and not sit down—decorum. You have to practice decorum. You were there; you understood, and you understand. We want total freedom of the press; that's very important to me. It's more important to me than anybody would believe.

But you have to act with respect. You're in the White House. And when I see the way some of my people get treated at press conferences, it's terrible. So we're setting up a certain standard, which is what the court is requesting. And always freedom of the press, always First Amendment. But that's the way it is.

And we always have the option of just leaving. You know, if we feel that things aren't being treated properly, that people aren't being treated properly, we always have the right to leave. And I think the other media, the other press in the room, will not be very happy if that happens. But I've instructed my people: When they're not treated properly, you have the right to just leave any time you want. Okay?

Q. Will you still seek to—[*inaudible*]—sir?

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, China gave a response this week to your trade requests. Have you seen that response? And are you pleased with it? And what do you think it means?

The President. Did you say China?

Q. China, yes. On trade.

The President. Yes, go ahead. Tell me what their response was.

Q. They sent a response with 142 items on trade. Just wondering what your thoughts are about it.

The President. Yes. That's good. No, China wants to make a deal. China—as you know, Jeff [Jeff Mason, Reuters], China wants to make a deal. They sent a list of things that they're willing to do, which was a large list. And it's just not acceptable to me yet. But at some point, I think that we are doing extremely well with respect to China. I have a great respect for President Xi. I have a great respect for China. But China has taken advantage of the United States for many, many years. Ron Johnson knows that maybe better than anybody, because Ron is a big believer in what I'm doing.

And I think that they're going to come in, and we're going to either open up China and make it fair, because it's not fair right now. They do very little business with them, and we do a lot of business. You know, it just can't be. Plus, they have tremendous barriers. They have tremendous tariffs on us that we didn't have on them. But that's all changed now. We've put on tariffs on \$250 billion worth of goods, and we have another \$267 billion to go if we want to. We may not have to do that. China would like to make a deal.

Our country has done very well, and China, as you know, has not done very well. They've been down 30 percent, 32 percent. They've been down very substantially. We have helped create China, as we know it today, by allowing money to be sucked out of our country by the billions. Five-hundred billion dollars—a year, in many cases, over a long period of time. And we can't allow that to happen.

And I think we will have a great relationship with China. Hopefully, we'll make a deal. And if we don't, we're doing very well just the way it is right now. We have tariffs coming in on \$250 billion worth of goods. And these are—we're talking about billions and billions of dollars a month will flow into our country and has already started flowing into our country that comes from China. So China has never been put in this position. And I don't want to put them in a bad position; I want to put them in a great position.

But it's called "reciprocal." We have to have reciprocal trade. We can't have trade that's meant for stupid people. And that's the way they took advantage of our country. And we don't have that anymore, and they understand that. And I think a deal will be made; we'll find out very soon.

Q. Mr. President, Mr. President——

China-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, just to follow up, sir, the list that they submitted, do you think it goes far enough? Are you happy with it? Unhappy with it?

The President. It's a pretty complete list. It's a lot of the things we asked for. There are some things—there were four or five big things left off. I think we'll probably get them too. But it's—as you know, it's a very complete list. I think it's 142 items.—

Q. That's right.

The President. And that's a lot of items.

Okay? Thank you very much, everybody. Yes.

Q. Can we do one more?

The President. Go ahead.

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election/National Economy/Administration Personnel Changes

Q. One more, Mr. President. You, on Twitter yesterday, seemed a bit agitated about what you might be perceiving the Mueller investigation will do.

The President. No, I'm not agitated. It's a hoax.

Q. I'm just curious—

The President. The whole thing was a hoax. There was no collusion.

Q. But did anything trigger that set of tweets yesterday?

The President. No, not that all. No. I'm very happy. I'm very happy with the White House. I'm extremely happy with our country. We're doing better on the economy. Maybe it's the best economy we've ever had. They may be the best unemployment numbers and employment numbers that we've ever had. There are more people working in the United States right now, at this moment, than have ever worked in the United States, by far—by far. I'm extremely happy. I'm very happy with almost all of my Cabinet. And you know, changes are made, because they're always made, especially after midterms.

But it's all fake news. It is—I'm thrilled with the way the country is going. I think, on foreign, we're doing very well. We're making trade deals—we just made a deal with Mexico, we just made a deal with Canada, we just made a deal with South Korea—that are phenomenal deals. And they were horrible deals before.

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election

Q. But you seemed unhappy with the Mueller investigation, particularly yesterday morning. I'm just curious about that, sir.

The President. No, it's just a continuation. You can go. And there should have never been any Mueller investigation, because there was never anything done wrong. There was no collusion; there never has been. You would have known about it a long time ago if there was. There was nothing—they should have never had it. They've wasted millions and millions of dollars. There should have never been a so-called investigation, which, in theory, it's not an investigation of me. But it's, as far as I'm concerned, I like to take everything personally, because you do better that way.

The witch hunt, as I call it, should never have taken place. It continues to go on. I imagine it's ending now. From what I hear, it's ending. And I'm sure it will be just fine. And you know why it's going to be just fine? Because there was no collusion.

The fact is, I was a much better candidate than Hillary Clinton. I went to the right States; she went to the wrong States. She was not a good campaigner. Obviously, I campaigned very well. And I easily won the election and the electoral college—306—I guess it was 306 to 223. That's a big difference.

Investigation Into Russia's Interference in 2016 Presidential Election

Q. And you've provided answers, sir?

The President. About what?

Q. To the Special Counsel. Your lawyers were working with you today on that.

The President. Yes. It's not—my lawyers aren't working on that. I'm working on that. I write the answers. My lawyers don't write answers; I write answers.

Q. Okay.

The President. I was asked a series of questions. I've answered them very easily. Very easily. I'm sure they're tricked up, because, you know, they like to catch people—"Gee, you know, was the weather sunny or was it rainy?" "He said it may have been a good day; it was rainy, therefore, he told a lie. He perjured himself." Okay? So you have to always be careful when you answer questions with people that probably have bad intentions.

But no, it's—the questions were very routinely answered by me.

Q. Okay.

The President. By me. Okay?

Q. Have they been submitted?

Q. You mean the Special Counsel? You mean you——

The President. To the Special—yes.

Q. And you submitted the answers yourself, you said.

The President. I haven't submitted them. Yes, we just—I just finished them. As you know, I've been a little bit busy. We've been in Europe. We've been working on various deals. We just finished the USMCA, if you look at that deal, which is one of the great trade deals. You'll see. I mean, you can see how happy our farmers are. We've done a lot of work in the last period of time, so we've been very busy. It's been very hard to find time.

But it didn't take very long to do them. And they were my answers. I don't need lawyers to do that. Now, you need lawyers for submittal. You need lawyers to go over some of the answers. But they're not very difficult questions. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody.

Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen. Sir, did you meet Under Secretary Krebs? He will be our new Director of the Cybersecurity Agency——

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Under Secretary of Homeland Security for National Protection and Programs Christopher C. Krebs, in his new capacity as Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency; and Department of Justice Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller III. H.R. 3359, approved November 16, was assigned Public Law No. 115–278.

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