

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2025

Remarks at the Commander in Chief's Ball

January 20, 2025

The President. Well, thank you very much. This is a great honor.

We have a lot of Space Force here, by the way. We have a lot of Space Force. We are very proud of Space Force.

But there's nowhere else I'd rather be tonight than with some of the greatest American patriots of all: the men and women of the United States military. Thank you very much.

This is quite a gathering, huh? It's a celebration, because we're going to turn our country around. We're going to make America great again.

I've had no higher privilege in life than to serve as your Commander in Chief, not once but twice. And you're incredible, and the people of our—the people of our country respect you, and they love you so much. You don't see it, you don't hear about it too much, but they love you just so much, you wouldn't even believe it. So thank you very much. We're honored to have you.

We're joined this evening by the servicemembers from every branch of the U.S. Armed Forces: Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Marines, and Space Force. And I salute you all.

Let me also thank our incredible military spouses, what you have to put up with. They put up with a lot.

And family members here tonight—we have so many and so many brilliant families, and you do more than anyone else to support our Nation's heroes. And, on behalf of every American, I want to thank you very much.

We have some people with us tonight. You know, we have the head of the Republican Party, and we won, and then she said: "All right. Dad, I think that's enough for me now. Let's win and let's go to something else." And she wants to get back to her beautiful babies. But she's married to a guy known as my son Eric Trump. *[Laughter]* And Lara was essentially chairman, along with Michael Whatley, of the Republican Party. And they were tough, they weren't going to stand for any nonsense, and they did a fantastic job.

And we won every single swing State. We won the—you know, we won the popularity. We were the most popular candidate in a long time. And I have to tell you, with the military, we really won. We really won.

I want to thank, obviously, a—a tremendous supporter of yours—and if I ever got out of line, she'd get me right back in line when it comes to you—Melania, First Lady. She's been fantastic for—*[applause]*.

And our Vice President—you know him well—he's all about you. He's a big believer in our military. J.D. Vance and Usha.

And I have other family members here. Don is in there somewhere, and Ivanka is there. Where is Ivanka? There's so many people. But we have a lot of family members. Tiffany is here. Barron was with us today. He's a tall one, I will tell you. *[Laughter]* And he's doing a good job.

But today we celebrate the enduring strength and resilience of our glorious republic. And so it's highly appropriate that we also honor the men and women who keep us safe, and that's what you are. Your bravery—*[applause]*. Your bravery inspires us, your service unites us, and your sacrifice and spirit protect us all.

We made a little speech today. I think you probably saw it. Who did see it or hear it? Did anybody?

Well, I think we said a lot, and we said, more than anything else, that we love you, we respect you so much, and we have a big commitment to each and every one of you. Starting today, America will be stronger and greater than it's ever been before. That's happening—*[inaudible]*.

That was a big win. That was a tremendous win. We all worked hard for it, and a big part of the reason that I won was because of my relationship with you. So we appreciate it.

Under the leadership of our next Secretary of Defense, who I just saw—Pete Hegseth, who's fantastic. Where is Pete? I saw him backstage. I don't know. There's so many people. How do you find anybody in this crowd? This is a big crowd.

But if Pete is around and Pete can hear this, come on up here, Pete.

But we will again build the most powerful military the world has ever seen. We're going to have it. You know, we did that 4 years ago, and then it was a little bit dissipated, but we're going to do it again, but much bigger, much stronger than ever before.

We're also doing the Iron Dome, all made in America. We're going to have a nice Iron Dome. You're going to protect us with the use of the Iron Dome.

Instead of worrying about political agendas, you don't have to worry about that at all. There's only one focus: defeating America's enemies. We're not going to be defeated. We're not going to be humiliated. We're only going to win, win, win. We're going to win, win, win.

And we really do have some just incredible people working with us. So I've been looking around for generals like George Patton, Douglas MacArthur, Ulysses S. Grant—his stock has gone way up in the last 20 years. Wouldn't you say, J.D.? They used to say bad things about him. Now, all of a sudden, he's very well respected.

But we all fight to win, and we're going to win, and we're going to win like never before in many ways. Economy—the economy is going to be strong. We're not going to let all of our nations—our friendly and unfriendly nations push us around from any standpoint, including the economy, because we have something that they don't have; we have a—a power that they don't have: liquid gold under our feet, the likes of which no other nation—*[applause]*.

Yet, as I said in my Inaugural Address, we will measure our success not only by the battles we win, but also by the wars we end and, perhaps most importantly, the wars we never get into. It's called peace through strength. We won't have to fight the war. Right? We don't have to fight the wars if we can do it without fighting.

As long as we have total victory, we do it without fighting, through our power and might, we will lead the world to peace. Our friends will respect us, our enemies will fear us, and the whole world will admire the unrivaled greatness of the United States military.

And I will tell you, we made big strides. We totally rebuilt the United States military—2017, 2019, 2018. We rebuilt the entire U.S. military, and now we're going to do it again. A lot of it's been dissipated by people that don't know what the hell they're doing—*[laughter]*—but we're going to do it again.

And this is going to be the dawn of the golden age of America. This is the golden age of America. And tonight I'm filled with optimism for what lies ahead over the next 4 years. We will replenish the pride of our Armed Forces, end the recruitment crisis.

And by the way, the recruitment numbers are through the roof in the last 2 months. I wonder why. Why? I don't know. Why the hell are they through—you know, you were having a little problem with recruitment. That's not good. And now the numbers are higher than they've just about ever—you know why? They love what they see for the future of our country, and they didn't love what they were seeing for the last 4 years. It was ridiculous.

It's a big thing, actually. There's big stories that recruiting has gone really through the roof, and that's good.

I want to thank every servicemember here tonight and across the globe to know that you're at the heart of America's greatness. It's an exceptional honor to join you again in serving this magnificent nation that we all love and that we're going to make greater, better, bigger, stronger. We're going to make it something that even you will be surprised—you'll see that. And it's going to be led by our great military, the strength of our military.

We're going to make our military so strong that we don't have to use it. Wouldn't that be good? We don't have to use it. They'll look at us, and they'll say, "There's no way—there's no way we're going after that one."

So I want to just say to you, God bless you, God bless our Armed Forces, God bless our men and women serving overseas, and God bless the United States of America.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. So they say we have some troops from South Korea, and I have no idea how we're getting them on the screen. I've been waiting for it for about 2 seconds—oh, here it comes. No, that's a cake.

[At this point, a group of U.S. soldiers stationed at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, joined via video conference.]

Hello, everybody. How we doing over there? How's Kim Jong Un doing? *[Laughter]* How are you?

Eighth Army Commanding General Lieutenant General Christopher C. Laneve, USA. Mr. President, how do you hear me? How do you hear me, sir?

The President. That's a good-looking group of people, isn't it?

Thank you for being with us.

Lt. Gen. Laneve. Mr. President, sir, how do you hear us?

The President. Yes, I hear you fine.

Lt. Gen. Laneve. Sir, I'm Lieutenant General Chris LaNeve, commanding general, Eighth Army. And this is Command Sergeant Major Robin Bolmer. We're based in Camp Humphreys, South Korea, United States bedrock—*[inaudible]*—of freedom's frontier in Asia. Protection of both homelands, sir.

It's a profound honor to stand before you today representing our incredible team here in Korea. We're deeply grateful for this opportunity to be a part of this occasion.

Sir, on behalf of the brave men and women who serve under my command and the thousands of dedicated service members that are part of the joint team in Korea, congratulations on your victory as the 47th President of the United States.

Welcome back, Mr. President.

Sir, it would be a privilege to host you here in Korea soon. You can see firsthand the—*[inaudible]*—of our soldiers here, our formations—*[inaudible]*—our "fight tonight" focus, and our ironclad commitment to the defense of Korea and our homelands, and meet the families who serve alongside our war fighters, sir.

Participants. Pacific victory, sir.

The President. How about that? So could I ask you: How is it going in South Korea right now? How is it doing? You have somebody with pretty bad intentions, I guess. You know, you would say that. Although, I developed a pretty good relationship with him, but he's a tough cookie.

How is it going over there? How is it doing?

Lt. Gen. Laneve. Sir, every day we train, we stay hard, we plan for anything that you possibly could need us to do. The alliance is strong. We're ready to receive you, Mr. President.

The President. Well, thank you very much.

This is really—this—is this man central casting or what? If I'm doing a movie, I'd pick him to play my lead. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank you all very much. What a good-looking group of people. And we are very secure when we have people like you in our military, and we're having a beautiful time in Washington. We just had that great election that you alluded to. It was a big one. It was a very big win. We won everything. We won just about everything.

The only thing that matters, though, is we won with the military the likes of which nobody has seen before. So that's really good.

But I would like to just thank you all, and I'll see you soon. If anybody would like to make a statement, please do so. If you'd like to say something—you have a big group of people—we have all night, right? We have all night.

If anybody would like to make a statement, go ahead.

Lt. Gen. Laneve. Hooah, sir.

The President. That is great. You see that? They're not going to play games with you. That's good. I like to see that. Nobody is playing games with that man.

Have a good time, everybody. Say hello to everybody over there. I have a lot of friends in South Korea.

And great job. You look really sharp, really special, and you are a special guy. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Lt. Gen. Laneve. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you very much.

That's great, isn't it? That's great, but you're great. Thank you all very much. Have a great time.

Commander in Chief, this is the ball. This is the big one. This is the first one I stopped at. I hope the other ones don't hear me say that. But this is the one.

And now we're going to cut a cake. And they said: "Could you be very, very careful, sir? Don't cut the plane"—which is cake—"cut the runway." I think that's a good idea. *[Laughter]*

Thank you very much. We love you all. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to President of the State Affairs Commission Kim Jong Un of the North Korea. He also referred to his grandchildren Luke and Carolina Trump. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on January 21.

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