

Remarks to United States Servicemembers at Al Udeid Air Base in Doha, Qatar
May 15, 2025

The President. Well, thank you very much, everybody. This is an honor. What a beautiful group of people you are. You are good—I wish I looked like you. I would have—I would have been President 20 years ago if I looked like you.

But I want to give a special hello to Al Udeid Air Base, sometimes referred to as "the Deid." That's a little sinister term, "the Deid."

Today we can all relax and be at ease, and we're going to have a little fun. I have nothing else to do, so let's have a little fun, right?

So I'm thrilled to be here with the men and women who embody American strength and pride, the warriors of the United States Armed Forces. It's an amazing group of people. You are, without a doubt, the greatest fighting force in the history of the world. That's the way it is.

I said it last night. I said it's strong. We have the strongest military in the world. Not even a contest. We have the best equipment. Nobody has equipment like us. Nobody has the planes or the missiles or anything else.

And as your Commander in Chief, I'm here to say that America's military will soon be bigger, better, stronger, and more powerful than ever before.

We just did a budget. The budget was the highest by far, over a trillion dollars. That's a lot. That's a lot of stuff. And hopefully, it's peace through strength. Hopefully, we don't have to use it, because if you use it, I feel sorry for the other guy. *[Laughter]* But we don't want to have to use it.

I want to recognize a true warrior, and that's our Secretary of Defense. They put him through hell, the radical left did. And he's incredible. You know, he went to the best schools. He did the best stuff. He's a smart guy, and he's a great guy. And I just listened to his words standing backstage when he was speaking, and he really has it right on the peg. Pete Hegseth—he's going to be great. You're going to love this guy. You're going to love him.

And I also want to—it's really—I want to influence you to clap for a man who's a great influencer. In fact, my son Barron said, "Dad, you've got to do an interview with"—somebody I hadn't heard of, but my son knew very well. He knows everyone. He said, "Dad"—this is before the election. You know, we won in a landslide, in case you hadn't known. *[Laughter]* But he said, "Dad, you've got to do an interview with a guy named Theo Von." I said, "Who the hell is Theo Von?" *[Laughter]* He said: "Dad, he's such a big guy. You've got to do an interview." So he knew all the names. I didn't know the names.

And where is Theo? He's around here someplace, I think, huh? Theo, thank you very much. Thank you, Theo.

That's Barron. You know Barron. He said, "You got to do with"—we had a good time, right? We had a good time. We had, like, 270 million people that listened. So, you know what? I think Barron was right. Thank you for being here, Theo. Appreciate it.

Also, Lee Greenwood, right from the beginning, that song went on. And, you know, that song was a successful song, but we made it the most—number one. We made that song—it's the top of the list of that type of song. That's a pretty big—I don't want to go into the list, because you'll get upset with me if I do, like the national anthem and—*[laughter]*—things that's like—and it became unbelievable.

And I was saying, you could get Elvis or anybody else to do a song, there's nothing—that was my intro song, right from the beginning. Because, as you know, we won three elections, okay? And some people want us to do a fourth. I don't know. We'll have to think about that.

You saw the new hat. The hottest hat is—it says "Trump 2028." We're driving the left crazy when you see that. *[Laughter]* We didn't need that hat, but it was—it's been an amazing period of time.

And when Lee Greenwood did that song, it went—from the first day, I came out and played it. It was a great song, but we didn't know. And then I did it a second time, a third time—and that was 968 rallies ago. Can you believe that? We did 968 rallies. It's—another hat, it says "968." I said, "What the hell does that mean?" "That's the number of rallies." I said, "You have to be kidding."

But from the very beginning—and we played Lee's song, and it was the walk-on. And then for the last inauguration, I had every—all the big singers, they wanted to do a song for me, and they wanted to have me walk on to their song. And my people: "Oh, that would be nice. That would be nice. That would"—and when I heard about it—we were all set. We had a lot of them, and I heard about it, and I said: "I'm not switch—are you kidding me? I'm not switching."

So we stick with Lee. But there's—nobody could have done better than Lee, and he's been so loyal and so great. And it's been, really, about 9 years of that stuff.

And you know, we had really—honestly, we had three unbelievable campaigns, and it's been—it's been an honor, and there's nobody been stronger than the military in terms of backing us. Nobody. So I just want to thank you all very much. Great honor. Thank you very much.

And also with us today is a—really, a great talent, and somebody who's one of the most popular television hosts in history. Still looks young to me, but he's been doing it a long time. But he's an incredible man. He's—always seems to take my side, and therefore I like him even more. *[Laughter]* But he has a—he has common sense. We talk about common sense all the time. But he's one of the biggest in the history of television, the great Sean Hannity.

He's here someplace. Sean, stand up, wherever you are. Thank you, Sean. Thank you. Where is he? Thank you, Sean. Thank you, Sean. He was a little shy for a change. I've never seen that.

We're also grateful to have a very excellent Ambassador, Timmy Davis. Everybody loves him. Timmy, thank you very much. Thank you, Timmy.

Along with your great military leaders. Real—these are real leaders. These are real tough cookies: Lieutenant General Derek "Trapper" France, Major General David Shoemaker, Brigadier General Richard "Deuce" Dickens, Chief Master Sergeants Chris Murphy and Joshua Weiner, and Colonel Brian Ellis.

We want to thank you amazing people. They're real leaders. And this is one of the great bases anywhere in the world, and we're lucky to have them. Thank you very much, fellas.

And a very special thanks as well to our partners from the Qatar Army and Armed Forces. Let's give them a really special hand. They are so great. They are so great.

And in particular, we want to be—give a little special applause for somebody that's been so good, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Saoud. Where are you, Saud? Thank you very much. Great. Thank you. Thank you. It's an honor.

Yesterday we signed an agreement for Qatar to purchase 42 billion dollars' worth of the finest American military hardware, including THAAD missile batteries, Pegasus refueling aircraft, Desert Vipers light armored vehicles, amphibious combat vehicles, the MQ-9B—and the

SkyGuardian drones. That's all the best stuff is, isn't it? If it isn't, please stand up and tell me, and we'll get something else. *[Laughter]* But I believe it's the best.

Qatar will also be investing \$10 billion to support this massive base in the coming years. And there's no place like it, they say.

And a man, the leader, Amir—he's been a special friend of mine for a long time, long before I did the political thing, when he was a novice, he was a young guy, and we got to know each other. We liked each other and got along, long before I ever thought of running for President. And it's nice when you have that kind of a relationship. We got along right from the beginning. He's a special guy. He's a great leader—a great leader of your country.

So I want to just congratulate you on that, and all the Qatari people—a spectacular group—and it's an honor. And I don't think our friendship has ever been stronger than it is right now. It's—you had the last administration—I don't know if they knew too much about what was happening, but this administration does, and you will never see anything like the relationship that we have.

We just left Saudi Arabia, as you know, and you have a fantastic Crown Prince. He is a fantastic guy, likewise. And we're going—from here, we're going to U.A.E. and—United Arab Emirates—and we're going to see another leader.

We have—it's an amazing part of the world, and our relationship has never been stronger, and you're going to see that as time goes by. But, with us, it's not words.

As you know, I'm in the midst of a very historic trip, visiting the key partners in the Gulf. We had just some incredible stopovers and a wonderful day. Yesterday we had the dinner, however, with His Highness, the Amir, and he is—I'm going to see him in a little while. I'm going to be saying goodbye to him, but we'll be saying hello again very, very soon.

But no visit in the Gulf would be complete without stopping to salute the people who keep America safe, strong, and free, and the patriots of the United States Army, Navy, Space Force. I love Space Force. That's—I have to say, that's my little baby. You know, I started that. They said, "That will never work." Oh, it worked.

You know, we were way behind Russia and China, and now we're way, way ahead of everybody. So Space Force, I'm very happy. That was my—you know, not since the Air Force has that happened. So we created a force, and it's a big force, and it's a brilliant force. So, Space Force, thank you for doing such a great job.

The Marines and, of course, the United States Air Force.

Al Udeid is the home of the legendary 379th Air Expeditionary Wing, known as the "Grand Slam Wing." We also have the 1st Expeditionary Theater Support Group. You've got them all. And let's not forget the top-notch Army soldiers from the 11th Air Defense Artillery—the "Imperial Brigade." *[Applause]* Thank you, fellas. That's great.

We also have the 8th Expeditionary Air Mobility Squadron, known as "Mighty Ochos." *[Applause]* Where are the Ochos? We don't want to fight with them.

All of you are the tip of the spear. You're the finest we have. Anywhere in the world, you're the finest we have. You're the finest anyone has in the fight against the enemies of civilization. You're the people that are defeating chaos, combating terror, defending our interests, supporting our allies, securing our homeland, and making America incredibly proud.

And you know what? Making America great again. That's what's happened. It's happened very fast. Happened very fast.

As President, my priority is to end conflicts, not start them, but I will never hesitate to wield American power if it's necessary to defend the United States of America or our partners, and this is one of our great partners right here.

When we're threatened, America's military will answer our enemies without even thinking about it. We have overwhelming strength and devastating force.

And we had people that didn't like to talk about that, you know? They didn't want to talk about the level of quality that we have. They didn't want to talk about anything. They didn't—we're going to have a big parade this year, you know, in Washington, DC. A real parade.

And I'll tell you just a little story. A week ago, May 8, I'd call up a certain country, and they said, "Oh, we're celebrating the victory of World War II today, sir." "Oh, really?" I speak to one of the Presidents or Prime Ministers or whatever, and they were so busy. "Oh, yes. We're celebrating the victory of World War II." Then I speak to another one, and they were celebrating.

And the fact is, Russia was celebrating, France was celebrating, everybody was celebrating but us. And we're the ones that won the war. We won the war. And they helped, but without us, they don't win the war; we're all speaking German. *[Laughter]* You know that, right? Without us, they're speaking German—maybe a little Japanese too. *[Laughter]*

We won the war, and we're the only ones that didn't celebrate. So what I did is, I got my crack staff over there, and we did it every time we have May 8—and we also have the date in November, that sacred date in November for World War I, because we won that war too.

But think of it. I'm calling—now, we love France, right? But I think we did a little more to win the war than France did. Do we agree? You know, I don't want to be a wise guy, but when Hitler made his speech at the Eiffel Tower, I would say that wasn't exactly ideal. *[Laughter]* And I called up the President, Macron—good guy, by the way—"Donald, we are celebrating our victory over the Germans." "Oh, that's wonderful."

No, we don't take credit for what we do. And I said: "What the hell? Every country I've spoken to in the last week is celebrating the war but us." Isn't that terrible?

So we're going to be doing holidays. But I said it has to be a working holiday, because we—you know, you can only do so many of them. We have a lot of holidays I'm not so sure we should have them, and you don't have to go to work. Our country has to go to work.

So we're going to have a working holiday for each one of those two dates, and we're going to be celebrating too, because we should celebrate more than anybody else. And others did help a lot, but nobody helped like us. We wouldn't have won. I mean, the fact is: not winnable without us. And now we're stronger than ever before.

You know, I rebuilt the military in my first term. We had a great first term, everywhere. We had the greatest economy ever. Stock market up 88 percent, the biggest rise ever. All of that stuff. But the second term is going to be even better.

We have over 10 trillion going to be invested in our country. And this little tour didn't hurt, I will tell you, between the three great places.

I recently announced that I'll approve an unprecedented \$1 trillion, as I told you—and it's going to end up going higher—investment in the U.S. Armed Forces, and that's a record.

As part of that effort, I signed an order to build the Golden Dome missile defense shield to protect our country from missile attack. Is everybody okay with that? It was called the "Iron Dome," but I changed it to the Golden Dome. I thought it was a little more beautiful—*[laughter]*—maybe a little more modern or something, but we're going to have it. And it's amazing, actually, what they do.

It's—you know, it's going to cost many billions of dollars. All made in the U.S.A. I want it all made in the U.S.A. The days of making our parts all over the world, because we have wonderful partners—no, it's America first now. America first. We're going to make it all in the U.S.A.

And we're going to—by the way, it's America first, but we're going to take care of other countries. We're going to have plenty left over, because we're doing things now.

You know, 6 months ago, our country was laughed at. Now our country is respected again at a level that it hasn't seen in a long, long time, and we're going to keep it that way.

And our Air Force will soon have the world's first and only sixth-generation fighter jet, the F-47. Why did they name it 47? Does anybody know? I don't know. That was a nice thing. But it's quite the plane. They say it's—there's never been anything done.

But we're also looking at an increased version of the F-35. I think we're going to call it the F-55, which will be a double-engine plane. I like two engines on a plane. I'm sorry if I say that—*[laughter]*—but does that make sense to anybody? Does anybody agree? General, do you agree with that? I like—*[laughter]*. Thank you.

So many of them: "Sir, this engine is infallible." No engine is infallible. I like two engines on a plane. Should have been made with two engines. If I were here, you would have had two engines, and you would have had a lot of other victories, by the way. *[Laughter]*

But we're going to do—when you think of it, Russia-Ukraine would have never started. October 7, Israel, would have never happened, because Iran, as you know, was broke. They were unable to fund Hamas or anything else. It wouldn't have happened. We wouldn't have had the disaster of Afghanistan, the leaving. We were getting out, but we were getting out with dignity and strength. We were going to keep Bagram Air Base. We weren't going to give that up, because it's 1 hour away from China. One hour. You know who occupies it now? China.

The damage that that administration did to this country is legendary. Allowing 21 million people through an open border, where anybody could walk into the United States of America, is something that will never be forgiven. Grossly incompetent and evil—bad people too. Bad people.

But the real strength of our military doesn't come from its fighter jets. It really comes from our people. That's you. It comes from our people. You're unbelievable people. The aptitude and all of the things you have to do to do what you do.

You know, I look at some of those engines—and I'm a pretty smart cookie. I would tell you, I'm real smart—*[laughter]*—and I'd look at you, and you take those engines apart and put them back together blindfolded and fix them up. It's amazing what you're able to do. And then to fly them—just incredible. You're incredible. You're a very special group of people.

And that's why in—my 2026 budget includes, across the board—maybe you don't want it; look, for the good of the country, you don't have to take it—pay raises for each and every one of you. Substantial pay raises. But you don't have to take it. You don't have to take. You can go to your commanding officer, say: "Sir, I'd rather not take that pay—I love my country, sir. I don't want—I refuse to take it." Anybody here—raise your hand, please, if you refuse to take it? Let's see here. All right. Well, at least we have smart people. That's good. *[Laughter]*

So you do your duty for us, and as Commander in Chief, I will always do and fulfill my duty to you. That's what I'm doing.

Under the Trump administration, we're liberating everything in our Armed Forces from really radical social experiments carried out under the previous administration and beyond that—

and actually, beyond that—and restoring the strong and fierce spirit of the American warrior and the American fighter.

On day one, I signed an Executive order stopping our service members from being forced to endure endless training sessions on political correctness. We don't care if you're politically correct. And I directed the reinstatement of all patriots expelled from our military by the COVID vaccine mandate, which should've never happened. They're being returned at their former rank with full backpay. Very important.

After years of not making our enrollment targets—to me, this is the biggest thing—our military suddenly has the best recruiting numbers that perhaps they've ever had, but certainly in 30 years. Think of that. You go back 6 months ago, we couldn't get people to join the military. Nobody wanted your job. Now, everybody wants your job.

So we went from having the worst numbers we've ever had in terms of recruitment—that included police officers, also—firefighters, but police officers—but in the military. Think of that. You couldn't get people to join the military, and now we're brimming over. We have the highest numbers we probably—minimum, 30 years, but probably have ever had, because there's such an incredible spirit now in our country.

We have a whole new spirit, and it began on a date: November 5. That was election day. Under the Trump administration, America is back, and America's military is back bigger, better, and stronger than ever before.

Since my inauguration, servicemembers stationed throughout this region have terminated 83 major terrorists operating across Iraq, Syria, and Somalia, including the number two—just recently—global leader of ISIS.

And I knocked out ISIS, as you know, in my term. They said it was going to take 4 years. I said, "Why 4 years? That's a long time." And then I met a general, "Razin" Caine. He's now the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, right? And he was great. He said, "We can do it in 3 weeks, sir." I said, "Well, I was told 4 years, General, by your television generals in Washington, DC." And he didn't want to be disrespectful to them. He said, "Sir, I'm telling you, if you want, we can do it in 3 weeks," and that's what he did. He knocked out 100 percent of the ISIS caliphate in 3 weeks.

Should I tell you a little long, boring story about that?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Yes? Okay. Some of you have heard it, because it's sort of a cool story.

But I was wondering why we couldn't defeat, you know, ISIS. We have this great military, all these great jets that we have—new—all over the place. The best in the world—the fastest, the best. And I went out and I said to a certain General in Washington, DC—a television general. Not much a—there's a real general on television—you have the television guys, then you have the real generals.

And I said, "General, how long will it take us?" Because it doesn't make sense. We're spending a lot of money on defeating ISIS, and they don't have great equipment. They, in many cases, don't even have equipment. They're vicious, and they are good fighters. We always have to respect that. "Sir, it will take at least 5 years, sir." I said: "Five years? That's a long time. You mean, we have jets, they have knives, and it's going to take 5 years?" "Yes, sir." I said, "I don't really believe that."

So I did something that I've never done before. I said, "I want to go to Iraq, and I want to meet with the people in Iraq," because maybe they're different, but I couldn't understand how a large and powerful terror group could last so long.

And so I scheduled a flight—meaning I left at 3 o'clock in the morning. It was pitch black. We left very, very under guard. We traveled through Washington, DC. There was nobody around. We got to the hangar at about 3:15. Air Force One was waiting for us. Pilots—the best looking human beings I've ever seen. Even better looking than Tom Cruise, and he's a friend of mine. Okay? *[Laughter]* These guys were central casting, and they could also fly.

And we headed out about 3:30 in the morning, pitch black. We headed for Iraq, and nobody knew I was going. Nobody. And we're flying, and we're starting to get close, and they come to see me, and they say, "Sir, we have a problem." "What?" "We're flying over enemy territory very soon, sir. Could we please turn off your lights?" I said: "My lights? We're flying on Air Force One. We just spent trillions of dollars on fighting the—and you can't fly in with lights on?" "No, sir. It's very, very dangerous out there." So I said, "Oh, obviously, turn them off."

Then he comes in: "In addition to the lights, we want to turn down the shades." So I said, "You mean not even shades? Okay." We turned down the shades. Then I said, "I want to go upstairs." This is 747, two levels. Beautiful plane. Just ordered new ones, by the way. Beautiful—beautiful new ones.

And Boeing just—by the way, did the biggest order in the history of Boeing. Just did—with your beautiful territory right here, they ordered, I think, 160 planes. I think it's the largest order ever for aircraft. So I salute the people from Boeing, Kelly and everybody. And General Electric—the engines are General Electric super prime. And I really think it's great. Congratulations.

But I go up to the—to see the pilots, because I love sitting with the pilots. I admire their skill. I really do. I like—amazing. Especially at a certain level, and when you—when you fly Air Force One, supposedly you're the best pilot. So I hope that's true, by the way. *[Laughter]* But it seems to be. I have no complaints.

We land—it's like always landing like glass. I've had pilots where, when you land, it's not a pretty picture. In fact, you admire the plane so much for being able to keep a part—you know, I mean, these—sometimes I land with some of these guys, you're bouncing down the runway. I'm saying, "These planes are amazing, that they don't crack up." But these pilots land us, I mean—and the 747 is a hard one to land, but they're great.

So I go up. I see the pilots. I say, "Hi, Captain." The guy is a handsome guy, got a blonde flattop. I'd like to have a flattop like that. *[Laughter]* I don't know if the hair is good enough for that. I don't think so. I don't think I'm going to try it either. But perfect person. And I look at the right, he's perfect. Everybody was perfect. They're like perfect human beings.

I said, "How we doing, Captain?" "We're doing fine, sir. We'll be there in a half hour, sir." I said, "They want the lights turned off, Captain." And they go: "Yes, sir. They're doing the right thing." "Oh, that's great, Captain." It's great.

So now we're—15 more minutes, and all of a sudden—and most of you know the sound, because that's what you do, but you have the computer voice, a beautiful voice, where it says "1,000, 900"—they're talking about feet. So, when you're in the big planes and sophisticated planes, the voice comes on, and I'm sitting back there watching them fly it beautifully, and I'm still not a hundred-percent happy with the statement that he agrees that the lights should be turned off. I would have preferred that he said, "No, there's no problem," but that's not what he said.

So we're going through, and it goes, "One thousand. Nine hundred. Eight hundred. Seven hundred," talking about feet. Now, 700 is getting pretty close to the ground. I don't see a thing. There's no lights, there's no runway. And I've done this a lot, and I always see the runway in the

distance. I have fairly good eyes. I'd say, for my age, extremely good eyes. And I don't see a runway.

"Six hundred. Five hundred." "Captain, are we okay?" "Yes, sir. We'll be landing in just a few minutes, sir."

"Four hundred." "Captain, are we okay? I don't see a runway up there, Captain." "Oh, we're fine, sir. No problem, sir."

"Three hundred. Two hundred." I'm saying, "Captain, you sure we're okay here?" And he said, "We're fine, sir."

And then "bah." You know, he just lands that thing so beautifully. And I see—they had no light. They had no nothing. I don't know how the hell they do it. Okay? All I know is we landed like—and for him it was routine. And I'm trying to pretend I'm cool as a cucumber. You know, I'm your President. *[Laughter]* I'm supposed to be cool as a cucumber. And I'm like—you know, I'm like—*[laughter]*—I'm not happy. *[Laughter]*

But after we land, I actually went to my people, and I said, "I want to ask you a question. I did a very brave thing just there. Is the President allowed to designate himself for the congressional Medal of Honor?" *[Laughter]* And they said, "Sir, honestly, that wouldn't be good." I said, "Okay."

So, anyway, we get it. I kid. You know, I have to say "I kid" because the fake news is back there, and they'll actually—*[laughter]*. No, it's true. And they'll say that "the President wanted to give himself the congressional Medal of Honor, and he was talked out of it by his staff." So, anyway.

So I got—the door opens, we have a platform, and I have—I see down—I look down, and I see all—these are all specimens, just like you guys. They're all perfect people. And I'm seeing a couple of generals, a couple of staff sergeants and drill sergeants, but everybody is, like, from a movie. And I walk out of the plane and meet the first gentleman, and I said, "What's your name?" He said, "Caine, sir. My name is Caine." And I said, "Hello, Caine. What's your first name?" Well, they call me 'Razin.'" I said, "Wait a minute. Razin? You mean like 'Razin' Caine?" "Yes, sir. That's what they call me." "General, I love you. You're the guy I'm looking for, General. You're the guy I'm looking for."

So he's "Razin" Caine. It's Daniel Caine, but "Razin" Caine, that's what they call him.

Then I met another general. I met a colonel. I met a sergeant—we all—they said, "Sir, would you like to rest?" I said, "What do you mean rest? I've been resting on the plane. I don't want to rest. What do I have to rest for?" He was thinking about Biden to come. Okay? *[Laughter]* Biden. Biden would have rested the entire trip. He wouldn't—first of all, he wouldn't have made the trip. But if he landed, he would have been rested for about 5 days before he had the first meeting.

I said: "No, let's go have the meeting, because I want to find out what's going on over here. We're spending a lot of money, and people are being killed. I want to find out why it's taking so long. So let's go right away."

So we went to the—almost like a—just a very secure room that was in the form of a boardroom. Very professional, however. It was very highly sophisticated with the equipment. Best you can buy. We have the best you can buy, all the time.

But I went into the room, and I said: "General, so, they tell me in Washington it would take 4 to 5 years to defeat ISIS. And I want to know from you, is that true? Is that?"—"No, sir. But it's not my place to say, sir, because they are the ones that call the shots."

I said, "Well, if you disagree, do you—do"—"It's not the military way, sir. You have to listen to them. That's the chain of command." I said, "Oh, that's great. I'm not sure I like that system. But how long do you think it would take you, if I gave you total authority, to go in and knock the hell out of them?" "Sir, it would take approximately 3 weeks." I say: "Say it again, General. I was told 5 years." "Sir, it will take 3 weeks, and you'll have time left over." I said: "You've got to be kidding me. Where the hell have you been?" *[Laughter]*

And then I sort of was, really, in disbelief, because I said, "You know, I've been hearing for so long, and we've been fighting it"—how long were we fighting them? Eighteen years or something. And here's a guy telling me 3 weeks. So I said, "General, how do you do it in 3 weeks?" He says: "Well, sir, I don't like saying this, because I do have people in Washington, but I'm going to say it. We have portable stations. We have portable runways. We have runways all over the place. We have other bases, and we're being forced to fight them from a very far away, distant base, which is right here. And by the time we get there, we have to come back because there's no fuel, and we're way too far away, sir. And they're over here," and he shows me a map, "and we're over here, and we're all the way here, sir."

I said, "Why didn't they use the other bases?" "Well, they didn't want to disturb the country where those bases were located." I said: "We give those countries billions of dollars. We can disturb them a little bit. They wouldn't know what we're doing anyway. Are they going to know where the planes are going?" "Not really, sir."

I said, "So what would you do different?" He said, "Well, sir, I'd start from here, and I'd go to"—he went through a whole thing. "And I'd hit them from the left. I'd hit them from the right. I'd hit them from underneath. I'd hit them from on top. I'd hit them from every angle, sir. I'd hit them so hard and so fast they wouldn't know what the hell is happening."

I said, "And you think you can do that in 3 weeks?" "Yes, sir. And we're going to have time left over." And I said, "Let me think about it, General."

I went back to Washington, and I spoke to a couple of people, and they said: "I don't think so, sir. I think you're talking about years of fighting." And then I called the General, and I said: "So, General, you still think you can do it in 3 weeks? A lot of people think you can't even come close to that." "Sir, we'll have time left over." I said: "Go to it, General. Go to it." "Thank you, sir." And he hit the hell out of them. He hit the hell out of them.

And he calls me up: "Sir, we have a lot of these people, and if you want, I can finish it off right now, sir." I said: "Well, I don't know. That's a lot. It's—you know, it's a lot of people." "Well, these people are not good people, sir. These are not good people. You'll feel better about it." "Well, they're not good people, but they're people, aren't they?" And he goes—I said: "You know what? Why don't you buzz them for a little while, and maybe after a day or two of buzzing them, they'll surrender." "They don't know about surrendering, sir." "Well, maybe they'll raise the white flag." "They don't have a white flag, sir." I said, "Well, give it a shot anyway." He said, "All we're going to do is take a couple of bullet holes in our wings." You guys know about that, right? And I said, "Well, let's give it a shot."

And he calls up. He says, "Let me do the job, sir." I said: "All right. Do the job," and we defeated 100 percent of the ISIS caliphate in just a very short little period of time. Totally different from what I was told in Washington, DC, by a bunch of fricking losers. Okay? *[Laughter]* Losers.

And that's the beginning. And I took that General and made him the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as I told you, and he's going to be great. And he's highly respected by everybody—just a different kind of respect too. It's a real respect.

But we can do our job better than anybody in the world, but you have to have the leadership of the top—at the top, and we're doing that. We're finding—you know, we let a lot of four stars go. A lot of four—we had more four stars—we had, I think, 425 four stars. In World War II—which, by the way, we won—in World War II, we had 187 generals. And we had, like, 425 generals now without really a war.

And so we made a lot of changes, and we have the best. We have the best. We figured—we worked hard to figure the best, the real ones. We want the real generals, not the fake generals, and not the political generals too.

So we have something that's special, but it can show you, really, what happened.

We also just apprehended, as an example, the ISIS terrorist of—the al bagrab [Jafar; White House correction], the one that caused all of the problems in Afghanistan. Caused unbelievable destruction. We lost 13 great soldiers. I got to know the parents and the families of those soldiers. But you know what they don't say is the ones who were so horribly wounded, which were many.

And hundreds of people were killed from the other side. I always include that. That should have never happened. That whole mess should have never happened. I think it was the most embarrassing day in the history of our country, and we're not going to have things like that happen anymore.

And, again, we should have kept—we should have kept the air base. Should have kept it. We left it—go, then we left. And it was a very embarrassing moment in the history of our country. That will never happen again.

There are a lot of people that said that Russia went into Ukraine when they saw that. They said, "Wow, we didn't think that was possible." But it's not possible any longer, I can tell you. That's another one would have never happened if I were President. Russia would have never gone into Ukraine. All of those things, they would have never happened.

But the Afghanistan withdrawal—not the fact that they withdrew, but the fact that they—the way they did it was so horrible and so embarrassing.

So we brought this horrible person to justice—to American justice. We caught the person that set off that bomb. And all of this is possible because of the work that you do with partnerships that you forge. In this case, it was Pakistan.

And by the way, I don't want to say I did, but I sure as hell helped settle the problem between Pakistan and India last week, which was getting more and more hostile, and all of a sudden you'll start seeing missiles of a different type. And we got it settled. I hope I don't walk out of here and 2 days later find out that it's not settled, but I think it is settled.

And we talked to them about trade. Let's do trade instead of do war. And Pakistan was very happy with that, and India was very happy with that. And I think they're on the way.

You know, they have been fighting for about a thousand years, in all fairness. [Laughter] So I said: "You know, I could settle that up. I can settle anything. Let me settle it up. Let's get them all together. How long have you been fighting?" "About a thousand years." "Oh, that's a lot. I'm not sure about that." [Laughter] "I'm not sure about settling. That's a tough one."

They've been fighting for a long time, but we got that settled. Nobody—boy, everybody was very happy, I'll tell you. That looked like it was really going to be escalating out of control.

But with us today is the first sergeant of the 379th Wing, Master Sergeant Patrick Elders. Patrick, wherever you may be. Where are you, Patrick? Handsome guy. Wow. I'm looking at him from here, and it says, "After having served 22 years"—he's a lot—how long have you been in, Patrick?

379th Wing Master Sergeant First Sgt. Patrick Elders, USAF. Twenty-two years, sir.

The President. Wow, that's amazing. It looks like he's, like, 25 years old. [*Laughter*] I'm saying, "22 years?" I said, "We must have this mixed up." We don't have it mixed up. I guess when you love what you do, you stay young, right? And he loves what he does, no doubt about it.

But having served over 22 years in the Air Force, he's one of his—right now, this is his sixth deployment. But this time, it's a little different, because his stepson, Airman First Class Ashton Inman, is on his own first ever deployment nearby, in Kuwait—right now in Kuwait, which is really incredible.

Master Sergeant Elders is proud that two generations of his family are now serving the same mission, in the same theater, protecting the same great American flag.

So say hello to him. Thank you very much. That's great. Very nice. A lot of stories like that. A lot of stories like that. And I want to thank Airman First Class Inman, also, very much. It's—that's a great—that's a great story. That's a great story.

And we have many of them. I guarantee, in this room right now, there are many such stories.

There are several married couples serving side by side in uniform at this base, including Staff Sergeants Tyler and Paige Duck. Where is Tyler and Paige? [*Applause*] Wow, great. Beautiful. Beautiful.

For years, they grew their relationship while Paige was deployed in the U.K. and Tyler was halfway around the world at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska, conquering a 14-hour time difference. That's a lot of time difference. And now they're together at Al Udeid, and it's really great. So, Staff Sergeants, congratulations. It's fantastic.

The American people never forget that our servicemembers and their families make incredible sacrifices each and every day so that all Americans can be safe and be free. And we love our amazing military families. Our military families are as good as you can get.

The men and women here today are part of a noble tradition of service that has been passed down from one generation of Americans to the next, and your spirit and courage and sacrifice has always been there when we needed you the most. You're always there where we need you the most.

With us today is Master Sergeant Michael Scullo, who happens to be from a small town in a place called Butler, Pennsylvania. Has anybody heard of Butler, Pennsylvania? Yes. Michael is a member of the Air Force Reserve, as well as Butler County corrections officer. And last July 13, he attended the rally where an assassin tried to take my life. He gave it a shot. Not good. That was some day.

As soon as the shots were fired, Michael raced to direct law enforcement toward the sniper's perch, then worked to evacuate the rest of the crowd in a very safe manner. But Master Sergeant Scullo would be the first to tell you who the real hero was that day. He personally knew and really liked veteran firefighter and also a veteran of the military—great veteran of the military, who laid down his life for his country. Really laid down his life for his country. His whole life was about his country. Corey Comperatore.

And he's become somewhat of a legend, I will tell you. He took a hard shot. He took a hard shot, guarding his family.

Master Sergeant Scullo, your commitment represents the very best in America. Thank you for your incredible service that day and forever, because that day was a horrible day, but you acted with incredible bravery. We've gotten reports about what you did. It was really amazing, and I personally appreciate it. That was a rough day. We don't want to have days like that.

But Corey was an incredible guy. Lost his life guarding his wife and children.

Every American warrior here today inherits a legacy of exceptional patriots who have defended our freedom for nearly 250 years. You carry on the glorious tradition of the heroes of Lexington and Concord, Gettysburg and Belleau Wood, Normandy and Midway. You embody the spirit of the soldiers who hoisted the flag over Fort McHenry and the marines who planted the Stars and Stripes on the summit to Iwo Jima. That was a rough attack.

You carry forward the mission of generations of Americans before you, who marched through halls of gunfire, trekked over rugged mountains, stormed across scorching deserts, sailed through hostile waters, conquered unknown dangers, and poured out their blood and guts on battlefields all over the world.

The military is incredible, and we won our independence. We preserved our union, protected our way of life, defeated fascism, crushed terrorism, liberated millions and millions of people from bondage, and brought communism to its knees. It's what we did.

And now we're going to defend America from all enemies, overcome all obstacles and dangers, and, as one nation, we're going to build a future of peace and prosperity for generations to come. Together, we will stand strong, we will stand proud, we will live free, and we will fight, fight, fight and win, win, win.

So my trip is 4½ days, but this is the one I was so looking forward because I'm with the people that I really love and respect. And we love and respect you. This is—what you're doing, the service you do for your country, you keep us safe. There is no more important profession.

And I was so proud to see those reports coming in, just a few days ago, saying that the enrollment is at the highest level ever, especially when I had to suffer running against a group of people that were very inappropriate, where they allowed that reputation of what you stood for and what you stand for to deteriorate to a point where we weren't able to recruit.

So just remember this: You have a job now that everybody wants. Everybody wants to be doing what you're doing. It's a special job.

And I am so proud. When I saw those numbers come across the board that we set the record for enrollment in the military—and we took that from the exact opposite just 6 months before—I was very, very proud of that.

We have a great country. We have a proud country. We have a country that's respected all over the world. And as I said before, a year ago, we were laughed at, but nobody's laughing at our country anymore. We're the most respected country anywhere in the world.

And thank you very much. And enjoy your lives, and God bless America. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to comedian and podcaster Theodor C. von Kurnatowski III; Sean Hannity, host, Fox News Channel's "Sean Hannity Show"; Lt. Gen. Derek C. France, USAF, Commander, and Maj. Gen. David G. "Baja" Shoemaker, USAF, Deputy Commander, U.S. Central Command Combined Forces Air Component; Brig. Gen. Richard R. Dickens, USAF, Commander, and Col. Brian Ellis, USAF, Air Base Group Commander, 379th Air Expeditionary Wing; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs Sheikh Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali Al Thani and Amir Tamin bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar; Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates; actor Tom Cruise; Kelly Ortberg, president and chief executive officer, Boeing Co.; and Helen Comperatore, wife, and Allyson and Kaylee Comperatore, daughters, of Freeport, PA, resident Corey

Comperatore, who was killed in the shooting in Butler, PA, on July 13, 2024. He also referred to Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on May 16.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Al Udeid Air Base in Doha, Qatar, remarks to U.S. servicemembers.

Locations: Doha, Qatar.

Names: Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Caine, J. Daniel; Comperatore, Allyson; Comperatore, Helen; Comperatore, Kaylee; Cruise, Tom; Davis, Timmy T.; Dickens, Richard R.; Duck, Paige; Duck, Tyler; Elders, Patrick; Ellis, Brian; France, Derek C.; Greenwood, Lee; Hannity, Sean; Hegseth, Peter B.; Inman, Ashton; Macron, Emmanuel; Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince; Murphy, Christopher; Ortberg, Kelly; Saoud bin Abdulrahman bin Hassan bin Ali Al Thani; Scuillo, Michael; Sharifullah, Mohammad; Shoemaker, David G.; Trump, Barron W.; von Kurnatowski, Theodor C., III; Weiner, Joshua.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Afghanistan, withdrawal of U.S. military forces; Armed Forces, U.S., funding; Armed Forces, U.S., recruitment efforts; Border security; COVID-19 vaccines; France, President; Illegal immigration; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; Joint Chiefs of Staff; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Pakistan, counterterrorism cooperation with U.S.; Pennsylvania, 2024 assassination attempt on former President Donald J. Trump in Butler; Qatar, Al Udeid Air Base in Doha; Qatar, Amir; Qatar, defense relationship with U.S.; Qatar, Deputy Prime Minister; Qatar, President Trump's visit; Qatar, relations with U.S.; Qatar, trade with U.S.; Qatar, U.S. Ambassador; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince; Secretary of Defense; U.S. military readiness, improvement efforts; U.S. missile defense, improvement efforts; U.S. servicemembers, service and dedication; U.S. Space Force; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; United Arab Emirates, President; World War II Victory Day.

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