

Remarks on United States Missile Defense and an Exchange With Reporters
May 20, 2025

The President. Thank you very much, and thank you for being here in the Oval Office, one of the great places of the world, as we make a historic announcement about the Golden Dome missile defense shield. That's something we want. And Ronald Reagan wanted it many years ago, but they didn't have the technology. But it's something we're going to have. We're going to have it at the highest level.

I want to thank Secretaries Hegseth, who's been fantastic, and Secretary Rubio and Space Force Vice Chief of Space Operations General Mike Guetlein. I also want to recognize Senators Dan Sullivan, Kevin Cramer, and Jim Banks. Fantastic Senators, great talents—great political talents and people that love our country.

In the campaign, I promised the American people that I would build a cutting-edge missile defense shield to protect our homeland from the threat of foreign missile attack, and that's what we're doing. Today I'm pleased to announce that we have officially selected an architecture for this state-of-the-art system that will deploy next-generation technologies across the land, sea, and space, including space-based sensors and interceptors.

And Canada has called us, and they want to be a part of it. So we'll be talking to them. They want to have protection also. So, as usual, we help Canada. Do the best we can.

This design for the Golden Dome will integrate with our existing defense capabilities and should be fully operational before the end of my term. So we'll have it done in about 3 years.

Once fully constructed, the Golden Dome will be capable of intercepting missiles, even if they are launched from other sides of the world, and even if they are launched from space. And we will have the best system ever built. As you know, we helped Israel with theirs, and it was very successful, and now we have technology that's even far advanced from that. But including hypersonic missiles, ballistic missiles, and advanced cruise missiles—all of them will be knocked out of the air.

We will truly be completing the job that President Reagan started 40 years ago, forever ending the missile threat to the American homeland. And the success rate is very close to a hundred percent, which is incredible. When you think of it, you're shooting bullets out of the air.

I'm also pleased to report that the "One, Big, Beautiful Bill" will include \$25 billion for the Golden Dome to help construction get underway. That's the initial—sort of a down—posit, and we have—probably, you're talking about—General, we're talking about \$175 billion total cost of this, when it's completed.

This afternoon I'm also announcing that I will appoint, very importantly, General Guetlein to lead the ambitious new effort as the direct reporting program manager for the Golden Dome. A very talented man.

And I'm very honored to have been the one that helped—or, really, created Space Force. Space Force has turned out to be a tremendous success. We were third in space, and now we're number one in space by a lot. It's not even close.

And Mike is a four-star Space Force general, the recipient of the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, one of the most respected people in the world having to do with defense. You

know, we have offense and we have defense. I'll bet he's good at offense too. [Laughter] And he has an unmatched background in missile warning technology and defense procurement.

General Guetlein also knows that we need to move fast. No one is more qualified for his job. And everybody—this was a universal acceptance of General Guetlein. Everybody that knows him and knows everybody else, they said, "There's only one man for the job." So I have a feeling we have the right guy.

But now I'd like to invite Secretary Hegseth and the general to please say a few words and describe the system a little bit.

And we appreciate you being here. The press has really been very fair over the last period of a couple of months. I don't know what happened to you. It was so much more exciting the other way, but you've been very, very fair.

We have very high poll numbers, the highest we've ever had, and I think we're doing a great job. We had a tremendous trip to the Middle East, as you know. It was a really amazing trip. And now I came home, and this is the one—I was really looking forward to this day, because this is very important for the success and even survival of our country. It's a pretty evil world out there. So this is something that goes a long way toward the survival of this great country.

And, as I said, we'll be discussing Canada. They want to hook in, and they want to see if they can be a part of it. That sort of makes sense. I guess that's what I was talking about from day one. You know? It just automatically makes sense, and it won't be very difficult to do. But they'll pay their fair share.

Thank you very much, everybody. And, Pete, go ahead.

Secretary of Defense Peter B. Hegseth. Sure. Well, Mr. President, add this to the long and growing list of promises made and promises kept. Ultimately, this right here, the Golden Dome for America, is game changer. It's a generational investment in the security of America and Americans.

Mr. President, you said we're going to secure our southern border and get 100 percent operational control, after the previous administration allowed an invasion of people into our country.

[At this point, Secretary Hegseth continued his remarks, concluding as follows.]

So, sir, it's an honor to be a part of this bold initiative. We're going to get to work on it. And we have been since you signed that Executive order on January 27. We've been fast forward on this. But we're here on this day, and this is just one stop in delivering this defense of the homeland, which is something you've charged us with doing, and we'll keep going until it is complete, sir.

The President. Thank you, Pete. Pete is doing a great job, by the way. Thank you very much. General, please.

U.S. Space Force Vice Chief of Space Operations General Michael A. Guetlein, USSF. Mr. President, today is a great day for the Nation as we double down on protection of the homeland. As you're aware, our adversaries have become very capable and very intent on holding the homeland at risk.

While we have been focused on peace—the peace overseas, our adversaries have been quickly modernizing their nuclear forces, building out ballistic missiles capable of hosting multiple warheads; building out hypersonic missiles capable of attacking the United States within an hour and traveling at 6,000 miles an hour; building cruise missiles that can navigate around

our radar and our defenses; and building submarines that can sneak up on our shores; and, worse yet, building space weapons.

It is time that we change that equation and start doubling down on the protection of the homeland. Golden Dome is a bold and aggressive approach to hurry up and protect the homeland from our adversaries. We owe it to our children and our children's children to protect them and afford them a quality of life that we have all grown up enjoying. Golden Dome will afford that.

I greatly appreciate your trust in me and your nomination in me and your trust in the team to deliver this. It is a great day for America.

The President. And also, very importantly, it's—we're the only ones that have this—we call it "super technology." Nobody else has it, and nobody else has nearly—really, near what we have. So this is a very exciting project.

This is something that will—I mean, the general said close to a hundred-percent protection, so that's something we need. I think it's very—and everything's going to be made in the U.S.A., by the way, very importantly. So it's something that I've been looking forward to for a long time.

And I just noticed you too, Jim. You're standing there, and behind you is a very important document—

Senator Jim Banks. Yes.

The President. —the Declaration of Independence. And that was in the vault for many decades under—right under this area. They have vaults with pictures on top. You have Abraham Lincoln. You see, that was the original Abraham Lincoln, the original Washington. And does everybody know who the middle was? That's General Grant.

And so it's very exciting. You look over here, and above Ronald Reagan, you have Thomas Jefferson. That's Monroe from the Monroe document. And you know who that is, right? Andrew Jackson.

So we have a lot of very exciting pictures. And on the other side, likewise. So, just some great—great Presidents and great people on the—these—many of these—because people were asking about them, many of them—almost all of them were in the vaults or nearby, but generally in the vaults downstairs, where we have some great—

So it's very exciting. And the place has become a little different than you first saw it, Jim, right? [*Laughter*]

Sen. Banks. Yes. Much better.

The President. It's a little bit different and slightly better.

Sen. Banks. Yes.

The President. But—and to think we had them—and some were in the vaults for over a hundred years. So it's pretty—pretty cool stuff.

Everybody knows Jim Banks. He's a great Congressman, and now he's a great senator from Indiana. And you might want to say a few words, Jim.

Sen. Banks. Well, your legacy with Space Force, Mr. President, is already big, but the Golden Dome is going to be an even bigger legacy for our country. And Indiana is going to help you make it.

The President. Right.

Sen. Banks. The space satellites that are made at Fort Wayne, Indiana, by L3Harris, all the work done at Crane Navy base in Southern Indiana is going to be a big part of it. And Hoosiers are very proud of that. We're proud of you.

Thank you very much.

The President. You're going to be a big factor. Thank you, and good luck.

And congratulations. You won that race by a lot.

Sen. Banks. Thanks to you.

The President. That wasn't even—that wasn't even a contest, right? [*Laughter*]

Sen. Banks. Well, thank—thanks to you and all of your support.

The President. Thank you very much. Thanks, Jim.

Please, go ahead. If you missed that, this is Senator Cramer, and he's—he's one of our best. Can't get any better. Go ahead, Senator.

Senator Kevin Cramer. Well, you're very nice, Mr. President, and thanks for this. And I remember the day in your first term when you called, and I was a brandnew, baby freshman Senator on the Armed Services Committee and said—you said: "I want to have a Space Force. Would you lead the effort on the Senate Armed Services Committee?" And I felt so proud, thinking that you chose me, only to find out later no one else would do it. But—[*laughter*]—but nonetheless, it worked out really, really, really well because——

The President. He's only kidding.

Sen. Cramer. ——because North Dakota has some great space assets——

The President. Yes.

Sen. Cramer. ——and—that contributed to that and to Golden Dome. No surprise that you would be the one, the President that would come along and put the homeland first. And this is just one more example of that.

So thanks for this and for allowing me this opportunity. By the way, let me just add my strong endorsement of General Guetlein's——

The President. Good. Good.

Sen. Cramer. ——role in leading this. I don't know anybody better, for sure—better equipped to do it than he is, so——

The President. Everybody said that.

Sen. Cramer. Yes.

The President. That's great.

Sen. Cramer. For sure.

The President. Dan Sullivan, Alaska Senator.

Senator Daniel S. Sullivan. Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for your continued leadership on missile defense. We were talking earlier how, in 2019, at the Pentagon, you laid out a speech about the Missile Defense Review——

The President. Right.

Sen. Sullivan. —that had all these principles on missile defense that you articulated then, during your first term. And now the Golden Dome is all of that.

So you're continuing to lead. We really appreciate it. You know, the Congress is stepping up, as you mentioned, right now in the budget——

The President. Right.

Sen. Sullivan. ——reconciliation bill. Twenty-five billion dollars for the Golden Dome. And what Senator Cramer and Senator Banks and I and many others—we're working on our—and I briefed you on this before, sir—on our Golden Dome Act, which we think will have—in terms of legislation that can help cement what you're doing right here, getting the Congress behind it, not just with the funding but with authorization.

So we're working closely with Secretary Hegseth, General Guetlein, the whole team. So we're very honored to be here, sir.

And you know, Alaska is the cornerstone of missile defense right now in terms of ground-based missile interceptors——

The President. Right. That's right.

Sen. Sullivan. ——in terms of radar systems and track incoming missiles. So my State is honored to continue to play a critical role in all of this and build on it.

The President. Right.

Sen. Sullivan. And we're really excited to be here. Thank you.

The President. Thank you very much, Dan. Great.

Any questions, please?

Current U.S. Missile Defense System

Q. Mr. President, you had mentioned at the beginning of your remarks that this was a campaign promise of yours. Have military commanders asked for this system specifically? Because NORAD had said previously that the current system was adequate, so what does this get the United States that——

The President. Somebody said the current is adequate?

Q. ——isn't already in before?

The President. There really is no current system. We have certain areas of missiles and certain missile defense, but there's no system. We just have some very capable weapons that, hopefully, we never have to use, but we have some very capable weapons.

No, this is a different league. There's never been anything like this. This is something that's going to be very protective. I think you can rest assured there'll be nothing like this. Nobody else is capable of building it, either.

Yes, please. Go ahead.

The President's Military Advisers

Q. Was it something that military commanders asked you for?

Q. Mr. President, would——

Q. Did they ask you to—to do this, the Pentagon?

The President. Well, let me put it differently. I suggested it, and they all said, "We love the idea, sir."

That's the way it's got to be, right? But they want it, and they wanted it badly, once it was suggested. I don't know if they ever thought they would be lucky enough to have it. But we were able to get it done, and we have all the funding so—pretty much tucked away. I think most people feel it's very important to have.

Yes, please.

Projected Costs of the U.S. Missile Defense Overhaul/Israel

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. When you first announced this idea, critics said it would be prohibitively expensive, potentially ineffective, and could trigger an arms race in space. What do you say to those critics about that?

The President. Well, they're wrong. It's about as close to perfect as you can have, in terms of real production. I told you, Canada wants to be a part of it, which would be, you know, a fairly small expansion. But we'll work with them on pricing. We'll be dealing with them on pricing. They know about it very much. They've asked to be a part of it, actually. They've asked us to be a part of it.

I think it's something that is great, if you can afford to do it, and we can afford to do it. You know, we took in \$5.1 trillion in the last 4 days in the Middle East. And when you think about it, that's—this is a tiny fraction of that.

But we make it all here. We're going to make it all here. We have—when—I will tell you, an adversary told me—a very big adversary told me the most brilliant people in the world are Silicon Valley. He said: "We cannot duplicate them. We can't." This was somebody that I won't tell you who it is, but you'd be amazed. We have the most brilliant minds in the world doing this kind of thing—the equipment, the space, the computers, everything.

But he said that "We just can't duplicate what you have there in Silicon Valley. We never have been able to." And this is a very strong group of people and very strong minds, but they can't.

So we have things that nobody else can have. You see what we've done helping Israel with that. You probably wouldn't have an Israel. They launched probably 500 missiles altogether, and I think one-half of a missile got through, and that was only falling to the ground as scrap metal. It's pretty amazing.

And this is a—this is, in terms of technology, far advanced from that system.

Russia

Q. And just one follow-up on the adversaries. Have you addressed Russia's ventures in space with a space-based nuclear weapon—

The President. Sure.

Q. —and told Putin to stop in your conversations with him?

The President. We haven't discussed it, but at the right time, we will, yeah.

[*At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

Q. Mr. President, with a goal of keeping—with a goal of keeping Americans—

The President. Go ahead.

Timeline of U.S. Missile Defense Improvements

Q. With a goal of keeping Americans safe with this, can you talk about the timeline of how long will this take to complete?

The President. We think it's going to be about—a little bit less than 3 years. And we'll have a big phase and—very early. You know, we're starting immediately with \$25 billion. It will cost about \$175 billion completed.

But we think in 2½ to 3 years. Yes.

Funding for the U.S. Missile Defense System

Q. Are you confident that you can get the funding needed from Congress quickly?

The President. Yes. It's amazing how easy this one is to fund. You know, some funding is tough, and some is easy. When we say we're going to save everyone's lives in a crazy world, it seems to be very easy to get.

Yes. We've already spoken to everybody we have to speak to. Everybody's in—I would say, Dan, everybody's in line here, right?

Sen. Sullivan. Yes, sir. Twenty-five billion as a downpayment in the budget reconciliation bill right now.

The President. Yes. So I think people——

Q. Mr. President, on Russia——

The President. ——people actually love it.

Finland/Norway

Q. Mr. President, on Russia, are you worried about the reports on a military buildup along the borders towards Finland and Norway?

The President. No, I don't. I don't worry about that at all. They're going to be very safe. Those are two countries that are going to be very safe.

U.S. Diplomatic Efforts/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. And the secondly, sir, if I may, Zelenskyy—Volodymyr Zelenskyy is saying today that he's hoping for you to impose new sanctions on Russia. Are you considering that?

The President. Well, that's going to be my determination. That's going to be nobody else's determination.

We'll see how Russia behaves. We see what's going to happen. You know——

Q. It's not off the table?

The President. We have a pretty—we have a pretty critical time right now. I had a talk yesterday for 2½ hours with President Putin, as you know. I also spoke to all of the European—or to many of them—leaders, but they were representing the whole. And I think we had very good conversations yesterday.

Please.

Geographic Scope of U.S. Missile Defense Improvements

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. What companies have asked to be involved in building this system? And have you decided on who will be building it at all?

The President. Yes, I think what—I'll let you answer that. You can mention some of your—yours from Alaska is involved—and Alaska is a big part of it, because locationally, they're sort of perfect. I think that's your first line of defense in certain instances.

And Kevin will tell you that his State is involved. But honestly, all—Georgia is going to be very big. Florida is going to be very big. They're all going to be very big.

Jim, do you want to talk about Indiana?

Sen. Banks. Yes. In Fort Wayne, Indiana, where I live, we make all the space satellites at L3Harris. Across the board, we're the top manufacturing State in the country.

By the way, the tariffs have been very good——

The President. Oh.

Sen. Banks. ——for auto manufacturing in Indiana.

The President. They've been so good.

Sen. Banks. But this is going to be really good for de- —the defense industry in my State. There are—there were—there's so much money involved here. There are—there are going to be a lot of American companies involved in making the Golden Dome possible.

The President. You might also say—you're talking about the tariffs. He has some of the biggest auto plants in the world moving into Indiana. Only for one reason—maybe two reasons: November 5 and the tariffs. Okay?

Sen. Banks. Yes, sir.

The President. But the tariffs have driven tremendous business into this country, but you have one of the biggest in the world being built.

Sen. Banks. Honda Civics.

The President. Right.

Sen. Banks. The new Honda Civic, made in Indiana. GM has added jobs. Eli Lilly moving pharmaceutical manufacturing from China to the United States—\$27 billion.

You go on and on with good news in Indiana and across the country because of the tariffs.

The President. Our country was cold as ice a year ago. And now we have the hottest country in the world. This is the hottest country in the world. Nobody even close.

If you look at even this last trip that I made, the respect that is paid to our country. We went from being laughed at all over the world, and now we're the hottest country in the world by far.

Dan, go ahead, please.

Sen. Sullivan. Yes, sir. Mr. President, I think when you look at the system that you've laid out, it's a idea in your Executive order of a layered defense. So you have initial ground-based missile interceptors, which are made by some of the big defense companies—Lockheed Martin, Raytheon—but the beauty of your vision, Mr. President, is that it's layered, it's open architecture, and it goes up into space.

So this is going to be some of the new defense tech companies that are very interested in it and can bring missile defense at a cost that I don't think—you said it, Mr. President—is unimaginable in terms of how much lower the cost is. So it's all across the board in terms of companies.

Senator Cramer and I just met with a bunch of them last week that are interested in this. And, you said it earlier, Mr. President, our technology sector is head and shoulders above any other place in the world, and they're going to be a key part of this. And I think that's why it makes it so exciting.

Sen. Cramer. Mr. President, I think one of the things that's—and you alluded to this—the new autonomous space-age defense ecosystem is more about Silicon Valley than it is——

The President. Yes.

Sen. Cramer. ——about big steel—big metal, right?

And so what's exciting about this is it makes it available to everybody to participate, to compete—big companies, mid-sized companies, small companies. But General Guetlein is the perfect person, again, to sort all that out, because he understands how it has to work together ultimately.

The President. And, Pete, maybe we'll close with you. We have been discussing this for a long time. Peter and I used to discuss it when I was going to go on a show that he did very well. It had tremendous ratings. But all he wanted to talk about was the military. He didn't want to talk about anything else. We used to talk about this.

How about you closing it out?

Secretary Hegseth. Well, yes, sir.

I mean, like I said, without your vision—willing to say and do things when other people wanted to look away and pretend like the threat didn't exist, or be focused on foreign adventurism, some other threat that we've been told is affecting us.

When you looked at the data, sir—from Russia to the Communist Chinese and other—their capabilities, what they're trying to do to supersede us and threaten us, how do we find the best innovators, the best military leaders, the best companies, tech companies?

[*Secretary Hegseth continued his remarks, concluding as follows.*]

Sir, you're defending the homeland, defending the American people. It's going to benefit my kids, grandkids, all of ours in this room. So thank you for your leadership.

The President. Thank you.

Secretary Hegseth. And we're going to charge ahead as fast as we can.

The President. Very good. Great job, everybody. Thank you. Thank you very much.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Q. Will Starlink be involved in this, Mr. President? Will Elon Musk be a part of this, Mr. President?

Medicaid

Q. Did you tell the Republicans not to mess with Medicaid?

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

No. No cuts. No cuts to Medicaid. No. No cuts to Medicaid.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:02 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Reporters referred to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; and former White House Senior Adviser Elon R.

Musk, in his capacity as chief executive officer of SpaceX. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on May 21.

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