

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland
May 20, 2026

The President. Hello, everybody.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. How are you? How's your new husband?

Q. He's—[inaudible].

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. He votes against me all the time.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Huh? I think he doesn't like me too much.

Hello, everybody.

Q. Morning.

The President. We're going to have a nice trip today.

We're doing very well in the numbers department. The economic numbers are phenomenal.

We're in final stages of Iran. We'll see what happens. We'll either have a deal or we are going to do some things that are a little bit nasty. But hopefully that won't happen.

The country's doing well. You see the numbers came out today. They're fantastic. The economic numbers are fantastic, so that's good.

Do you have any questions?

Representative Thomas H. Massie/Texas Senatorial Candidate State Attorney General W. Kenneth Paxton, Jr./2026 Midterm Elections

Q. Yes, sir. How are you feeling after this Massie defeat last night? And what does it mean for the Republican Party?

The President. Well, we had a great number of victories, not just Massie. Massie's a lowlife. We had a great number of victories. We have the Governors—you know, we won Governorships. We won Senatorships. We won everything. We won all races last night, every one of them.

And we have a great candidate, I believe, in Texas. And I believe the Texas candidate, who's Ken Paxton—I think he'll win. I think probably he'll win very substantially, and I think he'll go on to defeat a very defective candidate, a candidate that believes in six genders, and he takes hits to Jesus Christ, and he's wearing a mask 6 months ago. Wears a—guy—anybody wearing a mask 6 months ago doesn't get it. And he's a vegan. He's a vegan in Texas, and you can't get elected as a vegan in Texas.

Q. Did you talk to Senate leadership on the Republican side about endorsing against an incumbent?

The President. I did. I did. They'll be all right with it. They want to win. I know how to win.

Q. Are you worried about ballroom funding, Mr.——

The President. Some of them don't know how to win. I know how to win. I think I've proven that, haven't I?

White House Ballroom Construction Project

Q. Are you worried about the ballroom funding, Mr. President? There's speculation that could be——

The President. No, I'm building it. The ballroom's being built. I'm building the ballroom. You saw it yesterday, right?

Q. Yes.

The President. We're building a great ballroom. It's been needed. It's a very military complex. The roof is actually a drone port. The roof of the ballroom's a drone port, and it gives great safety to everything below. So it's good.

We're building a really great ballroom, but it's also a military—a strong military position for our people.

Q. Tell us about your call with Netanyahu.

White House Press Briefings

Q. Do you think Vance or Rubio did better in the press briefing room, sir?

The President. Do I think who?

Q. Vance or Rubio did better in the press briefing, sir?

The President. I think they both did great. What do you want me to say, right? I think they both—do you like that? That's pretty good though, right? I think they both did good. I watched both of them, so—both very good men. Really are.

Q. Did you have a call with Prime Minister—Netanyahu?

The President. But her husband votes against me all the time. Can you imagine? I don't know what's with him. You'd better ask him: What's with him? Her husband—she's married to a certain Congressman. He votes against—he likes voting against Trump. You know what happens with that? It doesn't work out well.

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

I don't know why he does, but——

Taiwan/China

Q. Mr. President, on Taiwan, do you have any plans to call President Lai before you make your decision on the arms deal?

The President. What?

Q. Do you have any plans to call President Lai of Taiwan before you make a decision on the weapons package?

The President. Well, I'll speak to him. I speak to everybody. We have that situation very well in hand. We had a great meeting with President Xi. He really—it was amazing, actually. It was amazing. You—many of you were there. We'll work on that, the Taiwan problem.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Q. What did you say to Prime Minister Netanyahu about Iran and how long to hold off on strikes?

The President. He's fine. He'll do whatever I want him to do. He's very good man. He'll do whatever I want him to do, and he's a great guy. To me, he's a great guy.

Don't forget, he was a wartime Prime Minister. And he's not treated right in Israel, in my opinion. I'm, right now, at 99 percent in Israel. I could run for Prime Minister. So maybe after I do this, I'll go to Israel, run for Prime Minister. I had a poll this morning: I'm 99 percent. So that's good.

But no, he's a wartime Prime Minister, and I just don't think they treat him well.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I think they have a President over there that treats him very poorly.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. But you're on the same page with him on Iran?

The President. Yes. Yes.

Representative Lauren Boebert

Q. Have you spoken to anyone about replacing Lauren Boebert after you—after she campaigned——

The President. If somebody comes along, I'd look. It's a little late in the race, but if somebody comes along, I'd look, certainly.

Los Angeles, California, Mayoral Candidate Spencer Pratt

Q. Spencer Pratt. Do you see yourself in him at all? A former reality TV star?

The President. No, I'd like to see him do well. He's a character. I don't know. I don't know him. I assume he probably supports me. Does he support me?

Q. I think so.

The President. I think so. Yes, I heard he does. I heard he is a big MAGA person.

He's doing well. I don't know if—you know, if you have a rigged vote out there, that's a problem. The votes are rigged. You have a really rigged vote in California. You have all the mail-in ballots. Everything else. Very hard to win because the elections are very dishonest.

If we had Jesus Christ come down and count the votes, I would have won California, because I do great with Hispanics.

But it's a rigged vote. They send out 38 million votes. Nobody knows where they're going. Of course, the Democrats do, I guess. But disproportionately, Democrats get many more votes. Some get eight votes. They get eight cards, and Republicans have to call in, "Where's my card?" It's a rigged system.

One of the most—not the worst. I'll give you a list. Maybe I'll do my list. But it's—California's one of the most dishonest States for voting.

U.S. Coast Guard Academy Commencement Ceremony/U.S. Coast Guard Rescue Operations

Q. What's your message to the cadets today?

The President. Just enjoy your life, you know? They enjoy it. They're great guys. It's my second time at the Coast Guard Academy. They're great guys. We like them.

You know, you don't realize how important Coast Guard is until you have a hurricane.

I remember the big hurricane in Texas where these kids go on boats, and they go into waves that are 20 times higher than the boat. And I say, "Can they really make it?" I'm watching this. And they say, "They find a way." But they were going into waves—these massive waves to save people that were inside. And you don't realize it, but boy, they are good. They are good seamen. They are unbelievable.

I wouldn't want to do it. I'm a very brave person, but I wouldn't want to do it. [Laughter]

Yes.

President Xi Jinping of China/President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. What do you make of President Xi meeting with Putin this week?

The President. Well, he told me he was going to. I think it's good. I get along with both of them, but I think it's good. I don't know if the ceremony was quite as brilliant as mine. I watched. I think we topped them. I think we topped them. Good team.

But no, I like—I get along with Putin. I get along with Xi.

I get along with everybody but your husband and a few others.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. On the Iran deal, would you be open to a limited deal that just covered the Strait of Hormuz?

The President. What does that mean?

Q. On Iran, just a limited deal just for a longer cease-fire.

The President. Oh, we'd have to open the Strait. That would open immediately. So we're going to give this one shot.

I'm in no hurry. You know, everyone thinks, oh, the midterms. I'm in a hurry. I'm in no hurry. I just—ideally, I'd like to see few people killed as opposed to a lot. We could do it either way, but I'd like to see few people killed.

I just wonder whether or not they have the good of the people. Because some of the things they're doing, to me, means they don't have the good of the people, and they have to have the good of the people.

There's a lot of anger now in Iran because people are living so badly. There's a lot of foment that we haven't seen before so much. And we'll see what happens.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran/Venezuela/National Economy

Q. Has it taken longer than you expected it would to——

The President. No.

Q. ——make a deal with Iran?

The President. Well, let's put it this way: You were in Vietnam 19 years. Right? You were in Afghanistan and these other places 10 years. You were in Iraq—how long were you in Iraq? Twelve? Twelve years? You were in Korea for 7 years. World War II is different. That was 4

years. I'm in for 3 months, and much of it's been cease-fire. So—and you know what? You lost hundreds of thousands of soldiers in these various wars.

In two wars, Venezuela, where we lost nobody, and here, we lost 13 people. Now, 13 people is 13 too much, but we lost 13 people. In other wars, you lost hundreds of thousands of people. So people don't like it when you say, "Oh, do you know you've lost 13?"

We've lost, in two major wars—we took over Venezuela. We essentially took over Iran. And we've lost, so far, 13 people.

Some other—somebody else would have lost 100,000 people. Okay?

But I get a kick when I look at somebody on television or—"He's lost 13 people." I lost 13 people. They lost 13 people leaving an airport—Obama. Thirteen very good people that I got to know their family.

So what we've done is amazing, and we have them decimated. Iran is decimated. And I—mean, you're going to see things that are amazing. You are going to see a lot of amazing things over the next 3 years for our country.

And I'd like to talk more about the economic, because we have \$18 trillion being spent, and no country has ever had anything like that. We have car plants pouring in from Mexico, Canada—they don't want to be there; there's no reason to be there—because they want to sell to our market. We have car companies and plants coming in from Germany, from South Korea, from Japan—coming in by the billions, and they're being built now. You're going to see things that nobody thought was possible.

Q. Mr. President——

Q. DOJ——

The President. You're going to end up saying, "He's the greatest President that ever lived."

Goodbye, everybody.

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Q. James Comey, over the weekend, Mr. President, he suggested that there's still people in your DOJ and FBI that are waiting you out. They're waiting until your administration is over to get back to work. Do you think those people are still in the DOJ and FBI?

The President. I hope not. Well, if they are, we're going to seek them out. We'll seek them out. We'll get rid of them. Okay? Because you have—in every agency, you have scum, and certainly they did in the FBI and DOJ.

But Todd Blanche is doing a fantastic job. Kash is doing a very good job. So we'll—we will prevail.

I've been standing here a long time with you—many years, right? And they've been saying, "I think it's it. I think he's troubled." Right? Here I am. You know, we just—it's a very constant situation.

But I think you're going to find that we have great people in the FBI and we have great people at DOJ. Todd Blanche has really been doing a great job, and a lot of things to come.

We have a lot of things that are coming right now. So, it's going to be great. Our country is doing well.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:33 a.m. on the tarmac prior to boarding Air Force One en route to New London, CT. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Brian K. Fitzpatrick, fiancé of Fox News Senior White House Correspondent Jacqui Heinrich; Texas Democratic senatorial candidate James D. Talarico; President Isaac Herzog of Israel; former President Barack Obama; Acting Attorney General Todd W. Blanche; and Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kashyap P. "Kash" Patel. Reporters referred to Sen. John Cornyn III; and former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Locations: Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Names: Blanche, Todd W.; Fitzpatrick, Brian K.; Herzog, Isaac; Lai Ching-te; Massie, Thomas H.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; Patel, Kashyap P. "Kash"; Paxton, W. Kenneth, Jr.; Pratt, Spencer; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Rubio, Marco A.; Talarico, James D.; Vance, James D. "J.D."; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2026 midterm elections; Acting Attorney General; China, President; Connecticut, U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London; Economic improvement; Federal Bureau of Investigation; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, U.S. military operations; Israel, President; Israel, Prime Minister; Natural disasters, recovery efforts; News media, Presidential interviews; Russia, President; Secretary of State; Taiwan, political status with respect to China; Taiwan, President; U.S. Coast Guard; Venezuela, U.S. military capture and exfiltration of President Maduro; Vice President; White House ballroom construction project.

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