

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks on Cuba and an Exchange With Reporters Upon Arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland
May 20, 2026

The President. So I was just watching. We have big news on Cuba, as you know, with the indictment of Castro. So they have—a lot of people have suffered very big. Very, very—at levels that few people would understand.

And I think the Cuban population of Miami and, certainly, beyond Miami—people that came there that were decimated, whose families were ruined—appreciate what the Attorney General just did today and was just doing now. I was just watching it.

So we have Cuba on our mind. Very important. It's been a lot of problem for a lot of years, and this was a big—I think it was a very big moment for people that—not only Cuban Americans but people that came from Cuba that want to go back to Cuba, keep—people that want to see their family in Cuba. I think this is a very big day, very important day.

They supported me to the nth degree. They supported me at levels that nobody's ever seen before. And so I think it's a very important moment.

Q. On Cuba, Mr. President——

The President. Say it.

Cuba

Q. What's coming next for Cuba?

The President. Well, we're going to see. It's a failing nation. You see that. It's falling apart. They have no oil. They have no money—they—it's a failing nation, so I just can't tell you that. But we're there to help. We're there to help the families, the people.

And, again, a lot of those people are related to me in the sense that I have had such a great relationship with Cuban Americans. They supported me at a 94-percent level. That's a pretty good level. And their—you know, their relatives are there. So we've got to—on a humanitarian basis, we're there to help.

Central Intelligence Agency

Q. The CIA Director was there last week.

The President. Yes.

Q. Can you talk about that at all?

The President. Well, we have a lot of people there. We had CIA there. We have—Marco was there. Marco's parents, as you know, were from Cuba. So we have a lot of expertise in Cuba.

And it's not going to be, like, the biggest thing we've ever done, but I will tell you, to a lot of people, it's going to be one of the most important. They've been looking for this moment for 65 years.

So we'll see what happens. But we're going to—in the meantime, we're going to have to help them out. They have no way of living. They have no food. They have no electricity. They have no energy at all. But they do have great people. They're a lot of great people.

I mean, I have so many Cuban friends in Miami—mostly in Miami and Florida, and they're unbelievable people. They're unbelievable entrepreneurs, and they'd like to go back. I think they—hopefully, they're going to want to live here, but they want to go back. Maybe they'll invest. We'll see what happens. But we're freeing up Cuba.

Q. Mr. President——

Cuba/U.S. Trade Policy

Q. Mr. President, how much longer do you anticipate the embargo having to be in place on Cuba?

The President. We'll see. We'll be announcing it pretty soon.

Cuba

Q. Are all options on the table here, Mr. President? Should we expect any escalation here, or should they expect anything?

The President. With Cuba?

Q. Yes.

The President. No.

Q. No?

The President. No, you won't—there won't be escalation. I don't think there needs to be.

Look, the place is falling apart. It's a mess, and they've sort of lost control. They've really lost control of Cuba.

Cuba

Q. Would you do like you did to Maduro to Castro? Would you take military action like you did with Maduro to—[inaudible].

The President. I don't want to say that.

Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance/2028 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, Gavin Newsom is on Capitol Hill today. He says that he doesn't think J.D. Vance has what it takes to come after you. What's your response to that?

The President. Who said that?

Q. Gavin Newsom.

The President. He said doesn't have what?

Q. He says that Trump—the era of Trump ends with you and that J.D. Vance doesn't have what it takes to come after you.

The President. Well, look, we've done a lot, and J.D. is very talented. He's a smart guy. He's—he'll do very well if it's J.D. We have a lot of very talented people.

So I think—hopefully, we're going to leave something that's going to be real easy to run. We're doing——

Q. Do you think Gavin——

The President. We're doing a lot. We're doing a lot, and J.D. is a very talented guy.

Q. Is Newsom intimidated by him?

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. How long does Iran have to respond after you said yesterday you were about an hour away from making a decision? Where does that stand today? Have you heard anything from them?

The President. Very—it's right on the borderline, believe me. If we don't get the right answers, it goes very quickly. We're all ready to go. We have to get the right answers. It would have to be a complete, 100-percent good answers. And if we do, we save a lot of time, energy, and lives, most importantly.

Q. How long will you wait?

The President. Could go very quickly, or a few days. It could be a few days, but it could go very quickly.

Iran is a defeated nation. We're dealing with some people, and we're dealing—actually, I must tell you, we're dealing with some very good people. We're dealing with people that are, I think, far more reasonable than the people that are, really, no longer with us. We're dealing with some people with talent, with good brainpower, and we're pretty impressed by it.

So, hopefully, those people will make a deal that's going to be great for everybody.

Q. Are you getting tired of the——

The President. But I——

Q. ——back-and-forth with Iran?

The President. ——I don't know. I don't know. I don't——

Do I get—what? I never——

Q. Are you getting tired of the back-and-forth with Iran?

The President. I never get tired. But what I like to do—if I can save war by waiting a couple of days, if I can save people being killed by waiting a couple of days, I think it's a great thing to do.

CBS's "Late Show With Stephen Colbert" Host Stephen T. Colbert

Q. Stephen Colbert's last show tomorrow night. What's your message to him? The late-night host, Stephen Colbert—it's his last show after him being such a staunch critic of yours. What's your message to him?

The President. I'll have a message at a later date. Okay?

Iran/U.S. Sanctions

Q. Sir, on Iran, did the U.S. offer Iran oil sanctions relief during the peace talks, as Iranian state media has reported?

The President. No, I haven't heard that. I'm not doing any relief until they sign an agreement. When they sign an agreement, we can get that place built up again and have something that's really a good country for the people. But no, we haven't offered anything.

Artificial Intelligence/Oil Markets and Prices/Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Mr. President, what's your message to American families who are scared by the rise of AI? They're worried that their kids are not going to be able to have jobs someday because AI will take over.

The President. Well, I'll tell you, AI's been amazing because, right now, we have more jobs, more people working right now in the United States by far than we ever had before.

And outside of the war—and I assumed the economy was going to go down, the stock market would go down 20, 25 percent. It's actually up. The stock market is higher now than it was before I started the Iran situation.

And on the Iran, I had no choice because they were going to have a nuclear weapon. We're not going to give them a nuclear weapon. But that's going to end soon, one way or the other.

Oil is going to come tumbling down. There's so much oil. We have 1,600 ships in the Strait that are loaded up with oil that are going to be coming out very soon.

So we'll have to see, but the military has been unbelievable. The blockade has been infallible. Not one ship has gotten through the blockade. Thirty-seven have tried. They all wish they didn't.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey

Q. Can you tell us about your call with Erdoğan?

The President. Yes, I had a very good call with President Erdoğan. And pretty standard. We have a very good relationship.

Isn't it nice that I have relationships with some very tough people? He's a tough guy, and—but I have a relationship with him that nobody else does.

He's actually done a good job. He's been, you know, I think, very much of an ally. Some people would doubt that, but I think he's been a great ally. And his people respect him. His people respect him a lot.

Q. Mr. President——

Internal Revenue Service/Department of Justice Compensation Fund

Q. Mr. President, any response to people that are critical of your settlement over your IRS case about the tax—now that you can't be prosecuted for tax——

The President. Yes. Well, what happened is, I was suing IRS for a lot of different reasons. One of the reasons is, they released my tax returns, which they're not allowed to do.

Now, they showed I pay a lot of tax. I may even release my current returns, because they show I pay a lot of money. But they're not supposed to do that. They were in lockboxes. As President, they were—and they released them. And a certain firm released them, which was, I guess, a private firm. But it released them to a lot of the fake news, and the fake news went—and you're just not allowed to do that. And many other things happened.

So I released them from the lawsuit, and I guess they made a settlement of some kind. I wasn't involved in the settlement. I could have been involved, but I didn't choose to be. So they made a settlement.

Also, the antiweaponization of people—I mean, people were destroyed. They went to jail. Their families were ruined. They committed suicide.

You know, all the Biden administration and the Obama administration—both of them—I mean, the Obama administration started it. The Biden administration was horrible in terms of—what they've done to people is incredible.

And we're getting—we're reimbursing those people for their legal fees and for their costs and for anybody involved.

But they destroyed people. People committing—I read the other day a person committed suicide over it. They went—you know, it was the most violent thing I've ever seen in politics, what they did. And yet, if I say, "Oh, let's look at this one or that one," they say, "Weaponization, weaponization."

What they did in terms of weaponization will never be allowed to happen in this country again.

So we think that those people—we think that anybody involved in that process should—partake. And you're talking about peanuts compared to the value. It destroyed the lives of many, many people.

Thank you very much, everybody.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:39 p.m. on the tarmac prior to boarding Marine One. In his remarks, he referred to former President Raul Castro Ruz of Cuba; Acting Attorney General Todd W. Blanche; Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio; and Gov. Gavin C. Newsom of California. A reporter referred to Central Intelligence Agency Director John L. Ratcliffe; and former President Nicolas Maduro Moros of Venezuela, who was captured, along with his wife Cilia Flores, in a U.S. military operation in Caracas, Venezuela, on January 3 and exfiltrated to the U.S. for criminal processing in New York City.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Cuba, remarks at Joint Base Andrews, MD; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Locations: Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blanche, Todd W.; Castro Ruz, Raul; Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip; Newsom, Gavin C.; Obama, Barack; Rubio, Marco A.; Vance, James D. "J.D.".

Subjects: Acting Attorney General; Artificial intelligence; California, Governor; Cuba, political and economic stability; Department of Justice Compensation Fund; Internal Revenue Service; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Job creation and growth; Maryland, Joint Base Andrews; Maryland, President's visit; News media, Presidential interviews; Secretary of State; Stock market; Turkey, President; Turkey, relations with U.S.; Vice President.

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