

Remarks at an Executive Order Signing Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters

June 3, 2026

The President. Hello, everybody.

Q. Hi, Mr. President.

The President. Kind of a big day today because this is——

[At this point, the President held up photographs of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.]

——as you probably have been watching——so, from 1922 to present, it really never worked. It leaked, and it was bad, and it looked terrible. It was supposed to be beautiful.

It was opened in 1922, and it always leaked, and it was a problem. It's called the great Reflecting Pool between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial and—right in between. It's almost 2,500 feet long. I could show you—it would be like a—the tallest building in the world laid on its side, and the building wouldn't reach it.

And today, it gets completed—the pool gets completed at 4 o'clock, and the water will start to flow in. And it won't leak because it's done properly. And it's going to be beautiful. It's going to be "American Flag Blue." That's the color we picked. And I think it will be something amazing.

It's never worked. A great concept that never worked because it always leaked. They used stone originally, and the stone leaks because it's got a lot of crevices. And we have a very special material that we used, and we'll do this for a tiny fraction.

You remember President Obama tried to do it, and it failed miserably. They spent over \$100 million. Between him and Biden, they spent much more than \$100 million, and it never worked, and it was filthy dirty. We took out 12 truckloads of garbage out of this pool. It was just rotting and terrible. A terrible thing for the country.

So we have many monuments and fountains all over Washington, and we're just about completed with all of them. The fountains are all working now—28 fountains. And as of this moment, just about this moment, a couple are going to be a few days longer. And we went on a real kick. Some of the most beautiful fountains in the world, but they haven't worked in 30, 40 years, most of them.

As you know, you saw the one in front of the station, Union Station. It was horrible, and now it's beautiful. It was all covered in graffiti, but this would be the big one, because this is—again—could you give me that picture of the—how it compares in size to the biggest buildings anywhere in the world? It's sort of amazing.

So we're very proud of that. We're proud of a lot of things we've done, but this is something—so, Washington now, as you know, a very safe city. It's considered a very safe city. It was a very unsafe city 14 months ago; now it's a very safe city, so we're very proud of that.

But it's also become a beautiful city. The encampments, the homeless are no longer sitting in the middle of the park. The level of beauty of the city is incredible. We re-grassed many of the areas.

We're really doing a job at Lafayette Park, which is really the entrance to the White House, and that's going to be completed very shortly. And it will be incredible, as it was originally envisioned. Most of it we're doing as originally envisioned. And if you walk across the street to

Lafayette Park, you'll see something that's incredible. It's going to be—we'll have it open before July 4. This, we wanted to get it open before July 4.

On the reflecting pond, or the Reflecting Pool, as some people call it, very important to us was the longevity, the—you know, having it so that it's not closed every day and all——

[The President held up a poster comparing the length of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool with the height of three famous U.S. skyscrapers.]

These are—I just had this done. You're getting a first glimpse, but that's your size compared. So those are compared to—those are among the tallest buildings in the world, including the Empire State Building, World Trade Center, Sears Tower—Chicago. So, if you lay it on its side, you'd take two or three of them to fill it in, because the width is very—almost 200 feet wide. And actually, much more than 2,000—close to—including everything, it's about 2,500 feet in length to the end. And it's going to be beautiful.

It was a great concept that never worked because they couldn't hold the water. Now they hold the water for a tiny fraction of the cost. I—we did a fantastic job, and Department of Interior was amazing. Doug Burgum, really, absolutely amazing.

And you're going to have something you're going to be very proud of it, and it will last for 50 to 100 years before you have to do anything with it. It's a very strong, powerful substance that we used, and we picked a color called "American Flag Blue." We had color choices. And before, it was just gray. It was the color of concrete and stone. So it's going to be really special. I thought you'd like to see it.

And the work ends on the pool. We also did a lot more than we anticipated there. We did all of the sidewalks outside of the pool, where people walk or they stand. That's where Martin Luther King made his great speech with a million people.

I had the same amount of people. Actually, I had a little bit tighter. It was a little bit tighter. They said he had a million people, and I had 25,000 people. And yet, if you look at the picture of comparison—the exact same location, the exact same pool, except now the pool is clean; it was filthy dirty then—but it was amazing, because that was my first glimpse into politics. I made a speech, and I had it—more people. In other words, you put the picture side by side, which we have, and they said I had 25,000; he had a million, but I had more people. They were tighter. My people were tighter. But these are minor details. That's what I said: "Well, wait a minute. There's something wrong."

But this was a—this is a very famous place, and it should be treated properly. A person came to my office, a very substantial person from a foreign country—another country—and said: "The Washington Monument, the Lincoln—you know, you take a look at the Washington Monument, beautiful, the Lincoln Memorial," he said: "but the walking in between was disgusting. The thing was loaded up."

We took 11 or 12 dumpsters—trucks full of garbage out of there that they were shoveling, and it was there for—it was there for years under the Biden administration. Again, Biden and Obama, if you combine the money they spent, it was over a hundred and—I think \$142 million, and they've got nothing, as usual.

So I'm very proud of it. Maybe I shouldn't say that before it opens because maybe I'll open it and it'll leak like a sieve, but it's not going to do. *[Laughter]*

I'm very good at building things and constructing things, so I hope you're going to go take a look at it. The sidewalks are being sandblasted. The granites on the outside—they're granite, and that lasts—a strong stone. And that's being sandblasted. It's going to look like really something beautiful. It's going to be brandnew. It's got a lot of life. So just enjoy it.

Rodney Scott is here, along with Peter Navarro. Peter has been with me for a long time. Knows more about China than any human being on Earth except for—I would say President Xi knows a lot more. [Laughter] But other than President Xi, Peter is probably in second place—and certainly having to do with trade. And—but they're here to talk about something else.

And, Rodney, if you would, please.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Rodney S. Scott. Sure. So we're talking about rolling out a customs EO. Why is that important? Basically, it's "America first" in the trade environment, like we've been doing on the border. People are used to the illegal immigration, the narcotics. We've locked that down. This is literally taking the same principles and applying them to trade to protect American industry.

Different countries and different people are undercutting the—our import-export rules, the tariffs to literally undermine American businesses, and we're going to put a stop to it in the same way. We are going to increase the amount of data we have so that we can actually make conscious decisions about who and what comes into this country. And we're going to start holding people accountable so there's a—we're literally going to use the rules that are in place, to a certain extent, and then make some recommendations for legislation going forward.

But we're going to start holding trade accountable, from bringing threatening things and threatening products into our country, just like we have on the rest of the border.

So Customs and Border Protection gets a lot of attention for the border wall, everything else. This is going to be basically the equivalent in the trade environment.

White House Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing Peter K. Navarro. And, sir, you did a miracle when you came in: You shut that border down in a matter of days to what had been a flood of millions of illegal aliens. And a secure America is a safe America.

What we're going to do here, the EO you're going to sign, that's about a \$20- to \$30 billion a year EO you're going to get, because we are going to crack down with this detective border that CBP is putting in innovatively. We're going to crack down on the fentanyl. We're going to crack down on the health—unhealthy products, the counterfeits, and all the tariff evaders.

So this is a message to the world today when you sign this: There's nowhere to run, nowhere to hide, and this is what Donald Trump does. He secures our borders, and not just physically, but in terms of trade. The new customs border is going to be awesome.

The President. Thank you. Thank you, Peter.

You know, we had millions of people pouring through our border and—when I got here. And it happened twice, but the first time was a lot easier because it wasn't nearly as bad as this. But, in 2016, we had a bad border—really, a bad border. And pretty quickly, we made it very good. We started the wall. I built over a thousand miles of wall.

Without that, you could have never done it, no matter how you—good you do. The wall has been—remember the Democrats—the "Dumocrats," I call them. But the "Dumocrats" said the wall doesn't do anything. I said, "No, walls work."

Two things. Everything else is obsolete. It gets obsolete quickly. Two things: wheels and walls. They've been here for a long time. A wheel and a wall, you'll always have. Other things—your computer is going to be obsolete about 2 days after it's—after you buy it. [Laughter] But wheels and walls, they work.

And we built an incredible wall that stretches more than a thousand—think of it—a thousand miles. And without that, we would not be as successful. We're actually, we're building now additional areas, because we need some additional wall in certain areas.

But we had millions of people—25 million people. I think it's more than that, but 25 million people came in during the Biden years, the Biden disasters, and we stopped that. We stopped it down to zero. Hard to believe, but the numbers come out—every month, they come out zero, zero, zero. People don't come anymore, because they know they're not going to get through.

So we had caravans with 10-, 15-, 20-, 25,000 people coming up from countries. And remember, I know these people. I know the leaders of the countries. They're smart, and they're cunning, and they're street-wise. And they would put their people that were from prisons in there, and they would put their murderers in there, and they'd put a lot of bad people, and they'd also put people that just didn't work. They put all of their welfare recipients in there, and they'd send them into our country.

And all of that stopped. And many of those people are now brought back—many of the murderers—11,888 were murderers. I say it all the time. Fifty percent of them were—they murdered more than one person—two, three, four, which—one, seven people murdered—into our country. They let them into our country. It's a sin that should never be forgotten.

So it's a much different country right now. We're respected by everybody. Everybody in the world respects. We just got back from China, as you know. Some of you were with us. And President Xi was great. And he said: "You're a respected country, respected all over the world." He was—he said, "You did it so fast." We did. We did it in a very short period of time.

This country was a laughingstock all over the world. For 4 years, we were a laughingstock. And now we're the hottest country anywhere in the world. We're the most successful country in the world. So this is very important, what you're doing, and I'd like to have Will just say a few words about it specifically, please.

White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf. Yes, sir. As Rodney and Counselor Navarro said, this is an Executive order on strengthening customs enforcement using new technologies and new approaches. The idea here is to ensure that importers of record, other people moving goods across our border are accurately reporting what they're bringing in; that contraband, that illegal goods aren't being brought across the border; and that goods being brought in are being accurately accounted for, for purposes of duties and tariffs and all the other things we require of importers of record.

But this Executive order will launch a series of bold, new steps that I think we, as an administration, believe will result in the tightest, most controlled border in American history, following on, obviously, your success in closing the southern border and stopping the scourge of illegal immigration into the country as well, sir.

The President. So, Peter, what kind of money do you think this involves, in terms of savings to our country?

Senior Counselor Navarro. I will guarantee you the first year will be at least \$15 billion, the next year 25. And out there, there's \$80- to \$100 billion that the tariff evaders are doing. Plus, sir, we're going to stop more of the fentanyl coming in, and we're going to crack down on counterfeits. This is good for America. This is good for the people that elected you. It's good for the country.

The President. And we have fentanyl coming in 59 percent less. Cut it by a number that nobody thought was even possible. We're going to get it a lot lower than that. But we have it—and we did this in a very short period of time.

Commissioner Scott. This is going to be a great one, sir.

The President. You didn't have the same problem.

Senior Counselor Navarro. It's a moneymaker for us. And CBP has been doing a really great job——

The President. Yes.

Senior Counselor Navarro. ——innovating on this, sir.

The President. You've done a fantastic job. Thank you.

Commissioner Scott. Appreciate it, sir.

The President. Okay. We'll sign one.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Strengthening Customs Enforcement."*]

Oh, that's a good one. That's a nice one. [*Laughter*] Okay. What else do you have?

Staff Secretary Scharf. This is another Executive order on reforms to the Federal workforce, sir. Currently, with respect to many policymaking positions in the departments and agencies across Government, we lack the ability, because of existing personnel rules, to effectively discipline or promote people who are in policymaking roles.

This Executive order follows on a number of previous Executive orders. The end goal is making the Federal workforce more accountable and ensuring that people, particularly in policymaking roles, aren't unaccountable to the wishes of the administration.

The President. And the reason for this was what? Whose idea was that?

Staff Secretary Scharf. James Sherk, who's here from Domestic Policy Council, can speak to that a bit more, sir.

The President. Would you like to say something? Come on. [*Laughter*] You did a great job on this. Go ahead.

Special Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy James B. Sherk. Thank you, sir.

It's been a longstanding problem that it's almost impossible to fire a Federal employee, even in cases of serious misconduct. And as a result, if you have employees who are trying to undermine the wishes of the American people by pushing their own agenda or are just incompetent at what they're doing, agencies have a longstanding difficult time getting rid of them. And that's a particular problem if you're in a senior policy influencing role, where you're controlling the policies of the entire agency.

What this does is basically treats those employees like private sector workers. They could be hired on the basis of merit and confidence, but if they're messing up, then they can be removed quickly, rather than taking a year or longer to get rid of them.

The President. That's great. That's great. And you were very much involved in it?

Special Assistant Sherk. I was, sir.

The President. Is this guy central casting?

Participant. This is his baby, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm telling you, he's, like, perfectly cast if I'm casting a movie here. [*Laughter*] You couldn't have done that any better. Were you nervous?

Special Assistant Sherk. Uh, a little.

The President. Huh? [*Laughter*] Good job.

Special Assistant Sherk. Thank you, sir.

The President. Would anybody else like to say anything? Want to—about either one? What about you? Come on over here. [Laughter] Come on. Did—can you top him? [Laughter] You don't have to.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Deputy Director James G. Kernochan. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you very much. Great job. Go ahead, please.

Deputy Director Kernochan. Yes, this customs reform EO is a long time coming for us, helps us solve problems that have plagued the customs system for many years. We've had a system where people have basically been able to hide behind shell companies. They move from one to the next, and then we can't go after them. This EO really enables us to crack down, hold people accountable.

The President. It's amazing. It's so important. I know you—you took it so seriously.

See how serious they are? I mean, there's a love of the country. This isn't, like, normal stuff. These are the smartest people in the world. They can do anything they want. They can have any job. And they love this country. They just want to be here. And they hate what you saw, and you fixed it.

Thank you very much, all of you.

Deputy Director Kernochan. Thank you, sir.

The President. Anybody else? Anybody? Only if you want. I'm not going to call on anybody. [Laughter] Anybody? You don't have to.

They covered you well, right? I don't know if you could do any better. Thank you very much. That's a great job, fellas.

Special Assistant Sherk. Thank you, sir.

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Implementing Schedule Policy/Career in the Excepted Service."*]

The President. It's a big one. Okay. Thank you.

Pulitzer Prize winner over there. I got the great Pulitzer Prize winner. [Laughter] Okay. Thank you very much. That's great.

Staff Secretary Scharf. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Do you have any questions on this?

Thank you, Peter.

[*Several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

Yes.

Iran/U.S. Military Readiness

Q. Mr. President, given Iran's attacks on Kuwait—this latest attack on Kuwait—is the cease-fire with Iran still on?

The President. Well, you know, there's a reason for everything, and we hit them pretty hard the night before and, actually, last night. And when it was explained to me, I said, "All right, so we'll do that." But we've been hitting them pretty hard, a little bit.

So there is a reason for certain things, and there's usually a reason that sometimes makes sense, some—but they did something very—not a big deal. We've got it. We nipped it in the bud very quickly, as we do. We have the greatest military in the world. But you—some people would say they were slightly provoked because we took a strong action for a different reason, so they were reciprocating.

Yes, please.

Q. Mr. President, can you explain why——

The President. I hear the negotiation itself is going very well, actually. Very well.

It could happen—I mean, if it happens—and it might not happen, you know? Who knows? But if it happens, it could happen, like, over the weekend.

Q. Mr. President, yesterday——

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. How do you define cease-fire, Mr. President?

The President. Say it?

Q. How do you define cease-fire?

The President. Pretty much the way it is. That's a different part of the world. You know, I'd say in that part of the world, cease-fire is when you're shooting in a more moderate manner.
[Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, yesterday you signed——

The President. Well, it's not bad. [Laughter] But it's true. I mean, it's—a cease-fire there is much different than a cease-fire in other parts of the world.

Yes.

Department of Justice Compensation Fund/News Media/2024 Presidential Election/Iran

Q. Mr. President, can you explain why you decided to drop the anti-weaponization fund?

The President. So I love it. I think it's so important. People were—this is a victim right here, but not only a victim. He was also a student of it. What happened to great people—great American people, the way they were victimized, the way they were savaged. You have suicides. They killed themselves. They went bankrupt.

They were weaponized by the Biden administration, by a bunch of thugs, including Obama people, and like nobody has probably ever been. I mean, I can think of maybe two instances in this country where they've had it to somewhere that extent. I'm not even sure if it was so much.

They were put in jail for long periods of time. They were accused of things that never happened. They had prosecutors that were radical lunatics. And their lives were destroyed. And frankly, we had a lawsuit that—against us on the—you know, on the weaponization, where the judge—a radical-left judge ruled against it. And we'll see how that all works out, but a radical-left judge ruled against it.

But these people—their lives have been destroyed. Their families have been destroyed, many of them. Not just—I'm not just talking about a few people. Many of them.

I'm one of them. I—look, I—they raided my house, Mar-a-Lago. Never happened. Nobody ever thought of a thing like that. It's turned out that it was a total fake. Everything about it was fake and corrupt. We have all the information here. The good advantage to sitting here is, we can

get information that you wouldn't get by—so what we have and what we are going to be showing over the coming weeks and months, you're not even going to believe.

Some of you will believe it. Like, CNN will believe it because they knew what was going on. They're crooked as hell. CNN is a very corrupt organization, but with a corrupt reporter standing right there. Never smiles. You never see—she's a young, beautiful woman. Never smiles. I never see a smile off her face. I see her standing there with hatred in her eyes, like she has hatred because we have borders, because we have a strong military, because we cut our taxes, because we do things that everybody wanted.

And then we win our election in a massive landslide. We win 87 percent of the counties in this country. Nobody has ever heard of a thing like that, and that's because we're doing the right job. And we took a detour down to Iran because we can't let Iran have a nuclear weapon. Under any circumstances, we can't let that happen.

So the reporters should be happy. They shouldn't be unhappy. They should be very happy, because you know what we're doing? We're saving our country.

Yes.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement/National Economy/China

Q. Yes, two questions. One on Iran and then one on your birthday——

The President. Okay.

Q. ——which you will like. The first one is: Are you concerned at all that the IRGC could sabotage any potential deal? And then the second one is——

The President. Sure.

Q. ——you have a birthday coming up. I won't say which number, but it's a big birthday. So, you're going to blow out a candle—you're going to blow out a—you're going to blow out some candles on a cake, hopefully. What are your wishes that you'd like to see accomplish over the next year for the——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——United States and your Presidency?

The President. Well, I'll go in your order. *[Laughter]*

Anything can happen, you know, when you're dealing with Iran. But when you're dealing with other countries—but that's a very volatile part of the world, probably the most volatile part of the world. It's very—the people are volatile. The leadership, you see what's going on.

We've gone through three teams of leadership. It's been a—you know, our military, there's no—never been a military like what we have. We could go another 2, 3 weeks and just wipe everybody out. We'd—I'd rather not do that. Very easy to do. They're ready to do—they want to do it. They want to do it.

But if we can get something down in writing which will accomplish the same thing without killing everybody, I'd like to do that. Most of my people, I think, would like to do that. Some people wouldn't, but most of them would.

But we had to take a detour. As far as wishes for—and I'm very proud of that detour, you know. That—by the way, just to finish off on that, we had the strongest stock market in history, and I said: "We have no choice. We have to do it."

I knew it would affect it, but I was very happily surprised when I saw that today we hit another stock market high. I mean, we have the highest stock market in history, with a military conflict going on—or a war. Some people call it war. Some people call it a military—it's not a big thing for us. We have a great military. It's not a big thing for us.

But if I didn't do that—I spoke to people like Peter, great financial people, Scott and Howard, and lots of others.

I said: "You know, we just hit the greatest stock market in history. Everyone's 401(k)s are the highest they've ever been. Everybody is making a lot of money. Costs are coming down." You know, we took over the highest costs and the highest inflation in the history of our country. "Costs are coming down. Everything is good. And I hate to tell you this, but we've got to take a little detour and go down to a place called the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we're going to have to stop them from having a nuclear weapon." That's what we've done.

And they've agreed to that. By the way, they—I mean, if they sign the agreement, they will have agreed to: "We will not have a nuclear weapon or bomb. We will not develop one. We will not buy one." You know, originally, it was, "We will not develop." I said, "What about if they buy it?" That went into a 2-week negotiation. But in the end, we got that.

Now, we've got it if they sign the paper. In theory, they're pretty close to signing a paper. We've actually gotten along with them very well. And you know, what you saw for the last few nights, it takes two to tango. You understand that. We hit them very hard on something else, unrelated, and so they were responding. But—and not—you know, not very strongly.

As far as birthday, as far as wishes, I want to just—you know, we have a phrase, I think it's—it goes down, I would think, in the history of our country, maybe the history of the world as the greatest slogan or phrase ever: "Make America Great Again." That's all I want. I want to make America great again. I think we've come a long way. I think we're the most respected country in the world right now—by far the most respected.

President Xi told me—I was talking about—he's a friend of mine. He's a good man. I hate to say it, because the press goes and they say, "Oh, he called him a good man." He is a good—he's—he's for China. I'm for the U.S.A. You know, it's like one of those things.

But we do very well now with China. When I came here, we didn't—were not doing well with China. My first term, when I inherited that, it was like—what China was doing to us was incredible. I don't blame China. They took advantage of stupid people—really stupid people. So, we're doing great.

But the phrase "Make America Great Again," that's all I want. A very simple phrase to think of, and I think it's the greatest in the history—I would say that's probably the greatest phrase in the history of the world. Not only here, there's never been anything like it: "Make America Great Again." That's what I've done, and we've made it great.

In fact, in a way, I want to use it because I would never give it up. MAGA is too good. It's too good. It's—it really is the Republican Party. That's why we're doing so well. That's why we—you know, if you look at the Republican Party from before I came until now, this is a much different party. It's a much bigger party. We have many, many more people, and I think the thought, the mind, the thought is much different than it was 10 years ago.

You know, it's been—it's amazing. A much more powerful party, a much different party, and a much more impactful party. Thank you very much.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Two questions on Iran, sir.

The President. Go ahead.

Iran/Disposition of Nuclear Material/U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities

Q. First, you said last week that the U.S. would go in and dig out the buried nuclear material in coordination——

The President. Yes. Yes, with them.

Q. ——with them.

The President. Right.

Q. Did Iran——

The President. It's possible.

Q. ——actually agree to that?

The President. Well, it depends on what day you're talking about. They did agree, and then——

Q. You put that out on Friday.

The President. ——sometimes they did—they agreed—well, that's what I'm saying. That's one of the things we talk about.

It's very overrated. I'm the one that overrated it. I thought—to me, it was important. To other people, it's not important, because those beautiful B-2—right here—the B-2 bombers—they obliterated—you know, when CNN said, "Maybe it wasn't obliteration," they knew—I mean, before the pilots even came back home, before anybody saw the site. But then the Atomic Energy Commission went. They said it was obliterated.

And that stuff is buried underneath a mountain that virtually collapsed. It's very, very hard to get it. What one of the—but nevertheless, I want to get it. We're the only ones—us and probably China are the only two countries that have the equipment where you can do that. So, yes, I want to get it.

We have, at different times, had different—I mean, they've changed their mind a couple of times. But, as it stands now, we will go in at some time in the not-too-distant future. It's very safe down there.

You know, we have—with Space Force, we have cameras. Every angle of that—those three sites are being watched at all times. If anybody went there, we'll see exactly what's happening, and we'll—we'll blow it up a little bit further.

But, as far as getting it, it's very—the B-2 bombers did a job like nobody has ever seen. In the night, with no Moon, dead darkness at 1 o'clock in the morning or so, they dropped those bombs, the biggest—just about as big a bomb as you can ever find. And it hit—it went down air chutes. It went—hard to believe that they can do—the technology. It followed a beam right into the air chutes, right—exploded.

Very hard to get that material, but I still, nevertheless, want it. And I don't want to do it if we're in conflict. I don't want to put men in that kind of danger. I remember Jimmy Carter had some bad problems in Iran with the hostages. I don't want to ever put our people in that kind of danger.

But when it's over, it—as of this moment, it's agreed that we will go in with them. We will get it, and we will destroy it. It will be destroyed.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz/Lebanon/Israel/U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities

Q. I have a quick follow-up, Mr. President. My second question: Is it possible to get to a deal with Iran, whether to go in and do that or to open up the Strait of Hormuz, without seeing an Israeli cessation of their hostilities in Lebanon, given what Iran has told——

The President. I think it would. We're trying to separate it. I mean, you—look, it—it's a very different kind of a thing. We actually spoke with Hizballah for the first time ever. We didn't know they spoke. And they agreed, yesterday, they're not going to shoot. Israel is not going to shoot. We're just going to see.

But I'd like to separate it. I'd like to have it a separate thing, because it is—it is separate. But Israel—hey, look, they've been a great partner. Bibi Netanyahu has been, for me, a great partner. For other people, not so good; for me, he's been very good.

We were very effective, what we've done. And they needed us. They couldn't have done it without us, couldn't have even come close. But—and they needed us, and they got us to help them with a real problem, because Iran was a real problem, a big problem, a worldwide problem, because they wouldn't have stopped with Israel. They would have blown up the Middle East.

And you saw that by the rockets. All those rockets that went to the five, mostly—for the most part, the five countries, outside of Israel, those rockets were aimed there before we hit them with the B-2 bombers. They were going to blow up the Middle East. They were going to blow up Israel, but they were going to blow up the Middle East. And I stopped it, and I'm very proud I stopped it.

I—and we also stopped it when I get—when I terminated—in the first term, when I terminated the Iran nuclear deal penned by Barack Hussein Obama. It was one of the dumbest deals I've ever seen.

And this has no relation—you know, I like these morons, these "Dumocrats"—d-u-m, "Dumocrats"—that go on television and say: "Oh, well, this is just like the Obama deal." This is the exact opposite. This is no path to a nuclear weapon. That was a absolute path to a nuclear weapon that you couldn't have done anything about. This is the exact opposite.

They gave billions and billions of dollars to Iran, including \$1.7 billion put into a Boeing 757 with the seats taken out, because there wasn't enough room if you left the seats, with \$1.7 billion in cash taken from the banks in DC, Maryland, and Virginia and flown to Iran—1.7 in green cash, and then tens of billions of dollars given to Iran by our Government. Frankly, they picked the wrong country, but maybe we're going to be getting along with Iran. We're going to find out.

You know, there is a good possibility, I think, because without the bombing, that wouldn't have worked; without the blockade. The blockade is the most powerful thing. I think the blockade maybe has more impact than the bombing has. But the blockade that we have—the naval blockade is incredible. Not one ship has gotten through, unless we wanted it to. And people respect it a lot.

And we'll see. But you know, there's a chance, if this really worked out, they could rebuild. You know, it used to be a very, very good nation. You go back—I have friends that used to—old-timers, they used to go there, and they used to do well. They used to build in Iran. They built apartment houses, and they built offices in Iran. Hard to believe, right?

But there's a chance that maybe that comes back. But whether it comes back or not, I think we have a very powerful deal that we're negotiating. The exact opposite as the Obama deal. The

Obama deal was a disgrace. It gave them a nuclear weapon. We do the exact thing. We—under our deal, they will never, ever have a nuclear weapon.

One of the other things that happens, and this is important—but there's nothing more important than taking away the capability of a nuclear weapon from Iran.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Wait. Wait.

But one of the other things that's important and very important is that immediately upon signing the memorandum of understanding, the Hormuz Strait will open, and it will open up quickly. And we've already had our minesweepers there. You know, we're sweeping, as you probably have heard. And these are underwater minesweepers. They're great. Amazing technology. They're underwater, because usually when you're looking for mines, that usually means you have some dangerous characters out there. That's why. So we're underwater.

But we've swept mines. And we've gotten most of them, we think. So—but the Hormuz Strait will open immediately upon signing. Now, that's subject to a couple of areas being cleaned out, also, of mines, which we don't think there are any. So it will happen very quickly, and we'll take the southern route anyway. But immediately upon signing, we open up the Hormuz Strait.

Q. Mr. President, just to clarify what you said.

Q. On communism——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Department of Justice Compensation Fund

Q. Excuse me, Mr. President. Just to clarify on what you were asked earlier: Is the \$1.8 billion DOJ fund dead, or is it on hold?

The President. It's—I'd have to ask the lawyers. I don't know. I know one thing: the weaponization——

Q. But what's your decision on it?

The President. Are you talking about the weaponization fund?

Q. Yes. What's your decision?

The President. The weaponization fund, as far as I'm concerned, was a beautiful thing. It was something I was—I didn't make it, but I was—I heard that, I thought that was the greatest thing, because people like you have abused our people so badly. The fake news, like CNN, like the New York Times, and like others have abused our people.

CNN/News Media

Q. Well, Republicans were critical of it, Mr. President——

The President. Wait a minute. Be quiet.

Q. ——on Capitol Hill.

The President. Have abused our people so badly, and you should be ashamed of yourself. You used to be a conservative. She was a conservative from Alabama. Can you believe it?

Q. I'm still from Alabama, sir.

The President. But CNN—in particular, CNN does such false reporting. But now they have new ownership, so maybe it'll straighten it out. I doubt it, but—it's hard to straighten garbage out.

But CNN has abused, and others have abused so badly people. These are people that are great people that were destroyed. Their families have been destroyed. Many suicides. They committed suicide. People that went there to—with love—they went there with love.

You know, when I made that speech early in the day—tremendous crowd. I hate to say, because they'll say, "Oh, I was wrong on the number," but I believe it's the largest crowd I've ever spoken to by twice. The biggest crowd, I think. Bigger than the Inaugurations. Bigger than anything.

And there was so much love and friendship. It was the most amazing thing. People were crying. They were like——

Q. But Republicans on the Hill were——

The President. Wait a minute. Let me finish.

Q. ——upset that——

The President. Let me finish.

Q. ——that the people who beat up cops——

The President. Let me finish.

Q. ——could be eligible.

The President. And those people have been abused by you and by others and by the politicians—by the "Dumocrats." They're dumb people. They want to have open borders. They want to have transgender mutilization of your children. They want to have men playing in women's sports. They want to have high taxes.

They turned down—you know, they fought us on the tax bill. And they fought us because they want people to pay high taxes, because they're crazy. There's something wrong with them. There's something wrong with you. It's a shame.

Yes. Go ahead, please.

The President's Post on Truth Social/Mayor Zohran K. Mamdani of New York City/Federal Law Enforcement Support in U.S. Cities

Q. Mr. President, thank you so much. On communism, today you had some stern words on communism on Truth Social.

The President. I just wrote that. Did you like it? Did you think it was well written?

Q. Well, certainly very meaningful to a lot of Americans who voted for you.

The President. Well, I believe it. Do you want to read it? Do you have it? You could read it. It's on Truth.

Q. Sure. Yes, for sure. I can pull it up.

The President. I just wrote it. I just felt—I've seen what's going on with communism, and I see this—read it. I'd love to have you. Thank you.

Q. Sure. You wrote that, quote: "Communists always do well with the voters or, as they would say, the people, in the early years. But, in the end, the country, State, or city, goes to hell. Great violence proceeds at levels never seen before, and the entity dissolves into poverty, squalor, and crime. Remember, breathtaking 'popularity' first, and then, guaranteed death and destruction."

The President. Well, you see it happening with New York. You see it happening with Los Angeles and parts of California. And it's so easy, you know? I'd be the greatest in the world.

Nobody would be as good as me. I'd give away every—I could be the greatest. I would sell them: "You're going to get free rent, you're going to get free houses, you're going to get free food, you're going to get free everything," but eventually, that ends, and it leads to death, destruction, and squalor a hundred percent of the time.

When I watch New York—and, you know, I liked him very much. He stood right here, and he's been in the office a couple of times, the mayor of New York. He—I think he's a very nice person. But—and I don't know—he's a smart guy. I don't understand why he thinks it's okay for all these companies that pay hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes a year to leave, because you're not going to have any tax base, and you're going to end up in hunger and squalor and death and destruction.

I would be better than him, if I wanted to go that route. "Ladies and gentlemen, you'll no longer pay rent. You'll no longer have to pay interest on your mortgage. In fact, I'll end your mortgage. I'm going to cut everything. You're no longer going to have to pay for food. I'm going to give you a grocery store, and I'm going to give you free food. You're no longer going to have—you're going to have the greatest life ever. Follow me. You're going to have the greatest life." And you know what? For a couple of years, that's such a powerful—I would be the best ever at giving it. Nobody would ever be.

I had to sell free enterprise. Free enterprise is tougher to sell, but that's what's made our country great, and that's why it's great again now. If I didn't get elected, we wouldn't have a country. We really wouldn't have a country. This country would be finished.

But I see what's happening in Los Angeles. I see what's happening in New York, where I—look at Chicago. You have a stupid Governor, a dumb—a dumb Governor, a really dumb guy. I know him well. He's a failure in his family. Pritzker. I know the family. I was partners in a deal with them. I made a lot of money; they made money. We made a good partnership. But he was like an outcast in the family. He was a slob. And the mayor is a low-IQ person. I mean, he's a stupid person. Chicago.

Chicago has a case—you know, a real chance to become great again. There's a case: great again. If we were allowed to do what we did in Washington or Memphis. You know, I was with the Governor of Tennessee yesterday, and he said, "I want to come in"—he came in to thank me. I said, "For what?" He said, "What you did for Memphis." Memphis, the crime is down about 72 percent, and it's going. He said, "It's like a different city." Washington is even more so. We started a little bit earlier. Washington, you walk down the streets and people feel safe here again. It's a safe city.

If I were—oh, by the way, in Louisiana, what I've done there is unbelievable. Because the Governor, Jeff Landry, called. He said: "You've got to help me with New Orleans. We have a tremendous crime problem." And I sent in our really talented people, including National Guardsmen, and they did an unbelievable—they had the safest—they said they had the safe—it just ended about 3 weeks ago. They had the safest Mardi Gras they've ever had.

I could do that in Chicago, but you have to have the support of a Governor. You can't have a slob that says, you know, "We don't want it." People get murdered, and he says it's fine. They lost five or six people last week, and they said, "That's fine." We're not going to lose five or six people. And I would make Chicago so good and so safe. It's got potential. The longer it goes, the harder it is to fix.

And San Francisco, we could do such a good job. My friend said, "Please let the mayor"—he's a liberal guy. Nice guy. I talked to him. He wants to make San Francisco good, and he's trying very hard. I said: "Look, I can do it much faster than you." "Please let me have a time." I mean, I spoke to the mayor, and some very important people asked me to give him a chance

because they'd like to see if he could do it. And he's doing okay, but he—I could do it much faster and much better.

And we can remove—don't forget: 2 percent of your people create 90 percent of your crime. That's a great number, because 2 percent of the people, you can take care of. If it was 90 percent of the people, that's no good. But 2 percent—in Washington, right here in DC, we removed close to 5,000 hardline criminals. Many came in through the Biden open border. We removed them from Washington, DC, and it's one of the reasons that we're so safe now.

We have a great, beautiful place. Again, the fountains are almost all open. You're going to have the Reflecting Pool opened within hours—I mean, literally within hours. The water starts pouring in tonight. It's going to be beautiful. You haven't seen that since 1922. Think of that: 1922. It hasn't worked. Never worked. From the day they built it, it never worked, but you're going to see that.

And people are all thanking me because Washington is beautiful again. The parks are open. We changed the grass. You know, grass has a life also. Like people, grass has a life, and that grass hasn't been changed in 70, 80 years. It died many times over. We have beautiful grass, beautiful parks, beautiful everything. We don't have people living on it.

And Washington, DC, in a matter of 14 months, Washington, DC, is like a different place. People are coming here. You know, you—the restaurants were all going out of business, as you know, because you use the restaurants, and now the restaurants are hot as a—in fact, if anything, we don't have enough restaurant space. They're all reopening. It's become vibrant.

It's a beautiful thing to watch, and I am honored that I've been able to do it to our Nation's Capital.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kaitlan Collins, chief White House correspondent, CNN; Secretary of the Treasury Scott K.H. Bessent; Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel; Mayor Brandon Johnson of Chicago, IL; Gov. William B. Lee of Tennessee; and Mayor Daniel Lurie of San Francisco, CA.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Executive order signing ceremony; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Bessent, Scott K.H.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Burgum, Douglas J.; Collins, Kaitlan; Johnson, Brandon; Kerochan, James G.; Landry, Jeffrey M.; Lee, William B.; Lurie, Daniel; Lutnick, Howard W.; Mamdani, Zohran K.; Navarro, Peter K.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Scharf, William O.; Scott, Rodney S.; Sherk, James B.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Border security; China, President; Civil service regulations; CNN; Department of Justice compensation fund; District of Columbia, beautification efforts; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; Domestic Policy Council; Illegal drugs, interdiction efforts; Illegal immigration; Illinois, Governor; Israel, Prime Minister; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Iran, U.S. military operations; Israel, military operations in Lebanon; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary

organization; Lebanon, Israeli military operations; Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, renovation work; Louisiana, Governor; Louisiana, law enforcement improvement efforts in New Orleans; News media, fairness and accuracy; News media, Presidential interviews; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of the Interior; Secretary of the Treasury; Stock market; Tennessee, Governor; Tennessee, law enforcement improvement efforts in Memphis; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; White House Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing; White House Staff Secretary.

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