

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure From New York City
June 8, 2026

National Basketball Association Finals Game Between the New York Knicks and the San Antonio Spurs/Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement/Beautification Efforts in the District of Columbia/Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool/National Economy

Q. What did you think of the game, Mr. President?

The President. Hello, everybody. Well, the game was fantastic. Well played by both teams. We all had a lot of fun. It was great to watch. Very talented players.

We have ongoing negotiations in Iran and with Iran. And that hasn't stopped. And we could have at least an idea by 1 or 2 days from now, but I think it's going well.

The blockade continues to hold, 100 percent. Nothing is getting through our blockade—no oil, no income, no nothing. Nothing is getting through the blockade.

We have our great Secretary of the Interior, and we have Lee Zeldin, as you know—environment.

And you might give them a little update on what we're doing with a few different things, as long as we're here with the news—with the media. See? I'm being very nice tonight. "The media."

In California, I hear they speeded the process up a little bit, and they had a good result, one good result out of two.

Doug, would you like to say a couple of words?

Secretary of the Interior Douglas J. Burgum. Well, I would just say: On the Middle East, President Trump has all the leverage, and I'm confident we're going to come out of this with a great deal.

In terms of getting ready for the spectacular celebration of our amazing country—our 250th—with President Trump's Safe and Beautiful in DC, what's been accomplished—I want to give a shout-out to everybody that works for the National Park, the U.S. Park Police.

But you know, cleaning up dozens and dozens of monuments, dozens of fountains back working again. The reflecting pool, which you've all known, is near completion. It's going to be ready before the UFC event at the end of this week. So, everything's going great on that front.

The city has never looked better. And, President Trump, I think you've said you've gotten—you called them "love letters." You've gotten more love letters on—about the fountains and the beauty of the city than ever before.

The President. Yes. Well—yes.

Secretary Burgum. But how fitting, as we go into our 250th, that—President Trump personally getting involved in making sure that our Capital reflects the greatness of our country, because it's not—decline is a choice. And President Trump—Trump has shown a blueprint for every American city, every mayor in this country that's got a large metro, that's got a homeless problem, that's got a graffiti problem, that's got a crime problem. He's played out a blueprint of how you solve that, and that's the real lesson here.

The President. Well, and I have to tell you that the main thing is there's very little crime now in DC. It was a crime haven a year and a half ago. Very little crime. Soon, I think it will be almost no crime whatsoever.

So I want to thank, really, the National Guard, the DC police. We worked very closely with them. And we—they do as we ask, and they've been terrific—really terrific. And we have very, very little crime.

Also, Memphis—and if you look at New Orleans in Louisiana, they're down 77 percent. Memphis is down 74 percent, and I would say DC is down 95 percent.

DC has become very safe and very beautiful. The grass is new—much of the grass. You know, grass has a life just like a human being has a life, and it hadn't been changed in 100 years. But you see there's nobody sleeping on the beautiful parks. The wire and fences are all taken down. And DC is very safe, and it's also become very beautiful.

The reflective lake, as we call it—the reflective—beautiful reflective lake—I mean, it's like a mirror. And that's filling up now. It's still filling up. And the work—and we increased the scope quite a bit. We've taken care of now all of the sidewalk and everything around the lake, because we have to bring it into the same shape.

And a lot of it's granite. We sandblasted. It looks beautiful. And we had 22 different fountains, all of which didn't work for 40 or 50 years. They were loaded up with graffiti. And because of the Department of Interior working with me and some other people that are into it, we just—we want to beautify. We have one of the most beautiful capitals in the world, and doing a really good job.

So, of the 22, not one of them worked for 40 or 50 years. Now every one of the 22 work, and I think we have a couple of more to go, don't we?

Secretary Burgum. Yes. We're doing ribbon cuttings almost every other day, and fabulous to see all these coming back on line. But what's most exciting is to see how much the people that live in Washington, DC, and visit Washington, DC, love coming to a safe and beautiful city.

And I think it really reflects what we're celebrating here at our 250 is not just gratitude for the past and respect for all that's gone before us, but it's inspiration for the future. People come and see what America can be.

The President. You know, it's a little bit—just sitting here talking—or standing here and talking to you, and we have a lot of respect for a lot of the people before me. I know some of you very well. But take a look at that plane. See that plane? That's in perfect mint condition. Take a look at that. Look at that. Isn't that amazing?

And everything should look that way. We work with the military. We do a real job. If you look at the polish—look at the way—everything is beautiful.

And that's the way we want DC. And some people would laugh or smile at it, but there's nothing to smile at.

So DC has become really safe and really, really beautiful. And we have some great things planned, like the promenade. We've got a promenade at the Lincoln museum—at Lincoln, and you have to see this.

This will be one of the most beautiful things. The Lincoln Memorial is going to be unbelievable. It was supposed to front on the Potomac, and they built two highways behind it. And we're taking care of that by bridging over the highways. It's going to be beautiful, what they're doing there.

So we have some really—and the arc will be maybe the greatest thing. I think the ballroom, but a combination of the ballroom and the arc will be the two greatest projects of them all.

So it's—we've got a very—we've got a lot of exciting things happening.

Getting back to other things, like jobs numbers. We have record jobs. We have more people working in the United States today than at any time in the history of our country. And you see the numbers on the stock exchange. We had just today 73 records, Doug.

Secretary Burgum. Yes.

The President. We have 73 new highs. So, out of my short 1½ years, we have—we've had 73 brandnew highs on the various stock exchanges, and that's a record. Nobody's ever had anything like that, and that's during a military conflict. So, you know, pretty amazing.

And even the oil and gas—it's lower during a military conflict than it was during the Biden administration, and they didn't have that because, to them, it was okay that Iran has a nuclear weapon. And I say it's not okay.

So we—the B-2 bombers did a big job and a great job, and we have got that in very good control. They will not have a nuclear weapon.

Okay. Could I ask Lee—he's done an incredible job, as you know. The environment is good, and he's approving more plans than any human being I think has ever approved anywhere in the world. We have more factories going up, car plants, AI plants.

We have about \$18 trillion being invested in the United States, which is a record by far. There's never been anything like it. Many, many times more than the last administration. I won't get into the numbers. The numbers are astronomical. But, in the history of the world, there has never been a country that's had \$18 trillion invested in it, and that's in 11 months.

The last administration had much less than \$1 trillion over a period of 4 years. We have \$18 trillion in 11 months. We haven't gotten the final numbers on the 12th month, which will be very good.

Lee, do you want to say something?

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee M. Zeldin. Sure. Well, you know, the Spurs—they have some good players. Wembanyama—[laughter]. Castle did well tonight.

But I'm still going with the Knicks. I think that they're going to pull it off. And, Mr. President, it was awesome to be able to spend the night with you. The energy was amazing. Jim Dolan was a great host.

But this Knicks team—I mean, O.G. Anunoby was fantastic. Jalen Brunson is "Mr. Clutch." They have great heart, so I'm feeling good about how that series is going.

Q. Knicks in how many, Mr. Zeldin? How many games?

Administrator Zeldin. I'm going Knicks in five. I feel like it's a resilient, strong team.

The President. He knows basketball. He knew every player. [Laughter]

Administrator Zeldin. They're going to come out for Game 4, and they are going to deliver.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran/Energy Infrastructure

Q. Will you guys go to the fifth game in San Antonio?

Administrator Zeldin. Oh, I don't know. We're busy with a lot of important stuff right now at EPA.

The President. Like a war.

Administrator Zeldin. There's a lot of important stuff going on, but I happened to be in New York. We were just in Binghamton earlier today, where we believe that we should build a new Constitution Pipeline to deliver natural gas from Pennsylvania to New England. We believe that New York should reverse its ban on the extraction of natural gas.

The President. We're getting held up by the Governor of New York. She made a deal with us to allow us to build it, and she's holding it up. And Connecticut is suffering, and all of New England is suffering, and Upstate New York is really suffering.

And this is a pipeline that goes very substantially underground that nobody is going to see, and the people of New England and others are paying among the highest prices anywhere in the world, frankly, if you look at throughout the world, because you can't get—because we have a Governor that just doesn't allow it.

This has gone on for a long time. And we made a deal with her, and she broke the deal. We made a deal. We were going to give her a couple of windmills someplace, because she likes windmills, which is a big mistake. And we made the deal. So, I guess we're withdrawing those windmills.

But she gave us two: one going out to Long Island, which is now under construction, and one going to New England. And the big one going to New England—the people in New England are paying a fortune for energy because of the fact that New York, for decades, has stopped the pipeline.

So we made a deal with the Governor, and she broke the deal.

Mayor Zohran K. Mamdani of New York City

Q. Speaking of New York, did you see Mayor Mamdani at the game?

The President. I did not, no.

National Basketball Association Finals Game Between the New York Knicks and the San Antonio Spurs

Q. What did you think of the reception you got from the Knicks fans tonight?

The President. I thought great. I mean, I thought it was amazing, actually. You mean, when they had the camera on me? I thought it was very good. Yes.

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

I—it was certainly amazing. It was, I think, mostly cheers. It was loud, and it was very enthusiastic.

National Basketball Association Finals Game Between the New York Knicks and the San Antonio Spurs/ ESPN Commentator and host of First Take Stephen A. Smith

Q. Mr. President, ESPN commentator Stephen A. Smith, who has talked about running for President, said he would blame you if the Knicks lost the game. How do you respond to that?

The President. I think he's a nice guy, but you need a certain aptitude to run for President. You need a high IQ. I'm not sure that Stephen has that. I don't think he does, actually.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel/Lebanon/Iran/Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Mr. President, what did you say to Prime Minister Netanyahu when you spoke to him?

The President. We had a very good conversation. And he was hit, and he hit back, and I can't blame him for that. But he was hit, he hit back, and now they've called it quits. So they're going to just leave each other alone for another week or something.

It's been going on for a long time. You could say about 3,000 years, if you really will. But certainly, it's been going on for 47 years.

But no, he hit back. They were going back and forth, and now they've both agreed, through me, to stop. And we're in the final throes of what will be a very, very good deal that will not allow in any way, shape, or form nuclear weapons, et cetera. It's—and the Strait will open up right away. It will open up immediately upon signing, which could be in 2 or 3 days.

Q. Did you ask him not to hit back? Did you ask him not to hit back, sir?

The President. No, I said, "Do what's right, but I want you to stop as quickly as you can," because they have to stop. It's had to do with Lebanon, and it has to stop. We want to get it finished.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. There's a report that an Army helicopter went down in the Strait. Can you give us an update on that? Are the soldiers okay?

The President. The pilots are fine. Yes.

Q. And was that—

The President. Nobody injured.

Q. Do you know what brought it down?

The President. We are going to issue a report tomorrow, but the pilots are fine. Yes.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement

Q. Sir, did you just say "2 or 3 days" or "2 or 3 weeks" that you'd be signing?

The President. Two or three days.

Q. You'll be signing a peace agreement in 2 or 3 days?

The President. No, no. We have a good chance of doing it. We should be able to do it in 1 hour, if you want to know the truth.

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz/U.S. Naval Blockade of Sanctioned Commercial Transit

Q. What's the biggest sticking point right now?

The President. I don't think there are any sticking points. I think we're very close to having a very, very good, strong, powerful deal.

If we go and bomb—which we can do very easily, if we want—and we spend another 2 or 3 weeks bombing, they'll have nothing left whatsoever, but you won't have the Strait open for months. If we do the bombing, you know, a lot of people are going to be killed. Who wants to do that? I don't.

And we'll get—we'll have a signed document that's actually stronger than doing the bombing.

What has proven to be a very powerful thing is the blockade. The blockade's turned out to be much stronger than bombing. And it was really a combination. It was our initial thrust, and then the blockade. But you know, their economy is really suffering, and they're going to make a deal.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

New York Knicks Owner James L. Dolan

Q. Tonight did you and Jim Dolan talk about the Penn—did you and Jim Dolan talk about the Penn Station project at all?

The President. They are talking about it. We're trying to get the Penn Station project approved, and I know Lee's involved, and Doug is involved. A lot of people are involved. It's a very big project.

Q. When you were sitting with——

The President. It's the rail station in New York.

Q. When you were sitting with Mr. Dolan tonight, did you and him talk about it at all? Or——

The President. We did. We talked about. He's a friend of mine for a long time, and he's a great guy. He's done a fantastic job.

Q. What did you and Adam Silver talk about?

Secretary Burgum. Secretary Duffy was also at the game tonight.

National Basketball Association Commissioner Adam Silver

Q. What did you and Commissioner Silver talk about?

The President. Just—he came over to pay his respects. Yes. As President, he came over.

We talked a little bit about the NBA and about the game, and the game's changed. I said, "It's gotten rougher," which is a good thing, not a bad thing. It's gotten rougher. When you look at the way they guard people now, I don't remember them doing that 10 years ago.

Administrator Zeldin. It has.

The President. And he knows a lot about basketball, but it's good. It's good for the game. It's a tougher game.

Q. Do you think the NBA has turned away from the left-wing stuff that they were getting criticized for?

The President. Well, it's a little left wing. Yes, I think so. It tends to be a little bit left wing, but it was—it's great entertainment. Great.

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

Q. Is there an oil or gasoline price, sir, in this conflict, that would prompt you to release more from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve?

The President. Well, we are, and we are releasing more from a lot of oil is coming out of the Hormuz Strait. A lot of it is coming out.

And, if you notice, the price is not very high, relatively speaking. I mean, it's lower than during the Biden administration, and he wasn't stopping a country from having a nuclear weapon. He didn't even know what we were talking about, because they had a very failed—you know, the JCPOA was an absolutely failed agreement. It was a road to a nuclear weapon.

See, we're the exact opposite. We are a road to absolutely no nuclear weapon. They were a road to a nuclear weapon. So we have that. You know, we're very far advanced.

Judicial Review

Q. Sir, a Federal judge today struck down the \$100,000 fee for the H1-B visa, saying you need congressional approval. Are you going to push for Congress to do this?

The President. These Federal judges are really giving us a hard time. It's really crazy what's going on with the court system. They are giving us a very, very hard time, and they shouldn't be doing it. They're hurting our country very badly.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:21 p.m. on the tarmac at the John F. Kennedy International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kathleen C. Hochul of New York. Secretary Zeldin referred to Victor "Wemby" Wembanyama, forward-center, and Stephon Castle, guard, National Basketball Association's San Antonio Spurs; and Ogugua "OG" Anunoby, Jr., forward-guard, and Jalen Brunson, guard, NBA's New York Knicks. A reporter referred to Leo T. Sorokin, judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on June 9.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, New York City.

Locations: New York City.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Burgum, Douglas J.; Dolan, James L.; Hochul, Kathleen C.; Mamdani, Zohran K.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Silver, Adam; Smith, Stephen A.; Zeldin, Lee M.

Subjects: Basketball; Crime rates; District of Columbia, beautification efforts; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; District of Columbia, Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, renovation work; Economic improvement; Environmental Protection Agency; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, diplomatic engagement with U.S.; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Iran, U.S. military operations; Israel, military operations in Lebanon; Israel, Prime Minister; Job creation and growth; Judicial review; Lebanon, Israeli military operations; National Guard; New York, Governor; New York, President's visit; News media, Presidential interviews; Oil and natural gas, domestic production; Oil markets and prices; Secretary of the Interior; Stock market.

DCPD Number: DCPD202600390.