

Remarks During a Greeting With United States Servicemembers at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland

June 19, 2026

Well, thank you very much. And, before we begin on the plane, this is a brandnew hangar, because as you probably have learned, these planes are much bigger. The other plane was about 35 years old, and it was time.

And President of the United States, numerous of them would land, and they'd be standing next to one of the new 747s, and the biggest difference is the difference in size. It's, like, virtually double the size. And it—actually, on a runway, it looks even more so. And I said to myself, you know, these countries, they have a lot of respect for us. A lot. And yet, they have a plane that's much better and much newer. It's a little ridiculous out there.

And we have our signal, and we have our beautiful American flag. And we put the wave in it. As you know, we've always gone with this straight little noodle, and I never loved that. Now we have a wavy, beautiful flag. We're waving it proudly because our country is doing so well. Our country is doing so well. Those ships are flowing out of the Hormuz Strait like nobody has ever seen before, actually. There were a lot of them, about 700 of them, and they're pouring out. And the oil is all over the place. You're going to see oil drop so low. I hope the companies are happy about it.

But we have a lot of victories. We had a great victory in Venezuela, where we're now doing really well with the Government. The big companies are all in there, the oil companies. They're building rigs, and we've paid for that war many, many times over. We're running it. And again, we have a fantastic relationship with the people of Venezuela. Venezuela has become a happy country, because they have never made the money that they're making now. We take some, and they take some.

But I just want to thank the General for the job—"Razin" Caine. I liked his name right away. I had him—"Razin" Caine. And he does, he "raises Cain," and he's very quiet about it. But he knows how to win. I knew that a long time ago. I said: "If I ever get back here, I know the guy I'm going to put in charge of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," and I got my man. So thank you, General. Great job. We're proud of you and all of the people.

I mean, we have the greatest military anywhere in the world, and you saw that in Iran, where in 1 week, virtually, we knocked out their entire navy, their entire air force, their anti-missile weapons, their radar. We knocked out everything.

Now, some of the fake news would say, "Oh, we didn't do it fast enough," or something. We took about a week. We're a little spoiled by Venezuela, but equal. I would say equal.

And now we have an agreement that was signed last night, and it's 60 days they have to make a deal. Otherwise we will do things that won't make them happy. But I don't think it's going to get to that. I think it's going to be very good.

Remember, if we do that, then all of a sudden, you're not going to have the oil flowing out of the Strait too quickly, because people that own billion-dollar ships don't love missiles flying over them, don't love mines all over the water.

And this is going to be amazing, what's happening now, because we have the greatest economy that we've ever had. We have \$19.2 trillion coming into our country from other countries and people. But a lot of other countries are coming in, including Qatar, who was so nice

in providing—you know, we were—we were at a little bit of a logjam. We're waiting for the—I call them the "normal 747s." And I asked the Amir if we could use the brandnew 747 that he got with—had—when we first heard about it, 800 hours. Eight hundred hours for an airplane is essentially—I think, Troy, you could say that's a brandnew plane. And I said: "We'd like to use it for a little while because the planes are pretty old. Our planes are old."

See, a normal President wouldn't do this. A normal President wants to stay away from aircraft. "We don't want to order any aircraft so that everybody thinks"—but our country has to be represented properly and includes with—we have the greatest military in the world. We have the greatest aircraft anywhere in the world, military fighters and bombers, and the B-2 bomber. You saw what that did. And we should have a plane.

And we're going to have—as you know, we ordered two for—a long time ago, they ordered. And they're coming in, and the hangar was built for the large plane. The other plane is such a difference in size, but there will never be one like this. This is very unique. This is considered the world's most luxurious plane. When it was built, it was built at a level that will probably never be seen again.

And if the press would like—I don't know if it's going to help me with stories. I don't think they'll be any different. But what we're going to do is, we're going to take you for just a quick tour. The press is actually going to—oh, look at them. They're actually smiling. Are you smiling? First time I've seen them smile in years. They don't smile at Republicans. They should smile at Republicans because we're the ones that make America great. Anyway.

But that's good. You happy about that? We'll do it, all right? So, when I leave, they're going to take you for a little tour. You'll see something you won't even believe, and you'll be spending a lot of time. We're going to do—we're doing a lot of trips.

We'll be going to Turkey. We'll be going, at some point during the year, back to China. President Xi is coming here in September, but we're going back for a big conference that's in China. I said I'd do that.

And I want to thank China, because, to be honest, I asked President Xi not to get involved with Iran. And they get 50 percent of their oil from the Strait, but I asked him not to get involved, and he said he wouldn't, and he didn't. I mean, very nice, actually. Very nice. So I appreciate that.

But we'll be doing a lot of traveling together.

The workmanship of this plane is—when you see it, you won't believe it, actually, the quality of woods, the quality of the materials, the quality of the engines. These engines are the finest. They're the best in the world. Nothing like it. So it's really an honor.

And I want to thank the Amir of Qatar. He's a fantastic guy. He went through a lot over the last few months. He's very brave, as were Saudi Arabia, the Crown Prince and the King of Saudi Arabia, who's in good health. He's a little older, got a little bit—I knew him when he was a little bit younger. I've known them all for a long time, but the Crown Prince is a fantastic person. And U.A.E.—Mohamed from U.A.E. Incredible. He's an incredible fighter.

They're all incredible fighters. And they fought with us, and they've been loyal to us, and I appreciate it. Also Kuwait, Bahrain, and some others.

And obviously, we fought very well with Israel, and we've had a great relationship with Israel. We were very formidable. And Bibi Netanyahu, he's a warrior Prime Minister, and he should be acknowledged as that. He should—they should give him credit, because he really did. He—we had a very good relationship, General, with all of them. We really fought hard with Israel. And, frankly, I feel that if we weren't around—let's say, if there wasn't this Presidency—

We rebuilt our military during my first term. Some of it was foolishly given away by the Biden administration. Nobody can even understand that, but not much compared—a lot, but not much compared to what we built. And then a lot was given away.

A lot was given away by Biden to Ukraine, and they should pay for it, meaning the Europeans should pay for it. But that wasn't in the cards for them. They didn't—nobody asked them to pay. All you have to do is say: "Take our military. You—we—just pay us. Just pay us." Nobody asked. I said, "Why didn't you pay?" "Nobody asked us to, sir."

I was with the European leaders over the weekend. I said: "You know, we gave you 350—think of it—\$350 billion worth of planes." Three hundred—of weapons of all kinds and other things. And they said, "Why?" I said, "Why didn't you?" And he said, "Well, nobody ever asked us." So we're going to—now they do pay. Europe pays.

And we're trying to get that war ended. Ukraine and Russia, I'd like to see it end. A lot of people—last week it was reported 34,000 people died. Soldiers. Mostly soldiers. I've ended eight wars—I'm very proud of it—but this was the one I thought might be the easiest of all, and it's turned out to be a little more difficult. But we're going to get it done.

I want to thank the Secretary of the Air Force, who's a friend of mine. He's highly respected. He's a great guy, doing a wonderful job out here. Troy, thank you very much. Troy Meink. Thank you very much, Troy. Great job. And he loves it. Don't you? Love—he loves—he likes beautiful aircraft.

Now, we have beautiful aircraft. We have a thing called the F-47. I'm sure you haven't heard of it, but they say it's stage six. It's the—they say it's the greatest fighting machine ever developed. We'll find out. The F-47. And it's under construction now, and they have the assembly line already working. And it's going to do great.

Under Secretary of War Michael Duffey. Thank you, Michael. Thank you very much. Great job. Thank you. And again, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Daniel Caine, who's fantastic. Air Force Chief of Staff General Kenneth Wilsbach. Thank you. Thank you, Kenneth.

The CEO of L3Harris, Chris Kubasik. Thank you. Great job, Chris. He said this—they do a lot of the great planes in the world, and he said, "We never did one like this." This is something special. Thank you. I heard you were fantastic. Thank you very much.

And I also want to thank, I think, a natural-born warrior. His name is Pete Hegseth, and he has done—working with the generals and everybody else, he's a natural, I believe. Well, so far, we've been winning all the time. It's—we're not going to lose. He doesn't know how to lose, and he's a tough cookie.

And he loved—the first day I met him, I said, "This guy really loves the military." Very successful, great colleges. Went to the best schools, great student. But he loved the military. Then I said I'm going to give him a chance, and he more than lived up to the reputation. So he's great. He's doing a fantastic job. Pete Hegseth.

And I also want to thank especially the 250 people—that's a lot—who worked 24/7 to prepare this plane for service, including many airmen here at Joint Base Andrews. And I want to thank you all. I want to thank you all and your generals and Troy and everybody.

We're doing you a little favor. You have two and a half really bad golf courses here. [Laughter] Really bad. They have no water, they're dying, and everybody wants to play, but they're really not representative of quality.

So Jack Nicklaus, who's a friend of mine, is doing—I told him—he's a great designer too. He was the greatest player. Tiger and Jack, Jack and Tiger. Gary Player was right there too. Gary. Gary won 168 tournaments. We've got to say that's pretty good too.

But Jack Nicklaus, a great, great legendary golfer. He won 18 majors and close to a hundred tournaments, and known also—very rarely does this happen—known also—he's really become a fantastic golf course designer. He's done tremendous golf course.

And I said, "Jack"—and he loves the military. I said: "Jack, would you do me a favor? Take the—these—this beautiful piece of land with terrible courses that don't have water, they don't have anything. They have grass that's 400 years old." [Laughter] I said, "Will you"—right? You know what I—they know what I mean. "Give them a really good—give them a world championship course," because the land is phenomenal, the outer fairways. In other words, the area—the trees between fairways are the most beautiful I think I've ever seen, because nobody has touched them in many, many years.

And they've just about started construction. You're going to have it very quickly. And you're going to have, I think, the finest military courses anywhere in the world. But they'll be among the best.

You know, it doesn't cost much more to make them top, top tier for a couple of bucks more. And I said we're going to spend it. So that's our gift. The general, myself, Troy, that's our gift to this—to a great place, Andrews. I've gotten to know it. You know, I've been coming here a lot of years now. It seems strange, but we've been coming here a lot of years.

And everybody involved with Andrews is a winner. They run this so well and so important. So you're going to have two and a half. We're doing two courses and a half for young people—very young people—and disabled. If there's anybody that needs a little help, it's so amazing what they do. And so we're doing nine holes, and that will be for disabled, young people. Very, very special. Hasn't been done before. I thought it would be a great idea.

But with the extraordinary devotion of many of you here today, this plane was transformed into a flying White House at a level of luxury that nobody has ever seen before, probably even almost outside of an airplane. It's—nobody has ever seen anything like this, and in only 10 months, a timeframe no one thought possible. And you know, they put a lot of things on here that normally you wouldn't do: great protective mechanisms, very, very—the latest and the greatest in every aspect. But it took us about 10 months.

And they did it really professionally. These generals were—what they do. And this was a—this was love, right? This was not your normal—General, this was not your normal situation.

Come here, I want to shake your hand. You worked so hard. Come here. This guy.

[At this point, the President shook hands with Critical Major Weapon Systems Director Gen. Dale R. White, USAF.]

He worked so hard with such love. And it's basically he has a love for the country and a love for the Air Force. But his whole group was just unbelievable. And you thank them all, okay? Thank you, General. Appreciate it. Great job.

And it was all of the generals. They wanted to do something special. They wanted to get it done for the 250th year, the anniversary. We have America's 250th, and that's coming up in a little while.

And I think I can say that we're going to do a flyover like no flyover. This is going to lead a group of many, many planes. I do love the F-22, I have to tell. Does anybody like the F-22? I

love the F-22. I said, "Why aren't you putting F-22s?" They're putting F-22s. They're going to have 35s, they're going have to 16, they're going to have everything.

But this will be a flyover on July 4, I think I can say the likes of which we've never seen before, General, right? Spending a couple of bucks extra for a little fuel. We own the plane, so all we need is a little extra fuel, right? And we have every pilot wants to do it. Those pilots are all fighting to do it. So we're going to have a lot of planes flying over the Capitol and over the White House.

And maybe I could ask you to do a return trip too, because, you know, they fly over and they go fast. When they're going slow, they're going fast, right? And, as I understand it, this is going to lead the brigade. And the generals doing that—[inaudible]—because sometimes you see them and you—like, for instance, the other night, did anybody see the fight the other night by any chance? Because it—I figured, because it was one of the highest-rated shows they've ever had, ever. I think everybody was watching that. That was rather gruesome. Does—would anybody like to be a fighter? I don't think so. Not that. That was one of the greatest events.

But they flew over, the Blue Angels and the Thunderbirds. I don't know, have they ever worked together before? You know, I think they probably hate each other, right? You know? [Laughter] But they're two groups that they got together and they put on a performance, and I think we're going to get some of that too. And it's really—these are fantastic people.

So we had it all painted up, and these are the new colors: red, white, and blue. And we like the baby blue, but it was time for a change. And this is the sleekest line. Everything was designed good. It was my taste. I will say, I like—they said, "What color do you like?" I said, "I like the color of the American flag." Right? That makes sense. So we have that, and all of the planes in the fleet are being changed into this look, which is a much better look and a more appropriate look.

But this plane is the first successful example of a real transformation of something that was built at the highest level and now had to be changed a little bit. We have communication equipment up there that's—nobody has ever seen before. It's the highest level. And—including Starlink. My friend Leon—my friend Elon is going to be very happy. But Starlink, and we have four or five different sets of double and triple communications like people haven't seen, and it represents what can happen with hard work, innovation, and aggressive timelines, because we did this quickly. And yet it's—there's never been communication like is on this plane.

Our pilots are incredible. You know, when you fly the President—not me, just the President—but they say there's a rumor that when you fly the President, you have to be the best pilot. So my pilot's very good. Where's—raise your hand, pilots.

That—he get—he took me in the other plane over, what, it was the national collegiate game? The championship game. I say, "Do me a favor: Buzz the stadium." [Laughter] As we arrived at the stadium, people going crazy, I said, "Captain, I didn't mean you had to go that low, Captain." [Laughter] He seriously buzzed. He even did a little dip right in the middle. I said, "What the hell is going on?"

But no, we have our best pilots. That's the way it should be. Marine One, the helicopters and the plane. When you get to pilot for a President, that's your best. So, thank you very much. Great. We're going to have a lot of fun together.

But our pilots, designers, and engineers prepared an aircraft that is the largest Air Force One ever built. It flies further and faster than any Air Force One. Those are the giant engines. Those are incredible engines. Far—it's the fastest, flies further. You don't have to stop for fuel every few hours. You maybe will never have to stop for fuel. It's got—they call it unlimited. Well, it's pretty

close to unlimited. And which is among the most beautiful aircrafts the Air Force will ever see or operate. You'll never have this opportunity again.

And I want to thank everybody involved, including Tamim. But every man and woman here today should be incredibly proud of what we've all achieved, because this is representative of our country. Now when we land at airports in London and in Germany, in different places, nobody tops this one, and that's the way we have to have it for our country. Nobody even comes close.

So my return from the G-7 summit was the last planned trip aboard the VC-25A. That's the 747. We'll probably do the museum thing. We'll get them fixed up a little bit—not like this one—and we'll do museums. But they're great planes, they're great history.

It's a plane that was authorized by President Ronald Reagan so many years ago—I think they had a 707 before that, and it's in his museum—and that was flown by every President since George H.W. Bush. And it was a great plane. We had very little trouble with it.

And Boeing has done a fantastic job. Boeing does a great job. They charge us too much, but other than that. *[Laughter]* I said, "You've got to get the prices down."

But over its lifetime, that aircraft traveled to 96 countries on 223 international trips and flew over 6 million miles. It became the most famous—and as you know, it's actually two planes, because Air Force One is actually two planes. They're totally identical. The other ones, I can't—the only way I can tell is, on the desk, the wood grain is slightly different. They're literally interchangeable. You can hardly tell. It became the most famous airplane in the entire world.

And I want to thank Presidential Airlift Group—the Presidential Airlift Group is unbelievable, the job they've done—and the 89th Airlift Wing, who have lovingly cared for that plane. And we just very rarely had any problems, which, if you know something about airplanes, you do have some difficulty. We really had very little difficulty.

But age was finally catching up to it, no matter what we did. But along with the two men who have piloted it during my Presidency—so, I'd get to introduce—because that—they're very important. When you're up there at 42,000 feet going at 6-, 700 miles an hour, you want to be very, very nice and appreciative to your pilot. So, as far as I'm concerned, it's a bad time.

You ever hear where pilots go, and they ask for a raise in the middle of flight? They always ask for a raise. *[Laughter]* They're working for some rich guy and they ask for the raise in the middle of the flight, and he always says "okay." *[Laughter]*

But Air Force Colonel Pete Donnelly and Lieutenant Colonel Tyler Sanborn. *[Applause]* That's pretty good. I guess they know you. That's the best hand. You got a bigger hand than I did. That's the end of your job. *[Laughter]* I don't like that. I'm not happy about that.

No, these are great pilots. These are great, very talented people.

The Air Force One team and the entire Presidential Airlift Group is amazing. Brilliant people, and they love our country. We are tremendously grateful for everything that you do each and every day and all of the people that work here. Look at the condition of this and how beautiful everything is. It's always tippy-top. It's tippy-top, and we appreciate it.

So we're going to have a big July 4 at the Capitol, flying over the Capitol. The generals promise to do a lot of the stuff, not just phoom and we never see them. "Where are they? Tell them to come back." They were so good at the fight. They did that one, and I've never seen that many. And they were right—it looked like they were a foot away from each other, going fast. I kept saying, "When are they coming back?" That was it. So we'll have them do a little bit of maneuvers back and forth.

But, again, you are very, very special people, and we're very, very lucky to have you. You're incredibly talented and brilliant in every way. And it's an honor to be with you.

And again, this really deserved a sendoff because there's never been a plane like this ever built, and there will never be a plane like this built again. This has things that no other plane can ever have, including the ones that are being built, the more standard, as they call it, 747s. There will never be anything like what you're seeing behind me.

So, again, the press, you get ready. They're going to take you for a little tour. A quickie. I think they don't want you to have cameras, so—but we'll get you pictures. But you'll see something like you've never seen before, and you'll also spend a lot of time there as we fly to different places to put out fires and other things.

Thank you very much. I'm a great fan of everybody in this incredible, brandnew hangar. And God bless America. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:45 p.m. in the Presidential Airlift Group Hangar. In his remarks, he referred to Amir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani of Qatar; Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud and King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates; professional golfer Eldrick T. "Tiger" Woods; and Elon R. Musk, chief executive officer, chief technical officer, and chairman, SpaceX. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on June 21.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : U.S. servicemembers at Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Locations: Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Names: Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Caine, J. Daniel; Donnelly, Peter; Duffey, Michael P.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Kubasik, Christopher; Meink, Troy E.; Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince; Musk, Elon R.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Nicklaus, Jack; Player, Gary J.; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King; Sanborn, Tyler; Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir; White, Dale R.; Wilsbach, Kenneth S.; Woods, Eldrick T. "Tiger"; Xi Jinping.

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