

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks on Signing Executive Orders on Quantum Technologies and an Exchange With Reporters

June 22, 2026

The President. Hello. Hello, everybody. Thank you very much.

And today I'm signing two very important Executive orders on quantum technologies that will strengthen America's place as the world leader in this very important emerging field.

I want to thank Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who's with us; Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick; Secretary of Energy Chris Wright; Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy Michael Kratsios. Thank you, Michael.

Director of OMB Russ Vought, who's cutting the budget by probably 40 to 50 percent this year. *[Laughter]* We're going to end up with a balanced budget. And National Cyber Director Sean Cairncross.

And I appreciate all of you being here.

Thanks as well to Chief Technology Officer of the United States Dr. Ethan Klein—Ethan, thank you very much; Director of the National Quantum Coordination Office Dr. Brad Blakestad; and Chief Information Officer of the Federal Government Greg Barbaccia, for joining us today. Thank you very much, fellas. That's great.

We're also honored to be joined by Google President Ruth Porat. That's a big position, I'll tell you. Google. *[Laughter]* Google president—that's as big as being President of the country, I think.

Google President and Chief Investment Officer Ruth Porat. Well, not quite.

The President. That's pretty good. *[Laughter]* There aren't too many.

IBM CEO Arvind Krishna, who's a great man, who's done a really great job. What a job you've done.

IBM Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer Arvind Krishna. Thank you.

The President. I used to have that stock when it was much, much lower. *[Laughter]* I brilliantly sold it when I became President. That was not a good move.

And Inflection CEO Matthew Kinsella, as well as Nobel Prize-winning quantum physicist John Martinis. Great going.

Should you tell them how many years ago it was?

University of California, Santa Barbara, Professor of Physics John M. Martinis. Well, about 40 years ago.

The President. That's pretty good.

Mr. Martinis. Yes.

The President. And you still look good.

Mr. Martinis. Thank you. *[Laughter]*

The President. Great job.

I've been waiting for one of them too. They don't think eight wars is enough, you know? I think—I have to do 12 or 13, I think, even though nobody's ever done one.

Quantum technologies represents the next generation of innovation across computing, sensing, and networking, with enormous significance for our country's economic growth, scientific research, and cyber security. It's really a big deal that we're doing today, and the country is doing really well, as you know.

In 2018, I signed the National Quantum Initiative Act into law, which led to doubling the Federal Government investment in quantum research and development. I think you all know about that. That helped unleash billions of dollars of private investment in America's quantum industrial base, promoting significant scientific and technological progress, like—progress like we've never seen before, actually. We want to keep that positive momentum going in America with the orders that I'm signing today.

And these will really have a—I think, place it a big step forward. We're already the leader by a lot, and we're going to be now the leader by a lot more.

The first Executive order launches a national effort to produce a quantum computer capable of performing important scientific calculations and to develop quantum-enabled sensors and networks in the next 5 years. And we're going to be investing in American quantum leadership like never before to stay ahead of the pack. We're way ahead right now. We'll keep it that way.

The second order I'm signing directs Federal agency to transition to what is called quantum cryptography. Do—anybody know what that is? You're going to hear very soon, so you're going to find it interesting. Cryptography—for their computer systems by 2031 and to lead the way for wider adoption of these extremely strong security standards.

America is celebrating 250 years of ingenuity, innovation, and invention this year. And today's commitments to quantum leadership will help secure that legacy for decades to come.

I just want to say, before we introduce a couple of the people, we're doing very well with respect to the Hormuz Strait. We took in more oil yesterday than we've ever—than has ever gone through the Strait. You probably see that. We have an—we have an oil gusher. The Strait is totally open. You know that.

And we're negotiating. We'll see how that all goes. But we have two things: We have an open Strait, and we have a country that will never have a nuclear weapon—will never, ever have a nuclear weapon.

So now I'd like to invite Michael Kratsios, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, to say a few words followed by National Cyber Director Sean Cairncross and Secretary Wright, who's doing a fantastic job over in Venezuela and every place else he touches.

Venezuela, by the way, has been amazing. We are really having a great relationship with that country, taking out tremendous amounts of oil—far, far more than that particular war cost—many, many times—sending it to Houston, sending it to Louisiana, sending it to lots of places. And Venezuela is also doing well. Venezuela is doing better than it's done in maybe ever. So it's been an amazing—it's been an amazing situation.

Where did you ever hear of getting money back for the war by 42 times over? Right, Pete?

Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth. Yes, sir.

The President. Nobody does that.

And I think Iran, I can say, on a sort of a different scale is, in its own way, working out very well. Maybe it's hard to say just as well, but maybe almost just as well. And we're doing very well in terms of negotiating a fair and reasonable deal.

One of the things that we are doing also—and it came up last night—is money that's being unfrozen is going to be used to buy food, and the food's going to be bought exclusively through the United States from our farmers. And corn, soybeans—all of the things they need are going to be bought from our farmers. So our farmers are very happy. I've had a lot of calls. They were very happy about that.

So now I'd like to ask Michael to say a few words, and we'll follow up by the other two gentlemen—or three gentlemen. And then, if anybody has anything to say—and we'll take some questions at the end.

So Michael, go ahead.

Office of Science and Technology Policy Director Michael J.K. Kratsios. So Mr. President, as you mentioned in your remarks, you were the first President history to prioritize quantum as a scientific priority of the United States Government in your first administration. And since then, there's been a big leap in the investment the private sector has made in this particular domain.

And we're now at the moment where a lot of that research is starting to pay off into commercial applications. And what this Executive order will do is turbocharge that.

First and foremost, it's going to task the Department of Energy to create a scientifically relevant quantum computer, which is going to help pave the way for even larger computers for the private sector.

Secondly, we're going to be focusing on sensors and networking. So agencies like Department of War, along with Department of Energy, are going to be doing a wide variety of sensing and networking work.

So this is a big step forward, and as one of our two top science technology priorities, we're excited to kick things off today.

The President. Good. Thank you very much. Good job, Michael.

Sean, please.

National Cyber Director Sean Cairncross. Yes. Thank you, sir.

You continue to be the most forward-leaning President in innovation in American history.

The President. Is that all? *[Laughter]*

Director Cairncross. That's—it. That's it, sir. *[Laughter]*

[At this point, the President and Director Cairncross shook hands.]

But—no. And while you recognize the tremendous potential quantum has to advance medical research and cryptography and improve the lives of American people, you also recognize the security implications.

As quantum rolls forward, it will challenge public key cryptography, which is what secures everything. It secures our financial transactions, our civilian critical infrastructure, and it secures the digital systems that Americans rely on for their daily life. And these two Executive orders, which pair innovation and security, will address those issues.

As we move forward, innovation and security have to be balanced. You recognize that.

The actions that you take today will make sure that American systems are trusted and secure and safe moving forward. And I just want to thank our tremendous American companies with whom we've been working so closely. I think it's fair to say we have an unprecedented relationship in this.

I want to thank our colleagues in the interagency who have been tremendously—it's such a mission-focused group of people.

And obviously, none of this happens, sir, without your leadership.

The President. Yes.

Director Cairncross. So you're securing our systems for generations to come.

Thank you.

The President. And you've done a great job. All of you have, actually.

Chris Wright, please.

Secretary of Energy Christopher A. Wright. Yes, thank you, Mr. President.

So, a hundred—a hundred twenty—141 years ago, Albert Einstein—121 years ago, Albert Einstein published a paper—

The President. Nobody cares. *[Laughter]*

Secretary Wright. Good point. Good point.

The President. I never go back. I just—and usually, they won't catch you, but—

Go ahead.

Secretary Wright. Published a paper on the photoelectric effect, recognizing the quantum behavior of light—that it came in quanta.

Forty years after that, President Trump's uncle, John Trump, was a pioneer in applying light radiation and the reflections of it to develop radar at the MIT Radiation Lab—critical in D-day, critical in the end in winning World War II.

That's the parallel of quantum innovation.

Forty years after that, John Martinis—down there—pioneered taking quantum effects and building them into a device to capture that behavior. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics just last year for that discovery, that breakthrough.

But 40 years, quantum phenomena are tough to harvest and tough to work with. But here we are, thanks to President Trump's leadership in the first term, with Director Kratsios, to launch a major national effort on quantum.

This is taking it to the next level.

The future of computing is going to be a three-legged stool. It's high-performance computing, basically Moore's Law in semiconductor manufacturing. It's artificial intelligence that everyone's seeing and hearing about that's supercharging it. The third leg of that computing stool is going to be scientifically relevant quantum computing.

This is tricky. We're not there yet. We're close, but with this Executive order and this coordinated effort, we will have scientifically relevant, meaning error-corrected quantum computing during this administration. The impacts of it will be tremendous.

The President. Just, if I might. So, with respect to the Strait—Hormuz Strait. A lot of oil pouring out, right?

Secretary Wright. A lot of oil pouring out. Despite Iran's efforts or pushback, we are flowing oil through the Strait of Hormuz and natural gas at precrisis levels.

We could get to above that. We will get to above that. But things today are going very well thanks to the U.S. military and Pete Hegseth down the line here.

The President. And, 2 days ago, we set a record: most ever taken out of the Strait. It's pent up, but it's a record.

Did you know of my uncle at all?

Mr. Martinis. No. No, I didn't.

The President. You didn't?

Mr. Martinis. No. Sorry.

The President. Oh. [Laughter] Too bad. You missed a good man.

Would you like——

Mr. Martinis. I'm at Berkeley. Berkeley and MIT——

The President. Oh, but MIT is—[inaudible]. They're—[inaudible]. [Laughter]

The President. Howard, do you want to say something?

Secretary of Commerce Howard W. Lutnick. Yes.

The President. Yes.

Secretary Lutnick. So you're—you're accelerating quantum with this EO, pushing—continuing to push America forward.

Now, I have the honor that John Martinis was a member of the Commerce Department——

Mr. Martinis. Yes.

The President. Oh.

Secretary Lutnick. ——and NIST, and he's a Nobel Prize-winning alum, which is, if you—don't think that people in the Commerce Department and in NIST are the best, I mean, here's an example. A Nobel Prize winner was part of our team.

You all know that the Government invested \$2 billion just a couple of weeks ago in quantum to drive it forward. And besides investing in the companies, we've also invested in fabs to build quantum for others so we can manufacture these quantum in America.

Now, you have Ruth Porat from—from Alphabet. They are doing amazing investing in building quantum.

And you have Arvind right next, from IBM. We invested in his fab. He's got a leading fab, so he's going to be building those chips, right? So that's that idea.

And then, lastly, postquantum cryptography, right? Once you have quantum chips, we've got to protect everyone in this Government. Postquantum cryptography—so NIST and the Department of Commerce is going to lead the charge to make sure all of us are protected and defended so we know how to deal with quantum when it comes.

We're going to lead in quantum, and we're going to make sure we stay safe. And these are both the things you're signing today, and that's why you have such an amazing team behind you: because you are leading the charge in quantum for America.

The President. And, Ruth, would you like to say something? Google.

Ms. Porat. Well, thank you. First, thank you so much for convening us for this important meeting and these two Executive orders. We completely agree quantum is a breakthrough critical technology. The U.S. is in the lead. We will stay in the lead.

At Google, we're really proud of our innovations. And thank you, Secretary Lutnick. We've been investing for more than a decade in quantum. And, back in 2019, we were the first company actually to achieve quantum supremacy. Didn't stop there.

About a year and a half ago, we unveiled a new chip, the Willow chip, which is a great example of American innovation manufactured here in the United States. And what the Willow chip does, it is—it enabled us to do a computation in less than 5 minutes that previously, on the best supercomputer, would have taken 10 septillion years——

The President. Wow. [Laughter]

Ms. Porat. ——which is 1 with 25 zeroes.

The President. That's pretty good.

Ms. Porat. So it's a lot. It's a lot. And what's exciting about this is what it means for our children and grandchildren. It's about medical breakthroughs, nuclear fusion——

The President. Yes.

Ms. Porat. ——material science. So we're really excited about the opportunity.

And then, also, around postquantum cryptography and the work that we're doing there——absolutely critical that we also keep America safe, everyone safe. So we have been deploying that across our products and services, and it's a critical opportunity. I think, with these two EOS, it lays the foundation for, one, protecting America, as well as continuing to benefit on the upside.

It's great to be here. Thank you.

The President. Tremendous. Say hello to everybody, please. Will you?

Ms. Porat. I absolutely will.

The President. Arvind, please. IBM.

Mr. Krishna. So first, I'd like to thank the President for both of these EOs. The role of the Government is often underestimated. The role of the Government in pushing innovation and technology forward is what both of these will achieve.

Asking for the investment in quantum computing, asking that the departments all work together will actually accelerate what industry does, because that gives us the confidence to invest even more, and that is what we commit to do to get these systems out and to get what both the Secretaries asked for: to get the systems out during your current term.

So we will——

The President. Yes.

Mr. Krishna. ——go and invest in doing that.

And I'd also like to thank Commerce for the investment they made in accelerating the ability to build fabs so that we can actually make these in America.

The President. Good. Thank you very much.

Would you like to say something, Russell, about——

Office of Management and Budget Director Russell T. Vought. Sure.

The President. ——how well we're doing on the budget and things?

Director Vought. Well, we're making tons of progress. I think, last year, you had the most fiscally consequential year in history—a story that's largely been unwritten—but today this is about——

The President. They don't want to write it.

Director Vought. They won't write it.

The President. They don't want—it's true.

Go ahead.

Director Vought. ——more savings in history——

The President. You might as well say it, because they won't.

Director Vought. ——more savings than ever before in history. Today is about the investments that we're going to prioritize. So we'll save in places, but we're going to do what's necessary to invest in the future and industries of the future. That's what today is about. Quantum is one of those areas in the first term, and now in the second term.

The President. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, everybody.

Any questions, please? Or of people?

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

Please.

Iran/U.S. Sanctions Relief

Q. Mr. President, Treasury lifted its sanctions on Iranian oil today, sir. Treasury—lifted sanctions on Iranian oil today, sir.

The President. Well, I'm going have to find out exactly the status, but if the sanctions go out, money is going to be put into this country. All that money is coming back in the form of purchases of food, which they desperately need. They have 91 million people. They can't feed them. So the money that we lift is going to go to our farmers, largely to our farmers.

Q. Can you ensure that the Iranians won't use profits from oil sales to rebuild their military and just prepare for the next conflict?

The President. Well, they're not supposed to be doing that. So we'll see, but they're supposed to use money to buy food for their people, because right now their people are very hungry, and they're buying it exclusively from us: corn, soybeans. Going to—it should be a lot of money. I hope it's a lot of money.

Iran/Oil Markets and Prices/News Media/National Economy

Q. If the war with Iran could cause a worldwide depression, as you noted, Mr. President, are you willing to risk economic catastrophe and strike Iran again?

The President. Well, not the way I'm doing it.

Q. Not the way you're doing——

The President. It's not going to cause depression.

Q. If—yes, but if they don't abide by the memorandum of understanding.

The President. Well, a nuclear weapon supersedes depression. Depression is real bad. Nuclear weapon will cause depression much more quickly.

The way we're doing it, we have the opposite of a depression. We're doing really well. The numbers are incredible. The oil is at a level that nobody's ever seen before. Oil prices are way down. I think they're very comparable to what they were.

Chris, I don't know, pretty comparable to what they were before we started, right? I——

Secretary Wright. They've returned most of the way back down.

The President. Yes.

Q. So if Iran does not abide by the MOU, are you still willing for strikes——

The President. Well, I didn't say——

Q. ——and does that give them leverage?

The President. ——it would cause a depression. I said it could cause a depression, right? And I said that I don't want to be Herbert Hoover. That's a President I don't want to be, because he—you know, he was in charge during the Great Depression.

And certainly, a lot of bad things could happen. That would be one of the things. I don't think it would, but if it did. But no, if—Iran doesn't live up to their agreement or if they're not behaving, I will—do what I have to do. I'll call—that guy right there.

Q. Does that give them leverage over you, Mr. President?

The President. Say it?

Q. Does that give them leverage—the Iranians leverage over you?

The President. Oh, you're so—"leverage."

You know, their navy is gone. Their air force is gone. Their leaders are all dead. Their whole country is a mess. Their economy is shot. The—you know, the Times, the fake New York Times said, "Oh, it's about the same as it was 4 months ago." No, 4 months ago they had a navy—159 ships, to be exact. It's gone. The whole navy is gone. Their 250 airplanes, all gone. Their every—their anti-aircraft is gone. Their radar is gone.

These guys love radar.

[*The President gestured to participants.*]

Their radar is gone. Everything is gone. Their leaders are gone. Their whole country is gone.

And the Times said, "Oh, they're about the same as they were 4 months ago." The reason the news is doing so badly—or let's put it another way: The reason that I won in a landslide, even though I got 92-percent negative press—all fake press—is because nobody believes the press anymore. And they have to start believing.

You know, when the Times and a couple of others—they just—they're grasping for straws. When they say that Iran is about the same as it was 4 months—4 months ago, they had a powerful navy; they had a powerful air force. You know, most of their missiles are gone, most of their launching pads are gone, most of their manufacturing capacity for drones and missiles is gone—about 87-percent gone. And then I hear, "Oh, they're in such great shape." No, they're gone.

And their first level of leaders: gone. Their second level of leaders: gone. Their third level of leaders—you have to hear the conversations. "Who wants to be President?" "I don't want it." Nobody wants to be President.

And then we have to read that they're doing well. They're doing so badly.

In the meantime, we're setting records. We have the strongest economy we've ever had. We have \$18- to \$19 trillion being poured into our country. We're building factories all over the place. We have more people working today than at any time in the history of our country, at higher salaries.

So when you ask a question like that, it's so stupid.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Here's—hey, here's another beauty. Watch this one.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel

Q. Well——

The President. He's a real beauty. Go ahead.

Q. —earlier today, the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said his forces are not leaving Lebanon. That is a sticking point in his conversations.

The President. Who did he tell that to? You?

Q. He said it publicly in Israel today.

The President. Well, we're going to take a look at it.

Q. Well, what would you do to make sure that he doesn't sabotage the deal?

The President. Well, I'm not going to tell you what I'm going to do, but it gets solved. I'm a problem-solver. I get problems solved real fast, including with Bibi.

Go ahead.

Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio/Vice President James D. "J.D." Vance/Representative Ilhan A. Omar

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you. What's the latest you've heard from the Vice President? Are you happy with his negotiations?

The President. Yes.

Q. And can you share a little bit about what Secretary Rubio will be doing in the Middle East this week?

The President. I think that they're doing a fantastic job. Our Secretary is fantastic. I think he's maybe going to go down as the best ever.

And I thought J.D. Vance this morning was fantastic. I watched his news conference and—from Switzerland. He's a very smart guy. Did a great job.

You know, when I look at the Democrats—I call them the "Dumocrats." They're dumb. The "Dumocrats." When I watched that, where one of them thought it was World War 11—she said, "World War 11." She meant World War II. You know about that, right? This is one of their potential leaders, Ilhan Omar, who married her brother to get into the country, by the way, illegally. [Laughter]

But when I watch A.O.C. have no idea on a simple question, what happened when she was over in Switzerland, which she probably never went there before. But she was—and then I watch somebody like J.D. or Marco, what a—I said, "What a difference." What a difference. What a difference a brain makes.

Q. Mr. President, the candidate that you endorsed in Colombia for the——

Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom

Q. Sir, you've been—sir, you've been quite critical of Prime Minister Starmer, and he's now resigned. Your thoughts? And who would you like to see as the next prime minister of the U.K?

The President. Yes, I—was critical only from the standpoint—because I think he's a lovely man, but I said, "You're doing—you're really messing up energy. You have windmills all over the place." In the meantime, you have the North Sea oil, and they won't let anybody drill. It's one of the great fields in the world, and they—they haven't even found most.

You know that the U.K. buys much of its energy—you know where? Norway. You know where they get their oil? The North Sea. The U.K. has a much better portion of the North Sea. They don't want to do it for environmental purposes. Okay?

And I told him—he's a very nice man. I mean, sort of a friend of mine. I mean, he was not good to us with NATO, Pete, right? He said we can't use the island to land. That was a first. For a couple of weeks. He said, "Well, but, ultimately, I gave it to you." No. That was a bad move. That hurt him badly.

But, I mean, I wish him well, but he's got two problems: energy and immigration and crime. But energy and immigration. And he's—you know, he's really hurt himself very, very badly.

Please, go ahead.

Defense Contractors

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us about your meeting with the defense contractors on Wednesday and what you plan to tell them?

The President. The meeting coming up? Because I've met with them before.

We're building plants all over the country. They are not allowed to take any more stock buybacks.

[*The President addressed Mr. Krishna.*]

Do you do stock buybacks, by any chance? Not too much, right? No, because you want to invest in product. It's just an artificial way of raising a price if you're running a bad company.

So they spent \$51 billion on star—you know, on—on stock buybacks instead of spending them on plants. Now they're spending—they can't do that anymore. Now they are spending a lot of money.

We're building many plants throughout the country. They're dealing with General Motors. They're dealing with Ford. But I know General Motors is all excited about building weapons now. They have some plants, which they're going to switch over, and we're going to build weapons, including the Patriot, including the Tomahawk and lots of other things, and we're in a big—we're really in a big, strong economic push to do the weapons.

And some of the car companies, if they have any excess capacity, they're making a deal to by—build missiles and the Patriot in particular. We have—quite a few of them, but we want to make sure we have always a lot of them.

Q. Mr. President, on Colombia, the candidate—the candidate that you endorsed——

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Please.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Congratulations on the quantum physics EO to all of you.

The President. Thank you.

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

Q. Vice President Vance said that there are mechanisms in place to make sure that there's not escalations with the Strait of Hormuz and with Israel and Lebanon. Can you talk about what those mechanisms are? And are you in direct talks with the Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei?

The President. Well, yes, look, here's the thing: As long as they respect us—I don't want to use the word "fear," because that's an inappropriate word—but as long as they respect us, we're not going to have any trouble. We have total control of the Strait.

Q. So the mechanism is respect?

The President. You know, we have a navy that had a blockade. I think the blockade was more impactful than dropping bombs, if you want to know the truth. It was—like I said, they call it the "steel wall." Nobody got through. Not one ship got through able to go to Iran. They got through if we wanted them to go through.

And we could set that up again in about 15 minutes—I would say, Pete, one phone call would—how long would it take? Maybe half hour? Twenty minutes?

Secretary Hegseth. They're ready to go right now, if you need to. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. Good. It will be—before we finish the meeting.

No, we have—as long as they respect us, we're going to be fine. If they don't respect us, things wouldn't be good. But they have a lot of respect.

Don't forget, we had Presidents that should have done this for 47 years. Nobody did it.

[*Several reporters spoke at once.*]

Obama gave them a road to a nuclear weapon. I gave them a wall against a—they'll—they can never—under this agreement, they'll never even think about building a nuclear weapon.

Colombia Presidential Elections

Q. Mr. President, on Colombia. The candidate that——

The President. Oh, El Tigre.

Q. Yes, El Tigre.

The President. Oh.

Q. Yes, Abelardo de la Espriella.

The President. El Tigre.

Q. We know that you had a phone——

The President. I endorsed him. He was in 10th place. I endorsed him, and he won the election.

Q. Yes.

The President. A surprise.

Q. We know that you had—you had a phone——

The President. No different than this country, right? [*Laughter*]

Q. You had a phone conversation with Abelardo de la Espriella——

The President. I did. I had a great call.

Q. ——in the last hours. What can you tell us about that phone conversation? And what do you see——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——what do you anticipate in terms——

The President. You're from Colombia, I assume?

Q. Yes, sir, I'm from Colombia.

The President. So he called——

Q. Cartagena, a great city.

The President. He called me last night, and he thanked me for the endorsement. He won. He won the election. It wasn't—he wasn't anticipated to win, but he won and he won handily.

It's just an honor. He was just a—a good man. I'd watch him, a little bit, speak, and he always spake—you know, when people like me, I like them. It's very simple. [*Laughter*] It's a very simple formula. And I liked him.

He said really nice things about me and the job we've done in the United States and very, very powerful. And he won an election in Colombia that—I don't know, some people were surprised because he was a little bit further down the pack, but he won easily last night.

He won by—called me at 8:30 in the evening just to thank me very much. And I said, "You ran a great campaign." He's El Tigre, right? [*Laughter*]

Q. Yes. And what do you anticipate for the relation with Colombia? Colombia is such an important——

The President. Good. Much better. It'll be better. He's going to be a great President.

Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool/District of Columbia Beautification Efforts

Q. Mr. President, are the contractors who did the initial work for the Reflecting Pool, are they to blame for the current condition, or is it the vandals——

The President. No, no. We have vandalism.

Q. ——that you mentioned in Truth Social?

The President. No, vandals. It was all—you know, we have a hundred and—we have a, I think, 290-, 300-foot slit right through it, probably a box cutter or a knife of some kind. We had people lifting up the basic—some of the—it's not a lot of damage, but it's—we'll probably have to let the water out and refix it. They went in there with a knife.

I was just told by the—people over at Parks, they have—five people are arrested and five people are under investigation right now, and it's a sad thing.

In addition to that, they—you know, we put brandnew beautiful grass all around. They put these massive letters on the grass. You probably know about that, right? And they said, "86 47." They probably got that from the dirty cop, Comey.

You know he's a dirty cop, don't you? Dirty cop. He's a crooked guy.

They destroyed the grass, so that's a big thing. But we're going to get it back very soon.

Q. National Guard and police have been all over the Mall. How would these vandals have gotten so close to do something like that?

Q. Do you have any proof of the slit?

The President. It's easy. I mean, we didn't have—we didn't have a lot of them then. Who would think that somebody would go into a pool and take a knife and start cutting it?

Suspected Vandalism of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool/District of Columbia Beautification and Law Enforcement Improvements

Q. But do you have proof of that, that they used a knife?

The President. Yes, yes, they have proof.

Q. Do you have photos or video?

The President. Well, let's put it this way: When you have a 350—I think it's 350, not 250—a 350-foot slit from one end to the other, you think that's proof? You think that's proof?

Q. But they—reporters have been down there today looking for that slit that you mentioned, and there's no evidence of it.

The President. Well, it's—all you'd have to do is see the Parks Department. They'll show it to you. See the Secretary. But I saw it. They cut it. They cut it very violently. The same thing with the floor: They cut it. And then they lifted it, they pulled it, and that's what it is.

And you know, we've done over 50 monuments.

Number one, we start with this is now a safe city. It's the safest—as safe a city as you're going to get in the country. And when I came here, it was a very dangerous city.

And, number two, what we did is the beautification with the parks and the grass and everything—removal of all the tents. And this is like a different place.

One of the things we did is over 50 fountains and statues, most of which were in horrible shape. All of them were bad, but some were just absolutely horrible. Graffiti—you couldn't even see the stone. They've all been fixed.

We also fixed the Reflecting Pool. In fact, if you go over there right now, it looks very good. It's up—they put, somebody said, fertilizer in the water. If you put fertilizer in the water, you get algae. But somebody said they might have put fertilizer. They did something to create the algae.

But that doesn't matter because that's been purified. It's dead, laying at the bottom. They're taking it out. They vacuum it out. They vacuum it very carefully out, and it will be back to health pretty soon.

We're going to have to let the water out to fix the one little—there's two little areas—very little areas where they were cut, and we'll fix that. But it's not leaking or anything. It's got a base underneath.

Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool/Law Enforcement Improvement Efforts in U.S. Cities

Q. Part of what's—part of what's curious about this situation is we stood here with you in April when you first revealed the plans.

The President. I said what?

Q. You—in April, you showed us pictures——

The President. Yes.

Q. —of what you were going to do at the pool.

The President. Yes.

Q. And you said you had a guy who was going to do it in a week for about a million dollars.

The President. Well, it's—[inaudible]——

Q. It's been 2 months and \$16.5 million.

The President. Yes, okay. Ready? Barack Hussein Obama, have you ever heard of him?

Q. Yes.

The President. He spent 2 years and over \$100 million on trying to fix it. You know what happened to it? Never even opened.

Q. Right.

The President. He took the water from the river. You know about that, right? It turned out to be putrid, and it destroyed the whole thing. Spent over \$100 million.

Him and Biden together spent \$147 million. You know what happened? Never opened.

You don't mention that, right?

Q. But to Philip's [Philip Wegmann, Wall Street Journal] question——

The President. I spent—we spent about ten—many of the—much of the money we spent are park workers. They're there whether they do this or not, as you know. They work in the park, and they're very good workers. They did a great job.

So they were going to spend \$3- to \$400 million—you know that—and it was going to take four years. I spent——

Q. And you went over a million and——

The President. I spent about 6, 7 weeks, and I spent probably, in terms of outside—probably \$10 million. Around \$10 million. They say 16, but a lot of that is workers that work for the same thing.

So they were going to spend \$400 million. I spent 10. They were going to spend 4 years. I spent 2 months, maybe. Less. And I have a better product.

Now, I can't help it if somebody goes in with a knife and starts hacking it up.

And we also have pictures of it. You know, we have pictures.

Q. Can you release the photos? Because we've been asking for that.

The President. Yes, at the right time, you'll see it. You'll see it in court. You'll see it in court.

But all you have to do is call the Parks Department. Call the Department of Interior. And I don't know if their lawyers will allow you to speak to them because, you know, you write fake—you write fake news. But call the Interior Department.

And I understand they've arrested five people, and they have another five people that are under investigation.

Here's the bottom line: We made so much progress in this city, people don't even recognize it.

By the way, Memphis, Tennessee: Crime is down 78 percent in a matter of months. It was a hellhole.

New Orleans: Crime is down 79 percent. And they had Mardi Gras—it was the safest Mardi Gras they've had in 50 years. The Governor called me. Governor Landry called me. Safest Mardi Gras they've had in—and by the way, Chicago, which is a shooting field right now, if the Governor would call me—Governor Pritzker would call me, I would solve the Chicago problem. In 3, 4 months, you'd have virtually a crime-free city. We'll remove all of the bad ones. You have criminals—you have career criminals that came in through the border because of Sleepy Joe Biden.

You ever hear of Sleepy Joe Biden? Do you ever hear of him? He let people come into this country, and we can never forget that that happened. Guys like you should never forget that that happened.

They were murderers, drug dealers, mental patients. They took them out of prisons. They took them out of mental institutions. You should never forget that that happened.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, you're meeting——

The President. Let's leave on a nicer note. *[Laughter]*

Europe/U.S. Troop Deployments/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. You're meeting with NATO's Mark Rutte on Wednesday.

The President. Good.

Q. You've had Secretary Hegseth review U.S. presence in NATO countries.

The President. I did. Yes.

Q. Talk to us about that conversation. Are you planning on drawing down U.S. troops?

The President. Well, look, NATO—it's NATO, basically—the question. So we have been a great member of NATO. The—in many ways, certainly the predominant member. We paid trillions of dollars over the years—not billions—trillions over the years to protect Europe. When we wanted to know—I didn't need—we didn't need any help at all. I was more curious than anything else. So I said to Pete, "Let's see if they'd actually come." So we asked them to come, and they weren't there for us. So we spent—it's stupid that they weren't.

By the way, Starmer wasn't there. And you know what? The people of the U.K. did not like it that he wasn't there. Starmer said no. Starmer said worse than no. He said, "We'll be there as soon as you win." I said, "We don't need you as soon as we win."

Before I went in, we called him. He said: "Oh, wow. We'll be there"—this was not Winston Churchill we're dealing with. That, I can tell you. *[Laughter]* But Starmer said, "We'll be there"—right, Pete?—as soon as we win. As soon as we win, they're going to come and help us. Okay?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But you know what? Italy was very bad. Italy was very bad. And other countries—Germany was very bad.

So we spent all of this money, probably 600—I think we spent \$600 million a year, right? I would say that. I think the real number—think of that. The numbers that we spend are so crazy—on NATO. And they weren't there for us.

So I say to Pete and I say to everybody else, if we're spending all of this money, hundreds—just hundreds of millions of dollars to protect them from Russia, mostly—okay, so we're spending hundreds of millions of dollars a year. You know, the case could be made that we spent all of the money over the years before me. I cut it back.

But listen, we spend all of this money, and then when we want to maybe have help on a—on small stuff—this is small time; this is not the big one; this is small potatoes—they say, "No, we'd rather not help."

A stupid thing to say, because we can say that to them if we want. And we might. I don't know.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities

Q. Mr. President, it's the 1-year anniversary of—it's the 1-year anniversary of Operation Midnight Hammer. If you could go back in time, is there anything you would do differently?

The President. No.

Q. Nothing at all?

The President. It was the most successful attack that anyone has ever seen with a bomber. That totally wiped out their nuclear potential. If we didn't do that, you'd have no Israel right now. Israel would not exist, and most of the Middle East would not exist.

They were 2 weeks away from having a nuclear weapon. If we wouldn't have done that, Pete, they would've had a nuclear weapon.

You want to say something about that?

Secretary Hegseth. Yes, sir. I didn't—I wasn't aware it was 1 year. But you don't have the situation we have now, a position of strength where Iran is going to give up their nuclear program, without Midnight Hammer, which no other country on planet Earth could remotely, conceivably pull off that from start to finish, 37 hours back and forth. Iran never saw it, and every munition—precision munition that only we make hit exactly where we wanted it to, because—

The President. And they knew we were coming, and they could do nothing about it.

Secretary Hegseth. And they could do nothing about it with their air defenses, which are even further now degraded.

And that's what everyone misses in the press, and the president is right to call it fake news because the overwhelming military victory that has been had over Iran is what has set the conditions for them to be at the table with our negotiators.

And we will ensure, whether it's through a deal or through the War Department, that they never get a nuclear weapon because of this President right here.

The President. Okay. Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

White House aide. Thank you, press.

The President. Thank you very much.

White House aide. Thank you, guys. Thank you, guys.

The President. Thank you.

White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf. Sir, do you want to—do you want to sign these orders?

[*The President signed an Executive order titled, "Ushering in the Next Frontier of Quantum Innovation."*]

The President. See, Biden can't do that. [*Laughter*] See that, Arvind? Nice signature. Biden can't do that.

Oh, look, I'm on camera. [*Laughter*] I didn't know. Biden can't do that. He used an autopen. I say, "No, thanks."

Staff Secretary Scharf. It's postquantum cryptography, sir.

The President. Okay.

[*The President signed an Executive order, "Securing the Nation Against Advanced Cryptographic Attacks."*]

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez; President-elect Abelardo Gabriel "El Tigre" de la Espriella Otero of Colombia; Cameron M. Thiers, Sophie Dennison-Gibby, and Justin T. Carreno, who were arrested and charged for allegedly removing pieces of the Reflecting Pool, and former Olympic canoeist David C. Hearn, who was charged with damaging the Reflecting Pool; former Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James B. Comey; and Secretary of the Interior Douglas J. Burgum. A reporter referred to Secretary General Mark Rutte of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

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

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Barbaccia, Greg; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Blakestad, Brad; Burgum, Douglas J.; Cairncross, Sean; Carreno, Justin T.; Comey, James B.; de la Espriella Otero, Abelardo Gabriel "El Tigre"; Dennison-Gibby, Sophie; Hearn, David C.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Kinsella, Matthew; Klein, Ethan; Kratsios, Michael J.K.; Krishna, Arvind; Landry, Jeffrey M.; Lutnick, Howard W.; Martinis, John M.; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria; Omar, Ilhan; Porat, Ruth; Pritzker, Jay R. "J.B."; Rubio, Marco A.; Scharf, William O.; Starmer, Keir; Thiers, Cameron M.; Vance, James D. J.D.; Vought, Russell T.; Wright, Christopher A.

Subjects: Colombia, President-elect; Cybersecurity, strengthening efforts; District of Columbia, beautification efforts; Economic improvement; Illinois, Governor; Iran, cease-fire agreement with U.S.; 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; Iran, U.S. sanctions; Israel, Prime Minister; Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, renovation work; Louisiana, Governor; Louisiana, law enforcement improvement efforts in New Orleans; Management and Budget, Office of; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Munitions and military supplies, supply chain improvements; National Cyber Director; National Quantum Coordination Office; News media, fairness and accuracy; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Office of Science and Technology Policy; Quantum technologies, advancement efforts; Research and development; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of Energy; Secretary of State; Secretary of the Interior; Secretary of War; Tennessee, law enforcement improvement

efforts in Memphis; U.S. Chief Information Officer; U.S. Chief Technology Officer; United Kingdom, Prime Minister; Venezuela, oil supply and refining; Vice President; White House Staff Secretary.

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