

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

**Remarks on Signing Proclamations Modifying National Monument Designations
and an Exchange With Reporters**

July 13, 2026

The President. Hello, everybody. We have the Governor of Utah, and we have a lot of other very high representatives from Utah—at least mostly from Utah.

And we're doing something very dramatic and very important for the people of Utah and the people of our country because many people use it. We're terminating certain monuments—they call it monuments—not the ones we have outside, but these are large, thousands of acres. It's a total of almost 3 million acres, and we're going to be discussing it.

But—in fact, I think we'll start discussing it right now before I sign. After that, we're going to be signing two documents that are close to a million and a half acres each.

And, Governor, do you want to say a few words about what we're doing and explain it to the press?

Governor Spencer J. Cox of Utah. Yes. Well, thank you, Mr. President. This is a big day for Utah. The President did something very similar several years ago during his first term. Of course, the monuments were re-expanded under the past administration. And this matters to Utah. We believe that under the Antiquities Act, it's very clear that these monument designations are supposed to be the smallest area possible to protect the antiquities. And these multimillion-acre monuments that are bigger than the State of Delaware certainly do not fit that designation.

Now, we care—we definitely care about protecting these antiquities and will continue to do so. The problem is, with these giant monument designations, there are no resources that come with those.

We have nine monuments in Utah. Seven of them are around 700 acres to 7,000 acres. That's what this was meant to be—not millions of acres, as what happened with Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bears Ears.

And so we're grateful that the President has made a determination that we need to rightsize these monuments. Again, this does not remove the other protections that already exist in those areas; just making the monuments more manageable so that we have the resources necessary to continue to protect these antiquities.

I know we have the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Interior here with us.

Kate, is there anything you'd like to add to that?

Deputy Secretary of the Interior Kate Macgregor. I'll just say the Antiquities Act is 120 years old, but the first monument that was created was only 1,200 acres. So, if you think about it, since then, President Clinton, President Obama, and President Biden have increased the acreage in the State of Utah and locked those acres up—over 3 million acres. So today's—

The President. For nobody to use, right?

Deputy Secretary MacGregor. Nobody to use.

The President. You can't do anything. You can't go hunting. You can't go fishing. You can't do anything. You can virtually not even walk on it.

Deputy Secretary MacGregor. That's exactly right, sir.

The President. Right.

Deputy Secretary MacGregor. So you are remedying that today.

The President. I remember. No, I do remember. I have a great memory.

Gov. Cox. And, Mr. President, I know Senator Lee has been——

The President. And this is actually better than the first time, what we're doing. *[Laughter]*

Gov. Cox. It is better. Yes.

Senator Lee is been very involved, I know, and conversing with you.

The President. Good. That's true.

Mike, go ahead.

Senator Michael S. Lee. "Smallest area compatible" with the objects to be protected. That's always been the standard under the Antiquities Act. President Biden, President Clinton, and President Obama overlooked that standard. President Trump is fixing it today.

The President. You had—thanks, Mike.

You had something to say, I thought, that was very important.

Representative Blake D. Moore. I'll defer to Celeste.

The President. Please.

Representative Celeste Maloy. Well, I think it's worth noting for the press in the room that both of these monuments were created over the unanimous opposition of Utah's Federal delegation, our Governors——

Senator John R. Curtis. County commissioners.

Rep. Maloy. ——the county commissioners, the locals who are worried about losing multiple uses on these Federal lands.

And we're standing here with the Governor, the Speaker of the Utah House, the entire Utah Federal delegation, supporting a President listening to the people of Utah and saying: "We know you value this land. You want it used for multiple use and not locked up." And so this is a very different process than how the monuments were created.

The President. Well, they took the land away from the people, quite honest. It was ridiculous. And I remember Orrin Hatch before he passed away. He was a great guy. He was a friend of mine. And he felt so strongly about this. And we signed, and then they terminated it after they got in office, which was crazy. And we're putting it back, but we're actually giving more than we did the first time back to the people of Utah.

Please, go ahead.

Rep. Moore. Couldn't have said it better than Representative Maloy.

Sen. Curtis. May I point something out?

The President. Yes, please.

Sen. Curtis. I think people don't understand: Utah is over two-thirds owned by the Federal Government. These counties where these monuments are at are over 90 percent Federal land. When people make decisions about this 2,000 miles away, you can see how that steps on the local people who only control about 5 or 10 percent of the land with local government.

So not only do you have all these dynamics; you have an economy you can't—you can't pave roads, you can't build schools, you can't pay fire people, police department because of this dynamic of 95 percent Federal lands.

The other part of that is Utahns will tell you they love these lands. They manage them better than people 2,000 miles away.

The President. It's true.

Sen. Curtis. So if this is about good management, it really should be done in Utah by people who have demonstrated over decades and decades and decades and generations that they're good managers of this land.

The President. Great job. Well said.

Anybody? Huh? You're leaving. I can't believe it.

Representative C. Burgess Owens. I'm very, very excited.

The President. I can't believe it. You're excited? Where are you going from here?

Rep. Owens. Can—well, can I say this, first of all. We sat down with the previous administration and said: "Why don't we just work this out so we don't have to keep going back and forth. Just work with us."

The President. Right. Right.

Rep. Owens. And we promised if it didn't, that we—once we have the power, we're going to make sure the people's voices are heard.

So thank you for helping us keep our promise.

The President. Wow.

Rep. Owens. And, unfortunately, the last administration did not understand that this would happen one day. So thank you so much.

The President. Great honor.

Let's sign. This is very nice. I'm very happy about this, and better than the first time.

[*At this point, the President signed the proclamation titled, "Modifying the Bears Ears National Monument."*]

Okay. Here's number one.

Okay. Number two. Here you go, Governor.

Gov. Cox. Thank you.

The President. Almost 3 million acres going to be well taken care of now.

[*The President signed the proclamation titled, "Modifying the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument."*]

Okay. A pen, who should I give this to, huh? Maybe—the Governor's right beside me.
[*Laughter*] And, Mike, how about taking one, right?

Sen. Lee. Thank you.

The President. So we've done something that was, I think, very desperately needed. It was very unfair to the people of Utah. And now fairness has been brought back, it's going to be better taken care of, and they'll be able to use it a little bit. So there's something very nice about that.

Okay. Here you go.

Representative Mike Kennedy. Thank you, Mr. President.

Gov. Cox. Thank you, Mr. President.

Sen. Lee. Thank you.

The President. Okay. Thank you very much.

Do you have any questions about this, first of all, most importantly? Anybody want to talk about this?

Q. I've got one on Iran.

The President. Yes, Jeff [Jeff Mason, Bloomberg News], go ahead.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. I've got one on Iran too, but I'll start with this. Just, you said that 70 percent of the land was Federal. Was there any other way to turn this around? How is it that—I guess, my question is: How did it get there, if it's a State?

The President. Go ahead. Do you want to discuss that, please?

Sen. Lee. The land ownership is what it is, but under the Antiquities Act, 120 years ago, Congress made the decision to give Presidents the power to designate, by executive proclamation, certain land as monument. It was supposed to be the smallest area compatible with the objects to be protected in connection with that.

Now, initially, as the Deputy Secretary of the Interior explained a minute ago, that meant a few hundred, maybe a thousand or two acres at the most. These are 3 million acres. As I explained to President Biden, that's two Delawares.

It's been abused. And so it was done by executive action. President Trump is rightsizing it to bring it in compliance with what the law says.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. And, Mr. President, just on Iran, you have said now to Congress that we are back at war. How long do you expect this to take? And what's the legal basis?

The President. Take what? Take what?

Q. The war.

The President. Well, I think it's going very fast. We've demolished their military. We're hitting them very hard. We had a deal yesterday or the day before yesterday. It was all done, and then they broke up that deal immediately because they found out there was something in the deal they didn't like. And they're wired differently, and we're not going to put up with it.

We are just going forward. We're attacking them tonight, and we're taking out all of their capability for anything having to do with the Strait—with the Hormuz Strait. And I think, in the end, we will end up just controlling the whole thing.

Q. And what legal——

The President. And what they're doing is being very foolish, very stupid. And they've treated people horribly. They've killed 52,000 protesters so far, that we can determine. It might be more than that. But 52,000 protesters have been killed, and it's a really terrible situation.

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

But we'll have it under control very quickly.

Yes.

Q. You mentioned that you're going to——

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Please.

Q. Just one quick follow-up. You mentioned——

Q. On your Presidency——

The President. Wait a minute. Wait. Please.

Q. Just hold on 1 second.

The President. Yes, go ahead. Jeff, be nice.

Q. I'm sorry, I was going to ask a follow-up.

The President. Be nice, Jeff.

Go ahead, please.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On your——

The President. Have to teach him to be nice.

National Economy/U.S. Military Readiness/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On your Presidency. So a lot of us here actually witnessed a miracle 2 years ago today as we were on the ground covering your rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

The President. Right.

Q. You said a lot of times that you believe that God has saved your life. Has there been a moment throughout your Presidency so far where you thought this is why God kept you here?

The President. Well, we're doing a lot. You know, we have a country that—I use the expression "Make America Great Again," and we've done far more than anyone thought possible, including maybe even me. We've done things that are unreal.

And \$19.2 trillion—the money being invested in our country is more than any country has ever had by many times. We have trillions of dollars coming in because of the tariffs and the proper use of tariffs, because all of the things. I think because of the election. November 5 was a very important day.

When you look at the military, we have the strongest military in the world. We rebuilt it largely during my first term. And we have recruitment now. We're setting records in recruitment. We had—if you go back to the campaign when I used to talk about it, the last administration, they couldn't recruit soldiers. We needed soldiers in every single branch of our military, and that included police and firemen.

Nobody wanted to do anything having to do with the uniform in this country because they weren't proud of the country, and now the people are very, very proud to be an American. Our country is doing phenomenally well. We're respected all over the world.

If I go—no matter where I go—we just got back from NATO, and I think you saw the response. It was, like, a very beautiful thing, actually. It was a total—total response—totally positive response.

No matter where we go, we're respected again. Maybe respected more than ever before.

So I appreciate the question, but that's pretty much it.

Cuba

Q. Mr. President, thank you. Cameron Arcand with Townhall. I was curious about—there are reports about Iranian drones in Cuba. There are concerns about that. Where does the relationship of the U.S. stand there? Is military intervention still on the table there?

The President. Well, if they do have that—and they might very well have that—we'll take care of it. Marco is just in the other room. And if they do have that, we'll take care of it in short order. We're not going to have a problem. We're not going to allow that to happen.

So it could be that they're storing some. We're looking into it now. It could be so, and it maybe isn't. But we'll figure it out fast.

The President's Address to the Nation on Election Reform/Freedom 250 Grand Prix

Q. And what are you expected to speak about on Thursday evening?

The President. I'm going to speak on Thursday. We were thinking one of the nights, but this has been such a busy news day today with all that's happening. A lot of very positive things have happened, including the Indy.

We're going to have an Indy race, as you know, in 41 days—and that's going to be incredible—around the Capitol, around—down Pennsylvania Avenue. It's going to be something. They have 250,000 tickets ordered. It will be like UFC, which set every record in the book for that business, which is the business of fighting. So we have the Indy cars coming, and it's going to be great.

And I just—while we're talking, I have to pay—on behalf of Mike and myself and I think everybody standing behind me, very strongly, I want to pay my respects to Lindsey, who was our friend. He was a friend of all of us. He was a great guy. He was a great politician, actually. And it's hard to believe he's gone.

Spoke to me just before he passed away just to say hello. He got back. He felt fine. He was a little tired. And then this whole thing happened. And it's—boy, it's tough.

So the flags are at half-mast until Saturday evening, which is an extended period of time, you know, generally speaking, but I think he deserves it.

And he is a—he's a fantastic person. He was just—he was a fantastic man. He was actually a great politician. He got along with almost everybody. And when he didn't get along, they knew it. He was tough, but he was a good man.

He was very much in favor of the SAVE America Act. He called me about that. We were talking about that and some other things.

But he just felt tired, and—but he felt fine. And then this horrible thing happened just a short time afterwards, so it was terrible.

I just want to pay our respects.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Go ahead.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned that Iran has agreed to a deal and then walked away from it.

The President. Right.

Q. Have you reached the conclusion that a negotiated settlement won't be able to happen?

The President. No, I never reached that conclusion.

But we're hitting them very heavy tonight, as you know. We're hitting them. We have tremendous amounts of ammunition. We have numbers that we haven't had in years, and we're hitting them very hard. And it will continue, and we'll see what happens.

But we're knocking out all of their offensive capability, and we're controlling the Straits. We're putting the blockade back, and it's a blockade not for anybody but Iran. In other words, anybody doing business with Iran can't go through. Everyone else will be able to go through. So, it's a blockade. It's a very strong blockade.

The blockade was probably more effective even than hitting them. But I think the combination is the thing that really does it.

Iran/U.S. Diplomatic Engagement/Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. But you think a deal is still possible? You think they'll return to the negotiating table?

The President. Yes, I think a deal is possible. Sure. I do.

Q. But, Mr. President, you noted the United States is bombing Iran again. I mean, the—you've been bombing Iran for months now. Is this just the new normal for the American people?

The President. No. Well, you know, we were in Vietnam for 19 years. We're here for 4 months. So I think we've done a lot.

We've knocked out their navy in a period of 1 month. We knocked out their air force. Their air force is nonexistent. We knocked out most of their missiles, most of their drones. We knocked out their drone manufacturing capability about 92 percent. Their missile capability for manufacturing, we knocked out 89 percent. And they have a little capability, but they don't have any capability for us. This is almost a military skirmish.

Now, with all of that being said, you have to get people that want to make something. We had a deal with them 2 days ago, and then they said: "Oh, we can't make that deal. We have to negotiate it further." And this is what they've done for 47 years. The difference is, nobody negotiated like I do.

And this should have been done by Bush and Obama and Biden and people before them, frankly. It's 47 years they've been ripping off everybody and really hurting and killing thousands of people.

So they killed 52,000 protesters, but they killed many, many people with Soleimani, who I killed in the first term. Soleimani killed many people—many, many people. And not only killed. When you see a young former soldier walking around with no legs, no arms, a face that's been horribly, horribly hurt, that was done by Iran. That was done by Soleimani, who was a person that was very evil. He was an evil genius. He was looking to take out a lot of our military installations in Iraq and Iran, and I got him before he got us. So we have to do what we're doing.

And the Strait is open. It will be open. We've cut down their capability very substantially, but they—you know, they're going to fight for a while.

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Who's going to reimburse the U.S.?

The President. Our military has done a fantastic job.

And you know, the bottom line, though—and I say it to everybody, and I say it as much as they want to listen: Iran will not have a nuclear weapon. If we didn't bomb them with the B-2 bombers, that plane right there——

[The President pointed to an aircraft model.]

If we didn't bomb them, they would have had a nuclear weapon long ago.

One month—within 1 month from the day we bombed them, they would have had—if we didn't do it, they would have had a nuclear weapon. If they had a nuclear weapon, Israel would no longer be with us, and the Middle East probably would no longer be with us, because you saw they sent missiles to five different countries that never even knew they were involved because they're stone-cold crazy. They are crazy.

Q. But you said the U.S. will get reimbursed. Who's going to——

The President. And we're not going to put it up.

Q. Who's going to reimburse the U.S.?

The President. Yes, I want to be reimbursed because we're protecting a very rich portion of the world. We're spending money. And so what we've done is we are going to be reimbursed for protection.

Q. By who?

The President. We're protecting—by the countries that we're helping.

For instance, you look at the five countries. You have Saudi Arabia. You have U.A.E. You have Qatar—or Qatar, as I always say. You have Qatar, Bahrain. And by the way, you have others. You have Kuwait and you have others. And they will do very well, but we think it's appropriate that we're—we don't need them.

You know, we have more oil than any other country in the world. When you add Venezuela, which has been amazing—when you—which has tremendous amounts of oil that we control. When you add Venezuela and everything else, we have more than 50 percent of the world's supply.

We don't need it, but we need it from the standpoint of protecting allies, et cetera, et cetera—including Israel, including Saudi Arabia, including Qatar, including U.A.E. We're protecting all of them, and we've done a very effective job.

So, 4 months ago, these people had military that was very strong—by far the strongest probably in the Middle East. They were called the bully of the Middle East.

Now they don't have a navy. They have 159 ships underwater. They had a total of 159 ships. Now every one of them is underwater. They had 230 airplanes—attack planes. They're all gone. They're all—they're gone. They had tremendous radar. It's all gone. They had tremendous anti-aircraft. It's all gone.

Sadly, their leadership is all gone. They had—their first-tier leaders are all dead. Their second-tier leaders are all dead. Their third-tier leaders, who we're dealing with, more or less, some of them are already gone.

And then you read fake news, like your network, CNN, which is fake news—you read them—you have them say, "Well, actually, aren't they doing quite well?"

Let me just tell you: They have now inflation of over 300 percent. Four months ago, they had inflation of 5 percent. Now they're at over 300—could be 350 percent.

They made a deal. They broke it—probably 10 times. And they killed a lot of people. They killed our people. But the protesters—what they've done to the protesters. Fifty-two thousand—have you ever seen any of the burial lots where they're doing—where they're burying the protesters? They killed 52,000 protesters. And, on my watch, they can't do any of that.

So we have them in a position that they don't have any military. There's not a thing they can do about it. All they have is fake news, because they have—the fake news would rather see us lose the war than win the war, which is really treasonous.

Q. But you argued Iran should have ballistic missiles.

The President. Which is really treasonous, in a certain way.

So we're doing another very major attack tonight. They want to make a deal. They came back. We made a deal 2 days ago, and they want to make a deal. They've been negotiating for 47 years, but nobody has ever hit them militarily. We're hitting them very hard.

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

Russia/U.S. Sanctions

Q. Are you going to sign the sanctions bill? The Russia sanctions bill.

White House aide. Thank you, press.

Q. The Russia sanctions bill that Lindsey Graham wanted passed.

The President. Yes, we're talking about it.

Q. You'll sign that?

The President. We're talking about it. We'll decide very soon on that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Marco A. Rubio; and former Sen. Lindsey O. Graham, who died at his Washington, DC, residence on July 11. He also referred to S. 1383. Rep. Maloy referred to Speaker Mike Schultz of the Utah House of Representatives. A reporter referred to H.R. 5334.

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