

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026

Remarks at a Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Reception in New York City

July 17, 2026

FIFA President Giovanni V. Infantino. Well, thank you. Thank you very much.

Dear Mr. President, dear friends, colleagues, ladies, gentlemen, Presidents from all over the world—dear President, we have the world united here. Today the Presidents of all the countries of the world—of course, of football or soccer in the world, but we know that this is the most important thing in the world, so the most important people in the world are here today.

The legends of our game are here, those who made our heart beat, who made the hearts of billions of people in the world beat.

And of course, the FIFA Council as well.

We are all here united tonight, President, to celebrate this incredible FIFA World Cup. When we met the first time, Mr. President, in 2018, in the summer after the award of the decision, I promised you we would make a great World Cup. And by all means, this World Cup has exceeded all expectations.

Full stadiums, 7 million people in the stadium; tens of millions in the cities in America, in Canada, in Mexico; billions in front of their TV. Everyone enjoying the game with happiness, with joy, with peace. And the American dream, Mr. President, came to reality.

We united the world—[*applause*]. We united the world in America. When I told you we will do a great World Cup, you told me America will welcome the world, and you did welcome the world.

Everyone that came here enjoyed it. Everyone that stayed home enjoyed it, as well, by watching the incredible images of these beautiful host cities, of the fans from all over the world coming together and enjoying in peace, Mr. President, in happiness, and in joy, because I don't know if you know, but the official definition of FIFA is, we are—FIFA is the official happiness provider to humanity since 120 years. [*Laughter*] So we are providing joy and happiness.

The President. Unless your team loses. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Infantino. Unless the team loses, of course.

The President. That's not so happy. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Infantino. And all this, of course, would not have been possible—and I say this because it is the truth; you don't need people to compliment you, Mr. President—but this World Cup would not have been such an incredible success without you.

Please.

Your administration, every single person in the White House, in the administration, in the cities, in the States, everywhere, contributed to create this safe and secure and joyful environment to live something that the world has never seen.

This has not just been and it's not just the greatest World Cup of all times. It is the greatest human, social, and cultural event that mankind has ever witnessed and seen. And we are all part of it.

And for this, I thank you very much.

Mr. President, thanks for having us here. There is one more game to go: the great—well, two more games: the bronze medal tomorrow and—between England and France, of course; and the great final between Argentina and Spain.

One country will be the world champion, but the world has already won. America has won. FIFA has won. And uniting the world in such a way as we did this summer, giving unforgettable experiences and memories to millions, to billions of people all over the world, is something that we will take with us and cherish forever.

Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Gianni.

Mr. Infantino. Thank you.

The President. So I want to thank Gianni, this guy. He came to me with this crazy idea. I said, "Are you crazy? We're not a soccer country." And turned out we were a soccer country, and I think it's going to remain.

But what he's done and what he thought of with a lot of your friends that I met today—they were very much involved in the decision.

But I want to thank our great FIFA president, Gianni Infantino—there's nobody like him, actually, very few—and the entire team at FIFA for their incredible work. I've met so many of them. I see why you were so successful.

Because of the commitment and devotion of the people in this room—this beautiful room where the sound is very good, because you're going to hear a great opera singer in a couple of minutes. That's why I say—you know, Pavarotti was here. He sang—years ago, he was here, and he sang right in that corner. And he said to me something I never forgot, because it's luck—sound is luck. Like talent, you're born with it. Sound is a little luck. He said, "This is the greatest space," and he came and recorded either an album or a song.

And we're going to hear somebody—you're going to hear somebody in a couple of minutes that's really good.

But I did say to him, "Christopher, are you as good as"—he's an Italian man also. I don't know, it seems that being Italian is a big advantage in that business, right? [*Laughter*] If his name was Christopher Smith, it wouldn't work out as well.

But I said, "Christopher, are you as good as Pavarotti?" "No, no, no. He was the maestro. He was the greatest of all time. There was nobody like"—when you hear him, you'll understand. He's just as good.

Now, I would have said, "No, no, I'm better than Pavarotti," if I were him. [*Laughter*] And therefore, I'm doing this instead of that.

But you're going to hear somebody who's fantastic, really an acknowledged genius.

But this has been the most successful sporting event maybe in the history of the world. It's been amazing. So I want to congratulate everybody in this room because you're very much into football. I'll say the word "football." It gets a little confusing here because we have the great Bob Kraft. He's won six Super Bowls? Six Super Bowls. That's not—stand up, Bob. Will you, please?

And he also owns a soccer team, which is good, but hasn't been quite as good as the football. Do you agree? Not quite. And you're okay with that. [*Laughter*] He's okay with that, actually, in this country.

Congratulations, Bob. Nice to have you. You've been my friend for a long time.

But 8 years ago, all the way back in 2018, it was my honor to help secure the World Cup for North America, never thinking that it would turn out to be what it's turned out to be. And Gianni said this would happen. But, as fate would have it, I'm President.

I said—you know, I was supposed to not be here right now. I was supposed to be President for eight years. The polls showed it. Everyone showed it. They rigged the election, and what did I get? I got the World Cup. I got the Olympics. And I brought them here. I tried to take credit for 250 years, but that didn't work out as well. *[Laughter]* I tried to say I created 250 years. That one didn't work.

But I did get the Olympics, and we got this. And I don't know, this might be bigger than the Olympics. Tell me, is it bigger?

Mr. Infantino. Much bigger.

The President. All right. I'll take his word for it.

Mr. Infantino. Much bigger.

The President. I'll take his word for it.

Mr. Infantino. It's 104 Super Bowls.

The President. I had a feeling he was going to say that.

But, Gianni, I want to thank FIFA Secretary-General Mattias Grafström, as well as FIFA vice presidents and all of those vice presidents and council members, along with the presidents and general secretaries of FIFA member associations, along with some Presidents of their countries.

Of course, being a President of your country at this particular time isn't really as good as being the president of one of your associations, but you've done an amazing job. In fact, the Presidents of the countries are sitting in the back row. You believe this? They're going to be very upset with you. *[Laughter]*

But we also have many famous FIFA legends and all-star players—people that I recognize, being somebody that knows something about sports.

I have—my children love soccer. My one son, my very tall son, Barron, loves soccer. He's a good soccer player. He may—I don't know, his speed might—I—little—you know, he's very tall. I don't know. I said: "When some guy gets by you from Spain, from Argentina, from France—Barron, what happens? From England. What happens, Barron?" He said, "Dad, I'm a very good ball handler."

I said, "But, Barron, if he's faster, what do you do about it?" "Dad, he'll never get by me." *[Laughter]* I said, "But when he does"—and he didn't want to answer that question.

So speed, I think, is quite important in this sport. Do you agree?

Mr. Infantino. Oh, yes.

The President. But he has good skills, actually.

But he helped—you know, Gianni helped shape the game. You all helped shape the game, and really bringing it to a level that I don't think I've ever seen before.

Melania's father Viktor is sitting right here, and he's been a wonderful father-in-law, a great guy. And he said he used to play soccer as a young man. He didn't quite make it into the big leagues, but he's a good athlete.

Viktor, stand up. Stand up. An ex-soccer player.

But we're gathered tonight—thanks, Viktor.

But we're gathered tonight—he's going to be at the game, along with Melania, along with everybody. I mean, who's not going to be at the game? If we had—if we had about 10 million more—we would sell every ticket. You had—this thing is sold out. I've never seen—nobody's seen anything like it.

But we're gathered tonight in New York City as we await the final face-off on Sunday between the amazing—two amazing teams, Spain and Argentina.

I watched that pass that Messi made. And not knowing as much as the people in this room, but I know about sports, and I know about—a little bit about soccer. But I watched Messi, and he was well-guarded, right? Well-guarded. And, all of a sudden, he's standing on the right. You understand what I'm talking about? I don't know if anybody—I didn't—I just noticed it. Nobody talked about it. I just noticed it.

I said, "He's so well guarded by a great player," and then he moved to the right, and the other player was just standing there. And he had plenty of time. He kicked it. It was within, I would say, a quarter of an inch of being perfect. And that was the end of the game. It was brilliant.

And these great players, they seem to do that over and over again. They're just born with something extra special. I know that Ronaldo is one of them. I got to know him over the years, and he's a great guy.

You have a great player in England, who I played golf with. You know that, right? And he is—Harry, who's been fantastic.

I think they perhaps made a mistake when they made him a defensive player. I—what do I know about soccer? [*Laughter*]

They took the league and they took their best player and they put him on defense. [*Laughter*] Then somehow—no, we've got to be a little offensive, right? But no, I'm not going to call it. Look, what do I know about coaching?

But that was a little unusual. But Harry is a great guy, actually.

But we're gathered tonight in New York City as we await the final face-off on Sunday between these two amazing teams, and it's going to be something, I think, really special. This has been a tournament like no other, filled with fierce competition and unforgettable moments.

You had unforgettable moments, like probably the most unforgettable is when they gave that gentleman—is it a red card?—and I was forced to call Gianni and just make a recommendation. I said: "Gianni, I'd like to make a recommendation. Let the guy in the game." No, I didn't say that. [*Laughter*]

I said, "I'd like to wage a complaint," and actually, I didn't—I had no idea what was going to happen. But you know, it's so much better the way it worked out, because there's no controversy. They won the game, and our team had all of its players. You made another great decision, if you think about—I know, you'll never get credit for——

Mr. Infantino. Well, it's not me.

The President. You'll never get credit for that.

Mr. Infantino. For anything.

The President. Think of it, if he didn't allow him, and they lost. We'd say, "We would have won the game if we had our best player." So Gianni made yet another of his many good decisions.

But the spirit and patriotism and the unity that's brought, I think, the whole world together. This has really brought the world together. The 2026 FIFA World Cup has broken almost every record imaginable. This is the largest World Cup in history by far—by many times, actually—welcoming 16 additional teams. And I understand you may be making it even larger next time.

I suggested that this has been so successful that—and I'm—you know, I'm really working these people hard because they really call the shot. They tell Gianni exactly what to do. I say, "What we should do is, you should choose the United States of America again. This time we'll leave Mexico and Canada out." [*Laughter*] But then what you do is you—which I was very nice to get them in, but what we do is, you leave—you choose us, but you pick somebody else for the next one, and that will take some of the anger, hatred, and steam out of everyone.

But Gianni also had another idea. He said we could do it China and the United States for next time. We do them China, United States, so you have a nice, short flight in between games. You know? [*Laughter*] The players would love that.

But it is the world's largest, and it's like having—you know, I first heard this—but many Super Bowls at one time. You know?

Mr. Infantino. One hundred and four.

The President. It's like having many Super Bowls. They—Bob, every stadium is packed to the rafters. There's spirit.

But fans from 200 countries attended 104 games spread across 16 Northern American cities. And I saw things happen—my mother comes from Scotland. My father comes from Germany. When I saw the Scottish bagpipes and the Scottish, they were going wild. They were going—I said, "This is really different."

And you know, a lot of countries came here not knowing what to think, and they love the United States. In fact, the people that came, they're going to be coming back, maybe permanently. I don't know. They love the United States. We're doing great. We're doing great.

It's the golden age of America. We're doing better than we've ever done. We have \$19.2 trillion being invested—much more than any country has ever had—invested into our country. Factories being built all across the land.

But I'm proud to report that with more than 6.5 million attendees, this has been by far the most attended tournament in history, and that's the history of all sports. And that's only going to go—well, maybe up. I don't know where you're going next time.

Where are you going next time? Are you allowed to tell me? I'll let you know if you're going to do better. But that's a tough number to beat, right?

That's why he's—you know what he wants to do? He's very competitive. That's why he's going to add some more teams. He figures, by adding some more teams, maybe they can top it.

But the total number of spectators exceeds the entire attendance of the last two World Cups combined, and together, we pulled it off really flawlessly. I mean, I don't want to say this, because you do have two more games. And so let's not talk about it yet. I don't want to say how great it's been.

We've had absolute spirit—absolute. The—I have to say, the law enforcement—they're fantastic, but they didn't have to work too hard because the spirit was so good. There were no fights. There were no anything.

So I just want to say great. But let's save it for Sunday evening. I think we'll hold it out for Sunday evening. But it's going to go well.

By the time the final whistle sounds on Sunday, nearly 6 billion viewers will have watched this World Cup. That's a record by many, many times over. I have no doubt that the World Cup has won millions of new fans and a lot of new fans in this country, which traditionally hasn't been a soccer country, but it's got—it's getting there even before this. It's been going up. And this will have a big impact, I'm sure.

From the first day of my administration in 2025, we've worked closely with FIFA to make this event a resounding success. We have great people.

Andrew, thank you very much. Great job you did. We really—you really worked hard, and thank you very much. Great job.

To put our preparations into perspective, and the record-setting tournament has been the logistical equivalent of holding 78 NFL Super Bowls in less than 2 months' time—78.

We marshaled the resources of more than 50 Federal departments and agencies, deployed every arm of the Federal law enforcement to ensure the games would be safe, secure, and successful. And they've turned out to be amazing.

The State Department expedited thousands and thousands of visas for World Cup ticket holders. Very quick, very—we call it fast—fast letting them in. We call it "let 'em in" fast.

And we secured—and Marco was fantastic. Marco Rubio, fantastic, and the job he's done—Secretary of State. And we secured more than \$1.2 billion in funding to support transit operations and security for the games—1.2.

And he wanted more. I said, "Can we just relax for a little while, Gianni?" [*Laughter*] One-point-two billion dollars to transport people, isn't that nice?

But I want to thank the White House FIFA Task Force. They've been really fantastic.

And, again, Andrew Giuliani did a fantastic job. Thank you very much.

Hosting guests from all over the globe for the 2026 FIFA World Cup was also an incredibly special way to help kick off America 250 years of freedom. We have tens of thousands of people from around the world that got to join us. We had a fantastic July 4 weekend, like I think we've never had before, and it was only enhanced by having you here. By—I don't know if you did that on purpose. I don't think so, but it was—it worked out fantastically.

We had an amazing crowd. Four hundred and fifty thousand people showed up to celebrate our country on a very rainy evening, and because of lightning, everybody was forced to leave. And then I said, "We're going to do it anyway, even if I have to speak at 2 o'clock in the morning." We called everybody back, and 150,000 people came back. They were on their way back to Texas and Oklahoma, and we had 150,000 people standing in the rain late in the evening.

Somebody suggested, "Let's do it on a different day, maybe in a week or two." I said, "No, it doesn't work in a week or two." It worked on the 250th year.

From the Scotland fans who took over the streets of Boston last month to the Argentinian supporters who cheered on Messi—how good is Messi? The hat trick in Kansas City. He had the hat trick—something very rare, I guess, in your sport. That's pretty rare, isn't it?

Mr. Infantino. Yes.

The President. To our first ally, France, winning in Philadelphia on July 4. What a game. They would seem to be—I mean, it's life in sports, but they seemed to be unbeatable, and then they didn't beat Spain. It was—they were the team that was favored. They were the team that was winning, I think, probably the most easily. And then they—something happens.

Mr. Infantino. Sports.

The President. It can happen in life. It's sports. It can happen in life too. You're hot as a pistol, and then you're not so hot.

But I wouldn't know about a thing like that. No, it happens in life. You're hot, and then you're not. But you have to always make a comeback, right? You can never give up.

But it's been a true honor for Americans to share our magnificent country with the world. And today, America—it's stronger and wealthier and hotter than ever before. And you're a big part of it.

Once again, I want to thank Gianni and the incredible people of FIFA. They're incredible people. Got to know some of them during this period of time. I'll get to know some more on Sunday.

And I want to congratulate every team that made the 2026 World Cup one of the all-time greatest sporting events in history. And I think beyond a sporting event, it's been—this has been not just a sporting event. This has been far beyond a sporting event. This has been something very, very special.

So good luck to Spain and Argentina on Sunday, and may the best team win.

And now it's a pleasure—it's really my pleasure to introduce a very talented man, the man that I cannot tell—you know, Luciano was a great friend of mine—Pavarotti—and he was a great singer. And I cannot tell the difference. The only one that tells me he's not as good is Christopher. He says, "I'm not as good as him." He was the greatest of all time, as I said.

But Christopher Macchio is a great, great talent, a very highly respected person within the world of opera. And you're going to hear a tremendous voice.

And, again, thank you very much. And, Gianni, congratulations on probably the most successful event ever held.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:35 p.m. at Trump Tower. In his remarks, he referred to Robert K. Kraft, founder, chairman, and chief executive officer, Kraft Group, in his capacity as owner of the National Football League's New England Patriots and Major League Soccer's New England Revolution; Lionel Messi, captain and forward, Argentina national football team; Cristiano Ronaldo, captain and forward, Portugal national football team; Harry E. Kane, captain and forward, England national football team; Folarin Balogun, forward, U.S. men's national soccer team; and White House Task Force on the 2026 FIFA World Cup Executive Director Andrew Giuliani. He also referred to Mrs. Trump's father Victor Knavs.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) reception in New York City.

Locations: New York City.

Names: Balogun, Folarin; Cristiano, Ronaldo; Giuliani, Andrew; Grafström, Mattias; Infantino, Giovanni V.; Kane, Harry E.; Knavs, Victor; Kraft, Robert K.; Macchio, Christopher; Messi, Lionel; Rubio, Marco A.; Trump, Barron W.; Trump, Melania.

Subjects: America's 250th birthday celebration; Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup; Foreign nations, investment and business ventures in U.S.; New York, President's visit; Olympic Games; Secretary of State; Soccer; White House Task Force on the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

DCPD Number: DCPD202600470.