

Remarks on Efforts To Renovate Washington Dulles International Airport and an Exchange With Reporters

July 29, 2026

The President. Thank you very much, everybody. This is very exciting to me as a builder—somebody that builds lots of big, nice projects, before I got here. And we're doing some of the best in the world right now. This is all about the Dulles Airport remodeling.

It's considered one of the worst airports anywhere in the world. We're going to make it maybe the best, with some hard work and some good thought process.

But thank you for being here as we unveil exciting plans for a major and long-overdue renovation and reconstruction of Washington's really horribly thought-of Dulles International Airport.

I want to thank Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy. He's fantastic. He's doing a great job. Doing a great job, including having to do with the safety of airlines and getting in with the control towers and all new equipment that we'll be ordering in the not-too-distant future. So they will have—we'll go from—again, we're one of the worst countries in the world for that, and we'll end up being one of the best countries in the world. That's automation, having to do with landings, takeoffs, and safety. But—for his leadership at this important project, and that's the Dulles project.

Thanks as well to the CEO of United Airlines, Scott Kirby. Thank you, Scott.

CEO of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, Jack Potter. Thank you, Jack.

And we have—we've developed a great relationship with them. We're going to make this something special.

As well as a member of the Airports Authority Board of Directors, Trent Morse. Thank you, Trent. Thank you very much.

Dulles Airport is the primary international gateway to our Nation's Capital, which is now one of the safest cities in the country. It's one of the hottest cities in the country. We are the hottest country in the world. But our Nation's Capital has made tremendous improvements in the last year and a half since we got here.

Crime is down by 84 percent. We've removed 8,000—almost 8,000 career, hardened criminals. And amazing statistic: 2 percent of the people caused 91 percent of the crime. And we can handle that really easily. So they've done—I just want to thank our great National Guard and the Metropolitan Police and others that worked with us. But the job in Washington—everyone's talking about.

I can also say—and if you look at Memphis, Tennessee, where crime was rampant, and it's down, now, 71 percent. And it will go down still further.

And Louisiana—New Orleans—the Governor called. He said, "We need help," and we gave him help. And the crime is down 72 percent. And they just finished Mardi Gras. And they said it was the safest Mardi Gras on record.

So we have a modernization of Dulles that's sorely needed. Last year, J.D. Power ranked Dulles 23 out of seven—27—that's a very bad ranking—large airports nationwide. So, it ranks at the bottom of the list—just about the bottom of the list.

After an extensive review of more than 30 proposals with the top architects anywhere in the world—and I was involved with Sean and with a lot of other people, actually—but Scott was very much involved, I can tell you—but we are announcing plans to add more than 5 million square feet of new or renovated space. We'll replace the current C and D concourses, which are basic disasters, all the while preserving the iconic original terminal.

That is—one of the great architects of the world did the original terminal. And it was very, very important that it be left. That's one of the reasons—it was both an asset and a liability. The liability is that nobody wanted to build anything near it, and people had to walk crazy distances. And it's no good, not acceptable. So we've addressed it all, and we have a plan that's going to be phenomenal.

But we're going to replace the C and D concourses and preserve the iconic original terminal that first made the airport an architectural landmark. So it's going to be something.

You can sort of see a little example of it right here.

[At this point, the President pointed to an architectural model on the Resolute Desk.]

That's your front. On the other side of the street, we're building a massive 9-story, 8-story, 10-story—we're not sure yet. But we're building a garage that—a parking garage that will be right next to the terminal. You'll walk right across the street, and you'll have a glass bridge—a number of glass bridges that will go right into the terminal.

Right now you have to walk so far. You have to walk blocks and blocks to get to your—to get to the terminal. And we have an empty site right directly across the street that nobody wanted to tinker with, which was crazy. So we're going to have a magnificent garage.

What would you say, Sean? How many—how many cars?

Secretary of Transportation Sean P. Duffy. Thirty—thirty-two thousand parking spaces.

The President. Thirty-two thousand. It'll be, actually, the largest garage in the world. Thirty-two thousand is big. Mostly above ground. We don't like down—people don't like going down underneath. Mostly above ground. It'll be beautiful.

But a central walking tunnel and a new AeroTrain connections will provide travelers with easy options. Really, it's an impossible airport. You get off a bus. You go into a train. You get from train. You get onto another bus. It's the worst airport.

This plan also includes expanded options for parking, modern check-in areas, more efficient security screenings, hotels, et cetera, et cetera. We have a beautiful hotel right on the property, but further away so that we can give the good location—frankly, the best location—to parking. So people literally will be able to park their car and walk 15 yards, and they'll be in the terminal.

In addition, many of the new restaurants and shops will be added, including plans for one of the largest United Polaris lounges anywhere in the world. And it will be a beautiful level of luxury.

This transformation is another step in our ongoing efforts to make Washington, DC, safe and beautiful again.

The safety aspects, both in terms of the airlines and in terms of crime, are unparalleled for what we're doing.

For years, the United States has watched other major cities around the globe welcome travelers with grand and modern airports. Yet, last—the last major airport built in the United States was Denver in 1995, and it hasn't gotten very great reviews. That's more than 30 years ago.

So we're doing something with Dulles that's going to make it, I think, the top—maybe the top anywhere in the world.

And by the way, Palm Beach is going to be one of the top too. Palm Beach is going to be incredible, what the plans are. The people—Joe and all the people working in Palm Beach that have such—Meg—that have done such an incredible job. That's going to be an unbelievable airport very shortly.

So it's time to ensure that the United States has the greatest airports anywhere in the world, and we're starting right here with the capital city.

And you can see—just before Sean goes up—if you take a look, this is——

[The President referred to the architectural model.]

This is only showing the terminal in one rung, but you have numerous of them. You have here, here, here.

[The President pointed to architectural renderings.]

And you have a spine coming—here's your main entrance. You have a spine coming right through the building into these massive—massive ports.

Now, the planes won't have to be bothered because we drop down a little bit, and our walkway is underneath. We have systems—walking systems that go very quickly, or you can walk because it's very close. But this is it.

So you enter here. You have a parking garage, which will be built right here. This whole thing is parking garage. Thirty-two—probably thirty-two thousand cars. That will be a world record and very convenient.

And then you'll have glass tunnels that go into the airport right from here, so you're—you'll be one story above. This road stays—beautified and stays. We keep this. This is your landmark. This is all new. This is your first tunnel, and then you drop down from there on.

And so that—when you have—the planes will be able to go right across without having to go back, make turns, or anything else. It's going to be amazing.

It will be one of the largest airports anywhere in the world, and I think it will be actually one of the most efficient and the best.

So I'd like to ask Secretary Duffy to say a few words and then Jack Potter.

And I'd like to welcome a very great gentleman to our midst, Jensen Huang, who's here someplace. And he's—if we can do with an airport like he does with chips, it will be the greatest airport anywhere in the world.

NVIDIA Corp. Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer Jensen Huang. [Inaudible]

The President. [Laughter] He looks at this problem as being a very simple—he looks at this as being a very simple problem to solve because his chips are a little bit more complicated. But it's important that he's able to travel nicely, along with everybody else.

Mr. Huang. Thank you, sir.

The President. And right now this is not a very good airport. We're going to make it a great airport.

Sean, please.

Secretary Duffy. Thank you, Mr. President.

So, to your point, the president has worked incredibly hard to make DC safe and beautiful. I think this is the cherry on the top, Mr. President. This is the gateway to the world from our Nation's Capital.

And any of you who've traveled through Dulles, it is dark, it is dated—a little dank, maybe. It's not a great airport.

And so we—we had multiple architects come in and present to the President. And we are blessed that not only does he give his time to really important matters, but he gave his building skill to take the best of all the designs and come up with this concept.

So just if I could quickly point out——

[Secretary Duffy pointed to the architectural model.]

——we keep the Saarinen building, so that's going to be the foyer. A whole new headhouse. We are going to get rid of the people movers, Mr. President.

The President. Right.

Secretary Duffy. So, if you don't know what these are, these are like elevated busses. It's kind of like—it looks like it's from "Star Wars," if you will. And they're slow, and people are angry about them.

We are going to get rid of those. We are going to have a horseshoe train system throughout the airport. And as you mentioned, right down the spine of the airport is going to be a walkway. So, easy access to all of your gates, fast movement.

And what I like—the President, he was like, "Listen, we have to have great parking." So, when you pull up to the airport, you have easy access to the concourses—to the terminal.

And so I think this is one of the best designs, Mr. President—probably because you were—you actually did it—that you'll see in the country as a whole. And we've had—but this—just to—this is bipartisan, Mr. President. A lot of people, whether you're Republican or Democrat, you hate the way Dulles operates. So everyone's come together, and we're building for America and building for the future.

And it's your vision that made this happen, so thank you for doing this. And it's going to be, I think, one of the—it's going to be the premier airport in our country when you're done with it.

The President. Well, thus far, what Sean said about bipartisan—really is bipartisan. And I don't know if that's because it's the right thing to do, which it is, but it's also that whether you're a Republican or Democrat, you don't want to go and be subjected to this airport, because this airport is a—it's a terrible place to be. And it's going to be—I believe it's going to go—it will be rated—within a few years, it will be rated the best airport in the country.

So it's going to be so efficient. Right now it's totally inefficient between the trams and the "Star War" thing that they call it—the "Star Wars" and elevated buses, and nobody knows what's going on. It's a real mess.

And, as you know, United is subjected to it. It doesn't—doesn't help United very much. He's been very much involved with what we've done, and other airlines too.

And I have to say that we've had over 30 architects and 30 different designs, and we did a little cherry-picking, and we spoke to a lot of people about it, and we've come up with a plan that's efficient and really beautiful. And I think it's going to give you one of the most beautiful. Keeping the Saarinen—so Saarinen was one of the great architects of the world, and when he built this 30 years ago, I guess, or about that, this was considered one of the—like, the Eighth Wonder of the World. This was considered the greatest terminal anywhere in the country, and it

is. It needs some work. It needs some fixup, but it'll be architecturally amazing—the rounded glass and the whole thing. Massive, massive sheets of glass.

Cost was no object, unfortunately or fortunately, and we will—we're going to be using that. You know, it's going to be fixed. We're using it again as the primary entrance, and, almost, that's about it because essentially this is a brand-new airport. And yet, we're going to be able to work it well enough that it will work at least as efficiently—efficiently as it works right now.

And in the end, you're going to end up with, I think, maybe the best airport and one of the biggest airports anywhere in the world, and it's going to be a great thing for Washington, DC.

So could I ask Jack to say a few words, please?

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority President and Chief Executive Office Jack Potter. Yes.

The President. Jack.

Mr. Potter. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for your inspiration here and challenge. You challenged all of us to step into the issues that you just described. We're very proud of the process that we've gone through.

We're very happy that United Airlines, the Airports Authority, and the other airlines have agreed to step up and fund this thing so this is not requiring Federal dollars. This is going to be airport-generated dollars, airline contributions, which is phenomenal. It means that we're off to a fast start here.

We're engaging with the Saarinen family to make sure that they stay intimately involved with this. All the aspects that were just described, I think, will make this a world-class airport.

And you challenge us to do this. We're building off of growth, though. I have to tell you: Our airport was the fastest growing airport in '24 and '25 of any large airport in the country. So, we are—we're going to continue to build on the momentum that we have, and we're excited about taking on this challenge.

And it will be a challenge to construct this. And our goal is to construct it and make sure that the traveling public is minute—there'll be minimal impact to them as they transit through our airport.

So, again, Mr. President, thank you for your inspiration, and we look forward for you to continue to participate in this in the coming years because we're going to bring designs to you and other things, so we very much look forward to working with you.

The President. Thank you very much. Great. Great job too.

Scott, would you——

United Airlines Chief Executive Officer Scott Kirby. Yes.

The President. ——like to say something?

Mr. Kirby. Well, thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Mr. Secretary and Jack and everyone. We're really—at United, we're really excited to have this project get off the ground.

The terminal that's out there today was built 45 years ago. It was meant to be temporary, and so I've spent my whole career at United Airlines waiting for this day, and all the people of United Airlines have spent even longer waiting for the day that we could have, really, the best airport in the world.

And this design is one that works great for the airline. The President talked about how it works great for the—on the outside for the airline, but it's going to be a beautiful airport inside for customers, and it's something that all of us at United but really all Americans will be able to be proud of—having an airport, when people come into the Capital, that really represents what the United States of America stands for.

So I'm proud of it as CEO of United but proud of it as an American as well.

Secretary Duffy. That's right.

The President. It's going to be a great one. Thank you. And for—and thank you for your help.

And, Trent, would you like to say something?

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Member of the Board of Directors Trent Morse. Yes. Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership on this. On behalf of the MWA board, this is something that everyone's tried to do for decades and no one's been able to get it done. And without the president's leadership on it, we'd be back in square one. So thank you for your leadership on this project. Thank you to United and the Department of Transportation for moving this along as quickly as possible.

The President. One of the things that is interesting, they were going to build this over a 60-year period. They were going to start with a little section here, a little section there, a little—and that wouldn't have worked. It wasn't a design like this, but it wouldn't have worked. So, we're doing it all at one time. It will all be completed, and it will be beautiful, and it will be something very special.

Would you like to say something? Please.

Deputy Secretary of Transportation Steven Bradbury. Thank you, Mr. President. I really want to thank the Airport Authority and United Airlines for your partnership—the board of the Airport Authority. Your partnership is critical to make this happen. I know you had a plan to improve the airport, but as the President said, it was a long-term plan. We thought it was too modest—too slow, too modest, and we——

The President. Sixty years isn't too modest.

Deputy Secretary Bradbury. Decades. And—but with the President's attention and focus on this——

The President. Two years.

Deputy Secretary Bradbury. ——it's accelerating——

The President. Two years.

Deputy Secretary Bradbury. ——it's expanded, and we're actually going to realize the vision, and a much greater vision now. So it's a very exciting day for Washington, for the whole nation.

The President. Well, these people have all been fantastic, and they really—they want to see it get done and get done properly, and it should be done as one airport, not being built in chunks, which would have been, frankly, a catastrophe, I think.

So thank you very much.

Do you have any questions?

Timeline for Washington Dulles Airport Renovation Project

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Very quickly on this issue, did you just say "2 years"? It would take 2 years to finish this?

The President. We think we can get it started fairly quickly. It's largely financed, and yes, go—we need some approvals from Congress probably. But, generally speaking, it's been very bipartisan.

Drone Attack on a Fuel Tanker Ship Off the Egyptian Coast/U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. And then on the attack—the drone attack on the LNG tanker off of Egypt.

The President. Yes.

Q. What can you tell us about that? And is there any indication it's Iran-related? Does it represent——

The President. Well, let me give you a report.

Q. ——a widening of the war?

The President. We've—I've been briefed. It's a little more of the same, but it's going to be straightening out. It's going to be straightening out.

In the meantime, we're going to be hitting them very hard because it's our turn to hit them. They know it's coming. They're asking us not to do it.

But you know, they tried shooting at—last night. So we had five rockets shot, going 8,500 miles an hour, and all five rockets were knocked down to the ground. But they nevertheless took a shot, so it's our turn. And we'll see if we get there with an agreement at some point. But we're going to hit them very hard.

Renovation Work at the Washington Dulles Airport

Q. Mr. President, first on this. Is this expected to affect any incoming or outgoing flights——

The President. No, we think——

Q. ——during the renovations?

The President. ——we could do it without a lot of disruption. Very little.

Q. And then on——

The President. It might even be better.

Senate Prospects for Election Reforms Legislation

Q. ——on Leader Thune. He—what's your reaction to him saying that there's no evident path to success on killing the filibuster or passing the SAVE America Act?

The President. Well, that's too bad for him. I mean, that's too bad for him and too bad for the Republican Party.

Q. Do you believe that——

The President. He's got the votes. He should get it done. He should be able to get it done.

[Several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Former Chief Medical Adviser Anthony S. Fauci/COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Q. Mr. President, thank you. Dr. Fauci invoked the Fifth Amendment more than a hundred times today.

The President. Yes. Terrible.

Q. Senator Rand Paul said he's going to hold a vote on holding him in contempt of Congress. Do you think Dr. Fauci should face repercussions for this?

The President. Well, I watched the whole thing today, but more importantly, I was a part of the whole Fauci—I inherited Fauci. He was here from the 1980s, so I had him for a period of time. And I disagreed with him on a lot. I would have had to close down the whole country if I listened to him.

I went the federalist way, which is basically let the Governors decide. And, generally speaking, the Republican Governors did very well; the Democrat Governors did not very well.

But Fauci wanted to have nobody wearing masks, if you remember. And then everybody had to wear five masks—as many masks as you could get. I mean, he made a lot of mistakes.

And he wasn't a big factor for me. He was a very big factor for Biden. And if you remember, even though we were sort of prime time in terms of that whole disaster of COVID, far people died—fewer in the Trump administration than in the Biden administration.

We ran—we ran it well. Operation Warp Speed was talked about as being one of the great success stories anywhere in the world, actually, and we did a good job. But many more people died under Biden than died in the Trump administration from COVID.

COVID was a disaster, but Fauci did not help.

Former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr./Presidential Pardon Power

Q. Mr. President, do you think that the DOJ should reopen the investigation into the autopen, specifically pertaining to Fauci?

The President. Well, the only thing you can really think about is the autopen, because the most powerful thing a President has, they say, is the power of pardon. So he was pardoned by Biden, and I respect that. I know how powerful it is. It's a very powerful—they say it's literally the most powerful thing a President has.

Now, whether or not—I sign my things directly always. Almost everything, I sign directly. You're a witness to many of them.

He signed very few. The only thing I know that he signed was Hunter Biden's pardon, but I'm not sure that he signed—he probably didn't sign this one.

So I can't tell you what the law is. I've heard that you have to have a lot of proof. You need to have letters. You need to have all sorts of things, that the person operating the autopen has to know exactly what it's all about.

He didn't know what it was about, because I saw him testify, so maybe there's something on the autopen.

Other than that, the power of pardon is very powerful.

Bev.

Q. One question, briefly, on the—on the——

Q. Thank you.

The President. Yes, wait, wait, sir.

Bev.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham of the United Kingdom/Energy Sources

Q. Thank you. Bev Turner, GB News. We've just heard you talking about another example of American excellence. That's really what this is.

The President. Right.

Q. It's a project where you're striving to be the best in the world. As a Brit, that's really striking to me. You've had a couple of weeks to get to know our new prime minister.

The President. True.

Q. Have you spoken to him much?

The President. I have.

Q. And do you think he is the man to lead us to excellence again, sir?

The President. Well, he did say one very good thing. He said he's going to open up North Sea oil. If he does that, you're going to be a wealthy country, if he does it reasonably.

I was telling Prime Minister Starmer: "Open up the North Sea. Open it up. You'll be okay. Open it up."

They have two problems. They have a huge immigration problem, people coming from all over the world and just camping out in your country.

And we've taken a very tough stand. In fact, for 14 months, nobody has come into our country—zero—which is almost hard to believe, but that's what the report says. We—our border has become very strong, and your border is very weak. He's got that problem.

And he's got energy problem. He's got windmills all over the place, and every—any time you see windmills, you see a failing country. And they're made in China. Not used by China, but they're made in China.

And you have a thing called the North Sea. And you buy a lot of your energy, as you know, from the North Sea. You buy from Norway, and Norway gets it from the North Sea. They get their—their oil from the North Sea, and Norway's got trillions of dollars in the bank. Trillions. It sells its oil from the North Sea.

And Scotland has a better part of the North Sea, and you have 500, 600, 700 years. You have areas of the North Sea that haven't even been explored yet. You have one of the most valuable oil finds anywhere in the world, and if the United Kingdom would use it, they'd be a wealthy country again.

And, I tell you what, I could not get Starmer to use it. It was incredible. Every oil company that I meet—and these are all big giants—every person that I know in the oil business said: "Please, could you open up the North Sea? Could you get them to open it?" They're dying to do it.

And if you open up the North Sea to the oil companies, Scotland, Ireland, the U.K. as a whole—but it's—I mean, it's right in Aberdeen, Scotland. It's right in Aberdeen. And that would be one of the most vibrant.

You know, it used to be called the oil capital of Europe. Aberdeen was the capital of Europe, and now it's—they don't drill oil, and nobody can understand why.

You have among the—it's among the finest oil—it's the best oil anywhere on the planet. And it's unbelievable plenty—you don't have to pay Norway triple what it costs them to take out. You have your own oil and gas.

If you use the North Sea, the U.K. will be a really rich country. I cannot get the point across.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

The new gentleman, when I spoke to him, he said he's going to open up the North Sea. Let's see if that happens.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Federal Reserve System/National Economy

Q. Mr. President, the Fed today voted to keep interest rates unchanged. Are you surprised by that? Are you disappointed in any way with Kevin Warsh——

The President. No, Kevin is fantastic, but he's got a Board.

Q. ——not being able to corral his Fed members?

The President. Yes, Kevin's got a Board. He's fantastic. He's a brilliant guy, smart. I know he'd love to see lower interest rates. But he's got a Board, and it's a political Board, and they want to keep rates up.

But we fight through rates. We have the greatest—we have the strongest investment ever made in a country—of any country. It was China, about 13, 14 years ago. We have far greater. Nineteen-point—even Jensen would say that's a lot. Nineteen—and Jensen's spending a tremendous amount of money, by hundreds of billions of dollars. He happens to be in the room. He's spending more than United, actually.

Mr. Kirby. He is. *[Laughter]*

The President. But he's spending \$10 billion.

Mr. Kirby. Yes.

The President. But Jensen is spending hundreds of billions, right? I don't know. That's not a bad business, I guess. *[Laughter]*

But no, no. We have \$19.2 trillion. It's a—it's the biggest number ever spent in any country by far, and that's over a period of one year.

As an example, as you know, the Biden administration, for 4 years, did much less than \$1 trillion. We're doing \$19.2 trillion in 1 year.

So we have things that are happening in our country the likes of which nobody's ever seen. Plants and factories are moving in. Toyota just announced they're building one of the largest car plants anywhere in the world—and truck plants anywhere in the world. We are building more automobile plants now than at any time in the history of our country.

Yes.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Renovation Work at the Washington Dulles Airport/The President's Interest in Construction Projects/District of Columbia Public Safety and Beautification Efforts

Q. Mr. President, on Dulles, in particular. This is just one of several projects that you have underway——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——in the DMV. Why would you say that you're so focused on transforming the Washington region right now?

The President. Well, this is an important one. You know, this is travel.

So, in terms of the importance—I think the arc is going to be incredible. I think the protected ballroom and military center that we're building at the White House is going to be unbelievable. It's very important.

But, you know, this is the airport. This is sort of the lifeblood of a city or a capital—certainly a capital. And this will go from one of the worst—just like Washington. Washington was one of the worst places in this country, and now it's one of the best. You couldn't get into a restaurant because all the restaurants were closing or closed. They were afraid to have it open. Now you can't—if you're a restaurateur, you can't even find space to have a restaurant. The restaurants are booming. So, you know, it's a great thrill.

And, by the way, if you look, Washington is clean. It's safe. People walk to work. Every day, a young man or a young woman comes up and says, "Thank you, sir." I know exactly what he's talking about. They couldn't walk—they were afraid to walk to work. Now they literally walk to the White House. Washington is now a beautiful and clean—we got rid of the graffiti. Seventy-eight monuments and—and different things have been cleaned. They were strewn with graffiti.

We had 28 fountains that—not one of them worked. For years, for decades, they haven't worked. They're all up in service, and nobody's seen anything like it.

We have a clean—we're changing all the grass in all the parks. That's going to be changed very shortly. The parks are—because the grass is very—you know, grass is like human beings. Grass has a life also. And we're changing—we're raking, cleaning, and changing all of the parks.

We don't have people. We don't have the tents anymore. We don't have all the barbed wire up. We don't have the wire up.

Washington's become a beautiful city. It's become a hot city. But, you know, even more importantly, the United States right now is the hottest country anywhere in the world.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Renovation Work at the Washington Dulles Airport/Air Traffic Control Modernization Efforts

Q. Mr. President, just a point of clarity on the—the airport. No Federal funding will be required. What did you mean when you said Congress may need to approve?

The President. Yes.

Secretary Duffy. So——

The President. Sean, do you want to talk about it?

Secretary Duffy. So it's going to be bonded for \$22.5 billion. United is going to partake in part of the payment. But the airlines who participate in the project are going to pay for it.

If I can just make one point of clarification.

The President. Yes, please.

Secretary Duffy. We have some permitting we have to do, but we think, in the spring, we—this will be—this is both Concourse A. We think we can start construction in the spring of next year. So we're trying to move at the speed of President Trump. It's never fast enough. *[Laughter]* But we're—we're going as quickly as possible so we can give a deliverable for the American people very quickly.

The President. And the other thing Sean's doing, which I think is so important, maybe more important. I don't know if it can be more important than this.

But he's working on air traffic control. We have an obsolete system. It's 50 years old.

You saw the helicopter crash, a year ago, into a plane. That was a disaster. And things like that would never happen. Bells would have gone off in 4 or 5 minutes before it happened. You would have heard—the bells and whistles would have gone off.

Secretary Duffy. Right.

The President. And a thing like that couldn't have happened if you had proper——

Secretary Duffy. Yes.

The President. ——proper air control.

So what's happened is, we are working very hard on getting the finest in the country—now, in—in the world. We've examined the systems of almost every good country, in terms of air traffic control, all over the world. And we have the best people working on it in the world.

Secretary Duffy. It's true.

The President. And it will make—I mean, so often you'll see somebody—even bonking into each other at an airport. But where planes come too close—where planes, in the case of the helicopter, hit—they hit—the helicopter hits the plane. We are working on air traffic control to redo the entire system, including the new towers, because the towers are obsolete.

You know, you don't think of it. You see a tower, and it looks fine. You go into those towers; they're literally falling down.

Secretary Duffy. It's true.

The President. So we're talking about new towers and all new air traffic control, which will give us the safest anywhere in the world.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Former Chief Medical Adviser Anthony S. Fauci

Q. Why do you—why do you think Dr. Fauci invoked the Fifth Amendment so many times today when he has a pardon? And why couldn't—what's—what was stopping him from just giving an honest testimony this morning?

The President. Well, look, I've never been a big fan of Fauci. Why he did that was very simple: His lawyer told him to. You know, I don't know if he would have been better off not doing it. There were a lot of questions that I guess he could have answered and some, maybe, he didn't feel comfortable in answering. But his lawyer told him to do that.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Bev.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham of the United Kingdom/Migration Issues

Q. Prime Minister Andy Burnham hasn't mentioned publicly migration at all since he's gone into Number 10. Did you——

The President. Well——

Q. Did you discuss it with him?

The President. I did, briefly. He's going to have to mention it because it's killing your country. Killing.

Q. He won't talk to GB News.

The President. He's killing your country.

Q. He won't talk to us.

The President. And not him. I mean, we'll have to see. I know Starmer did very little about it. And they're coming from all over the world. They're coming from Africa, they're coming from South America, they're coming from different parts of Asia, and they're invading Europe. I mean, they're invading Europe. It's an invasion. And the U.K. is a prime suspect.

Acting Attorney General Todd W. Blanche/Senate Confirmation Process

Q. Mr. President, on Todd Blanche. Senator John Cornyn of Texas has been hesitant to back the confirmation. Seems to be some sort of deal that he's talking about. What is your reaction to his hesitancy?

The President. Well, all I can say is Todd Blanche is outstanding, and I thought he's—I thought it was pretty routine because he's so good. He's—you just wouldn't find a better person.

So I don't know. Maybe John Cornyn's upset with me because I didn't endorse him. I don't know what it is. But I haven't heard that there's a problem. I heard he's going through quite nicely.

Senate Majority Leader John R. Thune

Q. And do you think Senate Majority Leader John Thune, after the comments you heard regarding SAVE America and some other stuff, do you think he's still the man for the job?

The President. Well, we're going to find out, and I'll let you know.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Funeral Service for Senator Lindsey O. Graham/Senator Darline Graham Nordone

Q. It was a beautiful service yesterday for Senator Graham.

The President. Right.

Q. Beautiful eulogy that you delivered. As far as Senator Darline Graham is concerned, based upon your conversations, is she going to focus primarily on foreign affairs, like her brother, or will she focus more on domestic issues?

The President. I think domestic, really. I've spoken to her a lot, and she's much more focused on domestic, including costs and pricing.

Q. And do you think——

The President. I think she'll be outstanding.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Director of National Intelligence Walter J. "Jay" Clayton III

Q. On Jay Clayton. He was just confirmed by the Senate. Would you——

The President. Yes. He's great.

Q. Would you like to see him continue with Bill Pulte's work in exposing election interference——

The President. Oh, yes.

Q. —in 2020?

The President. I'm sure. I'm sure he will. Bill did a great job, and Jay is just—has just been confirmed. And, you know, he's outstanding. He was the head of Sullivan & Cromwell for many years, and he's very outstanding. And I think he's going to do a fantastic job.

And Bill was great.

Yes, please.

Artificial Intelligence/China

Q. Mr. President, in light of advanced ChatGPT AI models escaping their lab and conducting cyberattacks, are you considering stronger controls on AI? And would you consider negotiating regulations with China?

The President. Well, we're looking at AI. We're looking at controls. We're also making sure that we lead.

So we're leading China in AI by a lot. China has virtually no controls. It's freewheeling a little bit. So, we have to be careful in both ways. We don't want to restrict them, where, all of a sudden, we come in second to China.

Whoever wins with AI is going to win. That's how big it is. So it's bigger than the Internet ever was. It's bigger than anything ever was.

So I don't want to restrict. I know many of these people. I don't want to restrict them from doing great work.

Yes, please.

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. On what scenario do you see Iran attacking U.S. installations and personnel overseas and you withdrawing? Or are you always——

The President. Oh, I don't see that. No, we're not—no, we're going to hit them very hard.

Q. Are you always——

The President. I mean, I can actually say that because they're not—there's very little they can do about it.

It was a different group than we're dealing with. They've already apologized, but, you know, we got to smack them a little bit.

Q. Are you always going to hit back when they strike?

The President. Will I always hit back?

Q. Yes.

The President. Pretty much, yes.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Iranian Missiles Strikes in the Middle East

Q. Mr. President—just on—a point of clarity on that, sir. Is that in response to the attempted ballistic missile strike on Jordan last night, when you say it's our turn to hit back?

The President. I—yes, I think it—more so that, yeah, because there was another smaller event.

But no, they sent five 8,000-mile-an-hour missiles at us, and fortunately, we had our people operating the greatest equipment in the world, namely the Patriot system. Think of it: Five missiles going 8,600 miles an hour—big ones—coming right at us, and all five were shot down. How about that, right? Pretty good.

Only we—nobody else could do that but us.

Yes.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine

Q. Can I ask how was your—how was your meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy yesterday? Do you—

The President. It was good.

Q. Do you see a time scale for getting that conflict resolved?

The President. No, it was good. Look, you know, he's out doing his thing. I'd like him to end the war.

So it's very simple. I get along with both. I get along with President Putin. I get along with President Zelenskyy. I'd like—I told him I want to end the war, get the war ended. Thousands of people—25,000 people died last month. That's standard, and it's not acceptable.

So I said, "Just end the war."

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Iran/Russia

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On the war. Do you want the House to come back before August 31st to act on the Russia and Iran sanctions bill after it clears the Senate this week?

The President. Well, if it's necessary. I mean, it shouldn't be necessary, to be honest. But if it's necessary.

I'd like to—are you talking about the Lindsey Graham?

Q. Yes.

The President. So I'd like them to add Iran as tariffs, not just as sanctions. I think it's important. That's what Lindsey wanted. Because I heard that they have tariffs on Russia but not on those five countries with—having to do with Iran.

I'd like to see tariffs on Iran. It would make it much stronger. So perhaps—you're very good at this—you can maybe tell them. I think they should put in for Russia, but I think they should put in for Iran. And that's really what Lindsey wanted.

Yes, please.

Iran/China

Q. And on Iran. One more, sir. Sorry.

The President. And good job at the dinner the other night.

Q. Thank you.

The President. Did a great job.

Q. Thank you. Appreciate that.

President Xi told you that China would not give or sell Iran any weapons.

The President. Yes.

Q. And there's a new report that Iran's about to get 400 rocket launchers from China, going through Pakistan to Iran.

The President. Well, that would be surprising. I mean, things like that happen, but that would be surprising. He told me very strongly he wouldn't partake.

And he knows I'd be quite disappointed.

Yes, please.

Q. Mr. President—Mr. President——

The President. But he's coming here, I think, on September 24 too, so——

Mayor Zohran K. Mamdani of New York City/September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attacks

Q. Two questions. First, we're coming up on the 25th anniversary of 9/11, and a good number of 9/11 families have called on New York mayor, Zohran Mamdani, to not attend a number of these memorial services. What are your thoughts on that?

The President. Well, I think they're having a hard time with Mandami [Mamdani; White House correction]. The people having to do with—anybody having to do with 9/11, right now, on the victim side—and there are a lot of them—they're very unhappy with what's going on in New York, and they're very unhappy with the mayor. I understand that.

Yes, please.

Election Reforms

Q. Oh. Thank you, Mr. President. Senate Republicans are underway negotiating the budget. Would you sign a CR without the SAVE America Act attached? Is that something you want to see?

The President. I'll have to look at it, but they should get the SAVE America. How simple can it be? Voter identification, proof of citizenship.

I mean—now, you have to understand the—the Democrats—not one Democrat will sign because they want to cheat. There's no way they can get elected if they don't—if that happens, but we should have unanimous Republican support. And if we don't, people should look at those Republicans.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But think of it: Who would not sign voter identification with photo? And who would not sign proof of citizenship? Only people that want to cheat.

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

Thank you, Bev.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeffrey M. Landry of Louisiana; County Administrator Joseph Abruzzo of Palm Beach County, FL; Florida State Rep. Meg Weinberger; R. Hunter Biden, son of former President Biden; David Schertler, attorney for former Chief Medical Adviser Fauci; Federal Housing Finance Agency Director William J. Pulte, in his former capacity as Acting Director of National Intelligence; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. He also referred to S. 1383.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Washington Dulles International Airport, renovation efforts; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Abruzzo, Joseph; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Biden, R. Hunter; Blanche, Todd W.; Bradbury, Steven; Burnham, Andy; Clayton, Walter J. "Jay," III; Cornyn, John, III; Duffy, Sean P.; Fauci, Anthony S.; Graham Nordone, Darline; Huang, Jensen; Kirby, Scott; Landry, Jeffrey M.; Mamdani, Zohran K.; Morse, Trent; Potter, John E.; Pulte, William J.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Schertler, David; Starmer, Keir; Thune, John R.; Warsh, Kevin M.; Weinberger, Meg; Xi Jinping; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Air traffic control system, modernization efforts; Artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies; Bipartisanship; China, President; COVID-19 pandemic; COVID-19 vaccines; Department of Justice, Acting Attorney General; Deputy Secretary of Transportation; Director of National Intelligence; District of Columbia, beautification efforts; District of Columbia, law enforcement improvement efforts; Energy security and diversification efforts; Federal Reserve System; Interest rates; Iran, regional missile attacks; Iran, U.S. military operations; Louisiana, Governor; Louisiana, law enforcement improvement efforts in New Orleans; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority; National Guard; North Sea, oil exploration and development; NVIDIA Corp.; Pardons and commutations; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act; Secretary of Transportation; Semiconductor manufacturing; Senate majority leader; September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; Solar and wind energy; Tariffs; Tennessee, law enforcement improvement efforts in Memphis; Triumphal Arch, design and construction; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; United Kingdom, Prime Minister; Virginia, 2025 collision of military helicopter and passenger aircraft outside Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport; Washington Dulles International Airport, renovation efforts; White House Ballroom construction project.

DCPD Number: DCPD202600500.