

Trump meets with tech industry leaders

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President-elect Donald Trump met with 13 prominent US technology company executives on Wednesday in yet another widely covered event at Trump Tower in New York City. In attendance were also Vice President-elect Mike Pence, a group of Donald Trump's business advisers and cabinet nominees, as well as four members of Trump's family.

Several videos of the public portion of the meeting show the attendees seated around a conference table and introducing themselves followed by introductory comments by Donald Trump. Several of the Silicon Valley executives are seen expressing how pleased, privileged and excited they are to be meeting with the President-elect.

Trump then returns the favor, referring to the assembled executives of the richest companies in the world—including Tim Cook of Apple, Jeff Bezos of Amazon, Larry Page of Google and Elon Musk of Tesla and Space-X—as “a truly amazing group of people,” and saying, “I’m here to help you folks do well.” As Trump began discussing trade policy and adding “we are going to make it easier for you to trade across borders,” the reporters were ushered out of the conference room.

According to a press announcement published on the Trump transition team web site GreatAgain.gov, the 90-minute meeting covered a multitude of topics including jobs, trade, taxes, tech infrastructure and cybersecurity. The statement said the meeting was intended “to begin a conversation and partnership in order to spark innovation and create more jobs in the U.S., particularly for working Americans.”

Most media coverage of the event has focused on Trump's conciliatory approach to the technology executives, many of whom opposed him in the 2016 election and some whom he attacked publicly during the election campaign. In the case of Bezos, Trump fired off tweets that assailed Amazon for tax evasion,

largely in response to critical reporting that appeared during the election campaign in the Bezos-owned *Washington Post*.

In one of the few published comments from attendees following the meeting with the President-elect, Bezos said, “I shared the view that the administration should make innovation one of its key pillars, which would create a huge number of jobs across the whole country, in all sectors, not just tech—agriculture, infrastructure, manufacturing—everywhere.” Most attendees declined to comment on details of the meeting.

Other media reports and television news coverage focused on the propriety of the presence of Donald Trump's three adult children and son-in-law in the meeting. Some coverage also noted the absence of a representation from Twitter, despite Trump's daily use of the social media platform as a public relations tool. There were suggestions that Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey was not invited because the company had blocked an effort by the Trump campaign to have a #CrookedHillary emoji created during the election campaign.

The willingness of the technology CEOs and billionaires to troop into Trump Tower and kiss the ring of the President-elect comes as no surprise. It is part and parcel of the falling in line by the ruling elite before the inauguration of the most right-wing administration in US history. Like the Democratic Party establishment and media representatives that endorsed Hillary Clinton, the Silicon Valley moguls are eager to work with the incoming Trump administration in securing their profits and collaborating with the state apparatus in every way.

During the campaign Trump frequently lambasted the tech industry for its alleged failure to fully accede to the demands of the Pentagon, FBI and other intelligence agencies, particularly denouncing Apple over its reluctance to help the FBI break the encryption on the

cellphone of the husband and wife who gunned down 14 co-workers in San Bernardino, California a year ago.

It was reported on Wednesday that both Tim Cook of Apple and Elon Musk of Tesla and Space-X remained at Trump Tower following the conference to meet privately with Trump. The Trump transition team also announced that Musk and Travis Kalanick, CEO of Uber, would join Ginni Rommety of IBM as advisers on economic policy.

A notable feature of the gathering technology company executives was the presence of billionaire investor and Trump transition adviser Peter Thiel in the meeting. He was introduced and specifically praised by Trump at the opening “because he saw something very early, maybe before we saw it,” although just exactly what he saw was not explained. It has been reported that Thiel sees government spending on information technology and cyber-security as a huge growth area for the military-intelligence apparatus—and a huge source of profits for Silicon Valley. This was doubtless among the primary topics of the discussions with tech industry representatives behind closed doors.



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