



## Trump Meets With Tech Executives

Donald Trump [opened](#) the gathering of high-tech industry executives on Wednesday, nearly all of whom vociferously opposed him during the presidential campaign, by calling them “a truly amazing group of people.” If any of them thought the meeting would be confrontational, they were disappointed.

Trump went on: “There’s nobody like you in the world. In the world! There’s nobody like the people in this room. [Anything we] can do to help this go along, we’re going to be there for you. You call my people, you call me. It doesn’t make any difference.”



His opening statement disarmed those attending, which included Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon and owner of the virulently anti-Trump *Washington Post*, Elon Musk of Tesla, Tim Cook of Apple, Sheryl Sandberg who was standing in for Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, Larry Page and Eric Schmidt of Google/Alphabet, Safra Catz of Oracle, and Satya Nadella of Microsoft.

The meeting ran for 90 minutes, longer than expected, and covered topics such as vocational education, the risks and rewards of trading with China, and immigration. Trump asked them for help in using technology to detect government waste and eliminating some of it.

Following the meeting, Bezos told reporters that he considered the meeting “very productive”, adding, “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.”

This was a different Bezos from the boss who ordered 20 reporters at his *Washington Post* to dig into Donald Trump’s background for dirt to fill out a biography on him. In July, 140 tech executives skewered Trump in an open letter, saying that his potential presidency would be a “disaster for innovation.”

It was Dana Milbank of the *Washington Post* who authored the Trump hit-piece “The Ten Plagues of Trump” in April, comparing Trump’s actions to the biblical account in the Book of Exodus of the 10 plagues that God inflicted on Egypt. Milbank railed against Trump, hoping that his article would “help deliver America” from his presidency.

It was Bezos who excoriated Trump after he said that Bezos was using the *Washington Post* “as a toy.” Amazon, said Trump, is “getting away with murder, tax-wise. He’s using the *Washington Post* for power so that the politicians in Washington don’t tax Amazon like they should be taxed.”

Trump added: “Amazon is controlling so much of what they’re doing. And what [Bezos has] done is he bought the paper for practically nothing, and he’s using that as a tool for political power against me and against other people, and I’ll tell you what, we can’t let him get away with this.”

Bezos called Trump’s challenges “not an appropriate way for a presidential candidate to behave ... the



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*Post* has a long tradition of examining presidential candidates, as it should, and there's no way that's going to change."

Trump knows he has the advantage now and is using it politically not only to elicit their help in moving his agenda forward, but also as an implicit warning. After January 20 he will have power to help them greatly or damage them severely.

The meeting was a master stroke by Trump. As Michael Corleone said in *The Godfather, Part II*: "Keep your friends close but your enemies closer." Trump is doing exactly that. He is planning regular quarterly meetings with top tech company people, and is naming some of them to his newly created President's Strategic and Policy Forum. He's already named Ginni Rometty, IBM's Chairwoman, president and CEO to his Forum along with Elon Musk of Tesla, Uber CEO Travis Kalanick, and PepsiCo chief Indra Nooyi.

Those groups, forums, and meetings will serve as a constant reminder to those anti-Trump people that, on January 20, there will be a new sheriff in town, with his new rule: Play nice and we'll get along just fine. But leave your guns at the door.

*Photo: AP Images*

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