

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga of Japan**

*April 16, 2021*

*President Biden.* Well, I'm honored to have Prime Minister Suga here. Yoshi and I have had some private time together, both lunch and tea, and it's great to have him with us. As you know, this was the first foreign leader to visit me in my Presidency. And I'm really pleased to welcome such a close ally and good partner.

The United States and Japan have a big agenda ahead of us. And we are two important democracies in the Indo-Pacific region, and our cooperation is vital, in my view—and I think in both our views—to meeting the challenges facing our nation and ensuring the future of the region to remain free and open and prosperous.

So I'm looking forward to speaking with the Prime Minister. And our teams are tackling a shared agenda. We are ready to get to work.

So welcome, Mr. Prime Minister. As we say in the body I used to work in, the United States Senate, "I yield the floor" to the Prime Minister. It's all yours, Yoshi.

*Prime Minister Suga.* Thank you very much. Thank for you for accepting me as the first foreign leader under your Presidency. My deepest gratitude to you.

And yesterday there was a shooting in Indianapolis, so I heard, and causing much casualty. I would like to express my condolences to the victims and my sympathies to the families. Innocent citizens must not be exposed to any such violence.

Freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are the universal values that link our alliance that is prevalent in the Indo-Pacific, and this is the very foundation of prosperity and stability of the region and the globe. And the importance of such values has heightened to unprecedented level.

And upon my visit to the United States, I wish to reaffirm the new and tight bond between us. And in order to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific, there are many common challenges as well as emerging global issues, including COVID-19 and climate change. I wish to spend time with you to again confirm the close ties between our two countries.

And thank you again for accepting us.

*President Biden.* Thank you being here. Thank you for your sentiments.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:09 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, Prime Minister Suga referred to Samaria Blackwell, Karli Smith, Matthew R. Alexander, Amarjit Sekhon, Jasvinder Kaur, Amarjeet Kaur Johal, Jaswinder Singh, and John Weisert, who were killed in the shooting at the FedEx Ground Plainfield Operations Center in Indianapolis, IN, on April 15. Prime Minister Suga spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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