

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Reuven Rivlin of Israel and an Exchange With Reporters

June 28, 2021

President Biden. Well, I'm really happy to have President Rivlin here. And I don't want to—it's not technically appropriate, but I'm so delighted his daughter is here. She's in the back right there. And I got to meet her and talk about our kids and grandkids and all the like.

At any rate, I just want to thank the President for being here and for your dedication to strengthening the relationship between the United States and Israel.

President Rivlin. Thank you.

President Biden. And as the American press here can tell you, my commitment to Israel is—well, they can't tell you anything actually; they're not supposed to—but it's ironclad. It's real. It's something that—I often say, if there weren't an Israel, we'd have to invent one.

And so this includes, we're—you know, we're committed to—unwavering commitment to your self-defense. And today we're going to be discussing a broad range of challenges, including Iran. What I can say to you: Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch, as they say.

President Rivlin. God bless you.

President Biden. And you know, the—I directed last night's airstrikes targeting sites used by the Iranian-backed militia groups responsible for recent attacks on the U.S. personnel in Iraq. And I have that authority under Article II. And even those up in the Hill who are reluctant to acknowledge that have acknowledged that's the case.

I also want to be clear that, as I said, my team and I are already working closely with the Israeli Government to—that took office earlier this month. I'm looking forward to hosting Prime Minister Bennett at the White House very soon. And the U.S. fully supports normalization of the relationship between Israel and Middle Eastern countries—that you're making some headway on—and Africa as well.

And beyond, the important progress we are really looking forward to building back a wider block of peace and stability. And, going forward, Mr. President, the United States and Israel are going to continue to work together to advance peace in the region and stability.

And I've only one regret: You're leaving as President. But not immediately, and not soon.

President Rivlin. Seven years, for Israel, is enough. For the Americans, 8 years could be—

President Biden. Eh—[laughter].

President Rivlin. —a little bit longer. But for the Israelis, 7 years, it's enough.

President Biden. Well, welcome.

President Rivlin. It's good to be President, I must say to you. Yes.

President Biden. [Laughter] Well, you've done incredibly well. You've been a great friend.

President Rivlin. I did. Absolutely.

President Biden. You've been a great friend.

President Rivlin. I did my best, of course.

President Biden. Well, you did your best, and it was as good as it could be.

President Rivlin. Thank you. There was——

President Biden. All right, everybody. You have anything else you'd like to say?

President Rivlin. Of course, I would like to say and to mention that I'm delighted—really delighted—to be here once again in the White House meeting you, the President of the United States.

Of course, I have to repeat what we know very well: Israel have no greater friend, ally than the United States of America. You are our best friends, and we are sharing—we are best friends, and the bonds between the people of Israel and the people of America is based on the understanding that we are sharing values: values of democracy and values of liberalism.

And because of that, of course, we, according to a real friendship, can from time to time discuss matters. And even the—agree not to agree about everything. But we count on you. And your, really, declaration just now really brought the Israelis to understand that we have a great friend at the White House.

President Biden. You do.

President Rivlin. Mr. President, God bless you, God bless the people of America, and God bless the relationship between our two nations and to our two states.

President Biden. Well, I agree with you. And I thank you very much for being here.

President Rivlin. Thank you.

President Biden. Thank you all very much.

President Biden's Travel Schedule

Q. Mr. President, when will you visit Israel? When will you visit Israel? When will you visit Israel?

President Biden. I don't have a date, but I will.

Infrastructure and Jobs Legislation

Q. Mr. President—one question, Mr. President. One question, Mr. President. Will you—Mr. President, will you say, on camera, what your statement said Saturday? What is your bottom line on infrastructure?

President Biden. My bottom line on infrastructure is exactly what we negotiated. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:14 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Anat Rivlin, daughter of President Rivlin.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Israel, President Rivlin.

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