

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Sauli Niinistö of Finland

March 4, 2022

President Biden. Welcome. I'm delighted to have a good friend here with us today, the President of Finland, and in the White House in what is a critical moment involving all of Europe.

And you know, we've been in regular touch for some time now and coordinated a united, transatlantic response to the Russians and holding Russia accountable for their unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine. And we agreed it's not only an attack on Ukraine, it's an attack on the security of Europe and on the global peace and stability.

And Finland is a critical partner of the United States, a strong defense partner as well, a partner to NATO, especially in—on strengthening the security of the Baltic Sea area.

And we're committed to helping Ukraine defend itself and—in support of the humanitarian needs of the Ukrainian people. And we're coordinated on everything from sanctions to export controls and broader global issues of energy, security, climate, and human rights.

So I want to thank you for making the trip, Mr. President. Our bilateral relationship is vitally important to the United States, and I think you see it the same way. And this is another opportunity for us to further strengthen that relationship.

So thank you for being here. Welcome to the Oval Office. And the floor is yours.

President Niinistö. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you very much for the opportunity to have this discussion with you. We are really living in very difficult times. I want to thank you also for the leadership you have showed. We need it now.

Our thoughts today undoubtedly are with the Ukrainian people who are fighting bravely for their country. And we do our best to help them.

Like you, Mr. President, said, we have a long-lasting partnership—very good relations—and I hope that during this meeting and discussion, we can strengthen them more between the United States and Finland and the Nordic countries all together.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Biden. Well, you know, as my predecessor who sat in this seat, President Obama, used to say, we'd be all right if we left everything to the Nordic countries. [*Laughter*] Everything would be fine.

President Niinistö. Well, we usually don't start wars.

President Biden. No. [*Laughter*] Anyway, well, thank you very much.

Thank you all for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:56 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Finland, President Niinistö.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Niinistö, Sauli; Obama, Barack.

Subjects: Finland : President; Finland : Relations with U.S.; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia : International and U.S. sanctions; Russia : Ukraine, airstrikes and invasion; Ukraine : Russian airstrikes and invasion .

DCPD Number: DCPD202200143.