

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

The President's News Conference in Madrid, Spain

June 30, 2022

The President. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you. If you have a seat, please sit down. You'd think someone else walked in the room. Thank you very much for taking the time to be here.

I think we can all agree that this has been a historic NATO summit. Some of the folks who have been covering me for a while, about a year and a half ago, when the first G-7 meeting took place in England, I talked about the need for us to reconsider the makeup of NATO, how it functioned, and come up with a different strategy for the—for NATO and how we work together. And in addition to that, we also talked about the G-7 taking on additional responsibilities.

And before the war started, I told Putin that if he invaded Ukraine, NATO would not only get stronger, but would get more united. And we would see—he would see democracies in the world stand up and oppose his aggression and defend a rules-based order. And that's exactly what we're seeing today.

This summit was about strengthening our alliance, meeting the challenges of our world as it is today and the threats we're going to face in the future.

The last time NATO drafted a new mission statement was 12 years ago. At that time, it characterized Russia as a partner, and it didn't even mention China. The world has changed, changed a great deal since then. And NATO is changing as well.

At this summit, we rallied our alliances to meet both the direct threats that Russia poses to Europe and the systemic challenges that China poses to a rules-based world order. And we've invited two new members to join NATO. It was a historic act. Finland and Sweden, two countries with a long tradition of neutrality and choosing to join NATO.

Some of the American press will remember when I got a phone call from the leader of Finland saying could he come and see me. And he came the next day and said, "Will you support my joining—my country joining NATO?"

We got on the telephone; he suggested we call the leader of Switzerland—"Switzerland," my goodness. I'm getting really anxious here about expanding NATO. [*Laughter*] Of Sweden. And what happened was, we got on the phone, and she asked if she could come the next day to want to talk about joining NATO.

Allies across the board are stepping up, increasing defense spending. A majority of them are on track for the first time to exceed our 2 percent of GDP commitment that they made. They agreed to spend 2 percent of the GDP on defense.

Look, for example, Germany: Germany has committed to spending 2 percent going forward, and announced a special fund for its military of more than \$100 billion. Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands have announced they will also meet their 2 percent commitments. Poland, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania are doing more than 2.5 percent, some as high as 3 percent. Together, they're deploying more assets and capabilities to bolster our alliances across all domains: land, air, sea, cyber, and space.

We've reaffirmed that our article 5 commitment is sacred. And an attack on one is an attack on all, and we will defend every inch of NATO territory. Every inch of NATO territory.

For our part, the United States is doing exactly what I said we would do if Putin invaded: enhance our force posture in Europe. We'll station more ships in here, in Spain. We're stationing more air defense in Italy and Germany; more F-35s in the United Kingdom; and, to strengthen our eastern flank, new permanent headquarters for the Army Fifth Corps in Poland. In addition, an additional brigade combat team positioned in Romania, and additional rotational deployments in the Baltic countries.

Things are changing to adapt to the world as we have it today. And all this is against the backdrop of our response to NATO's—to Russia's aggression and to help Ukraine defend itself.

The United States is rallying the world to stand with Ukraine. Allies and partners around the globe are making significant contributions. Secretary Austin just brought together more than 50 countries—more than 50 countries—pledging new commitments, and this is a global effort to support Ukraine: nearly 140,000 antitank systems, more than 600 tanks, nearly 500 artillery systems, more than 600,000 rounds of artillery ammunition, as well as advanced multiple-launch rocket systems, antiship systems, and air defense systems.

And again, the United States is leading the way. We've provided Ukraine with nearly \$7 billion in security assistance since I took office. The next few days, we intend to announce more than \$800 million more, including a new advanced Western air defense system for Ukraine, more artillery and ammunition, counterbattery radars, additional ammunition for the HIMARS multiple-launch rocket system we've already given Ukraine and more HIMARS coming from other countries as well.

We also welcomed, for the first time, our partners in the Indo-Pacific to participate in the NATO summit. As I indicated to Putin, this would be—his action would cause worldwide response, bringing together democratic allies and partners from the Atlantic and the Pacific to focus on the challenges that matter to our future and to defend the rules-based order against the challenges, including from China.

In the G-7 in Germany, we also launched what started off to be the Build Back Better notion, but it's morphed into the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, to offer developing and middle-income countries better options to meet their urgent infrastructure needs. Because when the United States and G-7 countries put skin in the game, it helped bring—helps bring millions of dollars up to—before it's all over—up to possibly a trillion dollars of private sector money off the sidelines: \$600 billion in just the next few years.

Unlike China, these projects will be done transparently and with very high standards. For example, the U.S. Government just facilitated a new partnership between two American firms and the Government of Angola to invest \$2 billion building a significant solar project in Angola. It's a partnership to help Angola meet its climate goals and energy needs while creating new markets for American technologies and good jobs——

[At this point, the President coughed.]

——excuse me—in Angola. As you heard me say before: When I think "climate," I think "jobs."

And the G-7 also said we'd work together to take on China's abusive and coercive trade practices and rid our supply chains of products made with forced labor.

We tasked our teams to work on the details of the price cap on Russian oil to drive down Putin's revenues without hurting Americans and others at the gas pump. We'll seek to use the funds from the tariffs on Russian goods to help Ukraine rebuild. We're committed—we've committed more than \$4.5 billion—more than half of that from the United States—to address food insecurity and the immediate crisis caused by the Russian war.

At every step of this trip, we set down a marker of unity, determination, and deep capabilities of the democratic nations of the world to do what need be done. Putin thought he could break the transatlantic alliance. He tried to weaken us. He expected our resolve to fracture. But he's getting exactly what he did not want.

He wanted the Findalization [Finlandization]* of NATO. He got the NATO-ization of Finland. Just think about this: That's what he thought. Now NATO [Finland]* and Sweden are closer than ever to joining. And this will occur.

We're more united than ever. And with the addition of Finland and Sweden, we'll be stronger than ever. They have serious militaries, both of them. We're going to increase the NATO border by 800 miles along the Finnish-Russian border. Sweden is all in.

The point is, we're meeting the goals I set out when we first—the first G–7 meeting. We're moving to a place that reflects the realities of the 20—the second quarter of the 21st century. And we're on the verge of making significant progress.

Now, I'd be happy to take your questions. And the first question, I'm told, is Darlene Superville from the Associated Press.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Two questions, please. [Laughter]

The President. Of course.

U.S. Economy/U.S. Supreme Court Decision Overturning Roe v. Wade

Q. "America is Back" was your motto at the first NATO summit last year. And you've come to this summit here and the one in Germany after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned constitutional protections for abortion, after the shootings in Buffalo and Texas, at a time of record inflation, and as new polling this week shows that 85 percent of the U.S. public thinks the country is going in the wrong direction.

How do you explain this to those people who feel the country is going in the wrong direction, including some of the leaders you've been meeting with this week, who think that when you put all of this together, it amounts to an America that is going backward?

The President. They do not think that. You haven't found one person, one world leader to say America is going backwards. America is better positioned to lead the world than we ever have been. We have the strongest economy in the world. Our inflation rates are lower than other nations in the world. The one thing that has been destabilizing is the outrageous behavior of the Supreme Court of the United States on overruling not only *Roe v. Wade*, but essentially challenging the right to privacy.

We've been a leader in the world in terms of personal rights and privacy rights, and it is a mistake, in my view, for the Supreme Court to do what it did.

But I have not seen anyone come up to me and do anything other than—nor have you heard them say anything other than: "Thank you for America's leadership. You've changed the dynamic of NATO and the G–7."

So I can understand why the American people are frustrated because of what the Supreme Court did. I can understand why the American people are frustrated because of inflation. But inflation is higher in almost every other country. Prices at the pump are higher in almost every other country. We're better positioned to deal with this than anyone, but we have a way to go.

* White House correction.

And the Supreme Court—we have to change that decision by codifying *Roe v. Wade*.

U.S. Assistance to Ukraine/Russia

Q. There were some comments by some of your counterparts after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

But my second question is: G-7 leaders this week pledged to support Ukraine, quote, "for as long as it takes." And I'm wondering if you would explain what that means to the American people—"for as long as it takes." Does it mean indefinite support from the United States for Ukraine? Or will there come a time when you have to say to President Zelenskyy that the United States cannot support his country any longer? Thank you.

The President. We are going to support Ukraine as long as it takes.

Look at the impact that the war on Ukraine has had on Russia. They've had to renege on their national debt for the first time since the beginning—almost well over a hundred years. They've lost 15 years of the gains they made in terms of their economy. They're in a situation where they're having trouble because of my imposition of—dealing with what can be exported to Russia, in terms of technology. They can't even—you know, they're having—they're going to have trouble maintaining oil production because they don't have the technology to do it. They need American technology. And they're also in a similar situation in terms of their weapons systems and some of their military systems. So they're paying a very, very heavy price for this.

And just today Snake Island is now taken over by the Ukrainians. So we are going to stick with Ukraine and all of the alliance is going to stick with Ukraine as long as it takes to, in fact, make sure that they are not defeated by Ukraine—I mean, excuse me, in Ukraine by Russia.

And by the way, think of this: Ukraine has already dealt a severe blow to Russia. Russia, in fact, has already lost its international standing. Russia is in a position where the whole world is looking and saying: "Wait a minute, all this effort—you tried to take the whole country. You tried to take Kyiv. You lost. You've tried to take the Donbas and all of it. You haven't done that yet."

The generic point is that we're supplying them with the capacity—and the overwhelming courage they've demonstrated—that, in fact, they can continue to resist the Russian aggression. And so I don't know what—how it's going to end, but it will not end with a Russian defeat of Ukraine in Ukraine.

I'm supposed to go down the list here. Jim, the New York—Jim Tankersley, the New York Times.

Oil and Gasoline Prices/Russia/Ukraine

Q. Hi. Mr. President, thank you. This week, you and the G-7 allies introduced a plan for an oil price cap for Russian exports, which is not yet filled out and, obviously, is a response to the high price of gasoline in the United States and around the world. Are you confident that that cap would bring down prices for American drivers? And how long is it expect—fair to expect American drivers to continue to pay a premium because of this war?

The President. Let me hear the—the second part of the question was, "Would it bring down the price?"

Q. Will it bring down prices. And the war has pushed prices up. They could go as high as \$200 a barrel, some analysts think. How long is it fair to expect American drivers and drivers around the world to pay that premium for this war?

The President. As long as it takes so Russia cannot, in fact, defeat Ukraine and move beyond Ukraine. This is a critical, critical position for the world. Here we are. Why do we have NATO?

I told Putin that, in fact, if he were to move, we would move to strengthen NATO. We would move to strengthen us—strengthen NATO across the board.

Look, let me explain the price—I suggested a while ago that what we should consider doing is putting a cap on the amount of money that we would pay for—the world would pay for Russian oil, and that we would not—there would—we would not provide—the West provides insurance—would not insure Russian ships carrying oil. We would not provide insurance for them, so they would have great difficulty getting customers.

The point is that we've said to them, "Here's the deal: We're going to allow you to have a profit on what you make, but not the exorbitant prices that you're charging for the oil now." We've delegated a commission—a group of our—[inaudible]—sherpa—our national security people to sit down and work out that mechanism. We think it can be done. We think it can be done, and it would drive down the price of oil, and it would drive down the price of gasoline as well.

In addition, at home, I have also called for changes. We've—I've released a million barrels of oil per day from our oil reserve, and—in addition to getting other nations to move forward—a total of 240 million barrels of oil to release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Number one.

Number two, I've asked Congress would they, in fact, go and end the—temporarily end the tax on gasoline at the pump. And thirdly, to ask the States to do the same thing.

If we do these things, it's estimated we could bring down, tomorrow, if they—if Congress agreed and the States agreed, we could bring down the price of oil about a dollar a gallon at the pump, in that range. And so we could have immediate relief in terms of the reduction of the—of the elimination of—temporary elimination of the gas tax.

And so I think there's a lot of things we can do and we will do. But the bottom line is, ultimately, the reason why gas prices are up is because of Russia. Russia, Russia, Russia. The reason why the food crisis exists is because of Russia: Russia not allowing grain to get out of Ukraine.

And so that's the way in which I think we should move, and I think it would have a positive impact on the price at the pump as well.

Jordan Fabian, Bloomberg.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Turkey-U.S. Trade

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I also have two questions for you. [Laughter]

The President. Of course.

Q. Thanks. The first one is on Turkey. What assurances, if any, did you make to President Erdogan about his request for new F-16 jets for his military?

The President. What I said was—I said back in December, as you'll recall, we should sell them the F-16 jets and modernize those jets as well. It's not in our interest not to do that. And I indicated to them that I've not changed my position at all since December.

And there was no quid pro quo with that; it was just that we should sell. But I need congressional approval to be able to do that, and I think we can get that.

The President's Travel to the Middle East/Israel/Saudi Arabia/Oil Production

Q. And my second question is on your trip to Saudi Arabia, which is coming up next month. As we just discussed, Americans are paying almost \$5 a gallon nationally, on average, for gas. So do you expect to ask the Crown Prince or the King to increase oil production? And if so, how will you balance that with your desire to hold them accountable for their human rights abuses?

The President. Well, first of all, that's not the purpose of the trip. The purpose of the trip—my—first of all, I'm starting off on that trip in Israel. And the Israelis are—believe it's really important that I make the trip. And in addition to that, what we're trying to do is that the G-7—it's the Gulf States plus three. And so I'm sure the—it's in Saudi Arabia, but it's not about Saudi Arabia. It's in Saudi Arabia.

And so there's no commitment that is being made or—I'm not even sure; I guess I will see the King and the Crown Prince, but that's not the meeting I'm going to. They'll be part of a much larger meeting.

And what we're talking about in dealing with that trip is that, before I go, I'm, as I said, going to Israel to meet with Israeli leaders to affirm the unbreakable bond Israel and the United States have. And part of the purpose is—the trip to the Middle East—is to deepen Israel's integration in the region, which I think we're going to be able to do and which is a good—good for peace and good for Israeli security. And that's why Israel leaders have come out so strongly for my going to Saudi.

But the overall piece here is, we're also going to try to reduce the deaths and—in the war that's occurring in Yemen. There's a whole range of things that go well beyond anything having to do with Saudi, in particular.

Q. But if you were to see the Crown Prince or the King, would you ask them to increase oil production?

The President. No, I'm not going to ask them. I'm going to ask—there's—all the Gulf States are meeting. I've indicated to them that I thought they should be increasing oil production, generically, not to the Saudis particularly. And I think we're going to—I hope we see them, in their own interest, concluding that makes sense to do.

And you know, they have real concerns about what's going on in Iran and other places in terms of their security as well—all of them.

Tarina [Tarini Parti], the Wall Street Journal.

U.S. Assistance to Ukraine/Russia

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm going to keep the trend and also ask two questions, if that's okay. One on the summit and one domestic question.

On the summit, you just said that there would be another round of security assistance for Ukraine. After hearing President Zelenskyy's assessment that the war needs to end before the winter, are you changing your calculation in terms of the pace of the assistance and what kind of assistance you're sending to Ukraine?

The President. No, I—the war could end tomorrow, by the way, if Russia stops its irrational behavior. So, you know, when the war will end, I hope it ends sooner than later.

But for it to end, they have to be in a position where the Ukrainians have all that they can reasonably expect, we can reasonably expect to get to them, in order to provide for their physical security and their defenses.

And so one does not relate to the other. They need—we're going to be providing another—well, I guess I'll announce it shortly, but another \$800 billion—\$800 million in aid for additional

weaponry, including—you know, weapons—including air defense system, as well as offensive weapons. I have a whole list I'd be happy to give to you. But that's the next tranche that's going to occur.

U.S. Supreme Court Decision Overturning Roe v. Wade/Senate Filibuster

Q. And on the domestic question, sir: What further specific executive actions are you considering in response to the *Roe* ruling? And would you declare a public health emergency as several Democrats are calling on you to do?

The President. I'll be happy to go in detail with you on that, on the—I'm having a meeting with a group of Governors when I get home on Friday. And I'll have announcements to make then.

But the first and foremost thing we should do is make it clear how outrageous this decision was and how much it impacts not just on a woman's right to choose—which is a critical, critical piece—but on privacy generally. On privacy generally.

And so I'm going to be talking to the Governors as to what actions they think I should be taking as well. And—but the most important thing to be clear about is, we have to change—I believe we have to codify *Roe v. Wade* into law. And the way to do that is to make sure that Congress votes to do that. And if the filibuster gets in the way—it's like voting rights—it should be, we provide an exception for this—the—require an exception to the filibuster for this action to deal with the Supreme Court decision.

Abortion Rights/Codification of Roe v. Wade/U.S. Supreme Court

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Hang on. I got one more here. Kelly O'Donnell, NBC.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Well, you just made some news saying you would support changing the filibuster rules to codify abortion rights broadly across the country.

The President. Right to privacy, it's not just abortion rights. But yes, abortion rights.

Q. Can you describe for us, sir—many Americans are grappling with this. What is your sense today about the integrity and the impartiality of the Supreme Court? Should Americans have confidence in the Court as an institution?

And your views on abortion have evolved in your public life. Are you the best messenger to carry this forward when Democrats—many of them, many progressives—want you to do more? *[Laughter]*

The President. Yeah, I am. I'm the President of the United States of America. *[Laughter]* That makes me the best messenger.

And I really think that it's a serious, serious problem that the Court has thrust upon the United States not just in terms of the right to choose, but in terms of the right to who you can marry, the right—a whole range of issues relating to privacy.

And I have written, way back, a number of law review articles about the Ninth Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment and why the—privacy is considered as part of a constitutional guarantee. And the—they've just wiped it all out.

And so I'm the only President they've got, and I feel extremely strongly that I'm going to do everything in my power which I legally can do in terms of Executive orders, as well as push the Congress and the public.

The bottom line here is: If you care—if the polling data is correct, and you think this decision by the Court was an outrage or a significant mistake, vote. Show up and vote. Vote in the off-year and vote, vote, vote. That's how we'll change it.

All right, guys, I——

Q. Mr. President——

Q. Mr. President, just a quick one.

The President. No, there's no such thing as a quick one. I'm out of here. Thank you all very much. Which way am I going here?

[*Several reporters continued to ask questions at once as the President exited the stage.*]

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 2:56 p.m. at the Institución Ferial de Madrid convention center. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; President Sauli Niinistö of Finland; Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson of Sweden; and King Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : News conferences :: June 30.

Locations: Madrid, Spain.

Names: Andersson, Magdalena; Austin, Lloyd J., III; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince; Niinistö, Sauli; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, King.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Deployment; China : International diplomatic efforts; China : Trade and labor policies; Civil rights : Privacy; Commerce, international : Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Congress : Senate :: Filbuster; Defense, Department of : Secretary; Developing countries : Infrastructure development, international assistance; Economy, national : Inflation; Elections : 2022 congressional elections; Energy : Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs; Energy, Department of : Strategic Petroleum Reserve; Europe : Security cooperation with U.S.; Finland : North Atlantic Treaty Organization, membership bid; Finland : President; Health and medical care : Abortion; Iran : Regional involvement; Israel : Relations with U.S.; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: Roe v. Wade, opinion overruling 1973 decision; Middle East : Oil supply and refining; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia : International and U.S. sanctions; Russia : Oil supply and refining; Russia : President; Russia : Ukraine, airstrikes and invasion; Saudi Arabia : Crown Prince; Saudi Arabia : King; Saudi Arabia : Relations with U.S.; Spain : President Biden's visit; Sweden : North Atlantic Treaty Organization, membership bid; Sweden : Prime Minister; Turkey : Trade with U.S.; Ukraine : Russian airstrikes and invasion; Ukraine : U.S. assistance; Yemen : Civil war and sectarian conflict.

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