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Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister M. Elizabeth Truss of the United Kingdom in New York City

September 21, 2022

President Biden. Well, Madam Prime Minister, on behalf of the American people, I want to again express our condolences for the loss of Queen Elizabeth II. It was an honor for my wife and I to be able to pay our respects and—her lying-in-state and attend the state funeral in London.

I was amazed and overwhelmed by the affection of the British people and the world, quite frankly. Even—I mean, the thousands and thousands of people who stayed all night just to pay their respects was enormous.

And I want to extend my congratulations to you, Madam Prime Minister, for becoming Prime Minister and working—and I look forward to working closely with you. You're our closest ally in the world, and there's a lot we can do—continue to do together.

And there's no issue that I can think of, of global consequence, where the United States and the United Kingdom are not working in cooperation. And I expect we'll be—continue to be able to do that.

And we have a full agenda today, from supporting Ukraine and—as it defends itself against Russia and Putin's challenges, as well as China and its—posed by—preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons as well. There's a lot on the agenda.

We also want to talk about energy, which understandably is of significant consequence to all of Europe and Great Britain and England—the United Kingdom, in particular.

And finally, we both are committed to protecting the gains of the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland. And I'm looking forward to hearing what's on your mind and how we can continue to cooperate.

Prime Minister Truss. Well, thank you very much, Mr. President, for welcoming me.

And thank you also to you and the First Lady for coming to the United Kingdom for the funeral of her late Majesty. She was the rock on which modern Britain was built, and I have seen a huge outpouring of affection for her in the United Kingdom, but also here in the United States. And we're very grateful for all the support that you have given us over the—what has been 2 very difficult weeks in the United Kingdom as we move towards the reign of King Charles III and we enter a new era.

And as you say, Mr. President, we are steadfast allies. And I've enjoyed working with Tony Blinken very closely in our response on Russia's appalling war in Ukraine and making sure that we are supporting the Ukrainians in their fight for freedom. But we face huge challenges as autocracies seek to cement and increase their assertiveness around the world.

And that is why we're stepping up in terms of our defense spending. We're going to be moving to 3 percent of GDP on defense spending. And that's why we want to work more closely with the United States, especially on energy security, on our economic security, but also in reaching out to fellow democracies around the world to make sure that democracies prevail and we protect the freedom and future of our citizens.

And of course, I'm looking forward to discussing the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and how we make sure that's upheld into the future.

Thank you very much, Mr. President, for welcoming me and my delegation today. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:31 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. Prime Minister Truss referred to U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

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